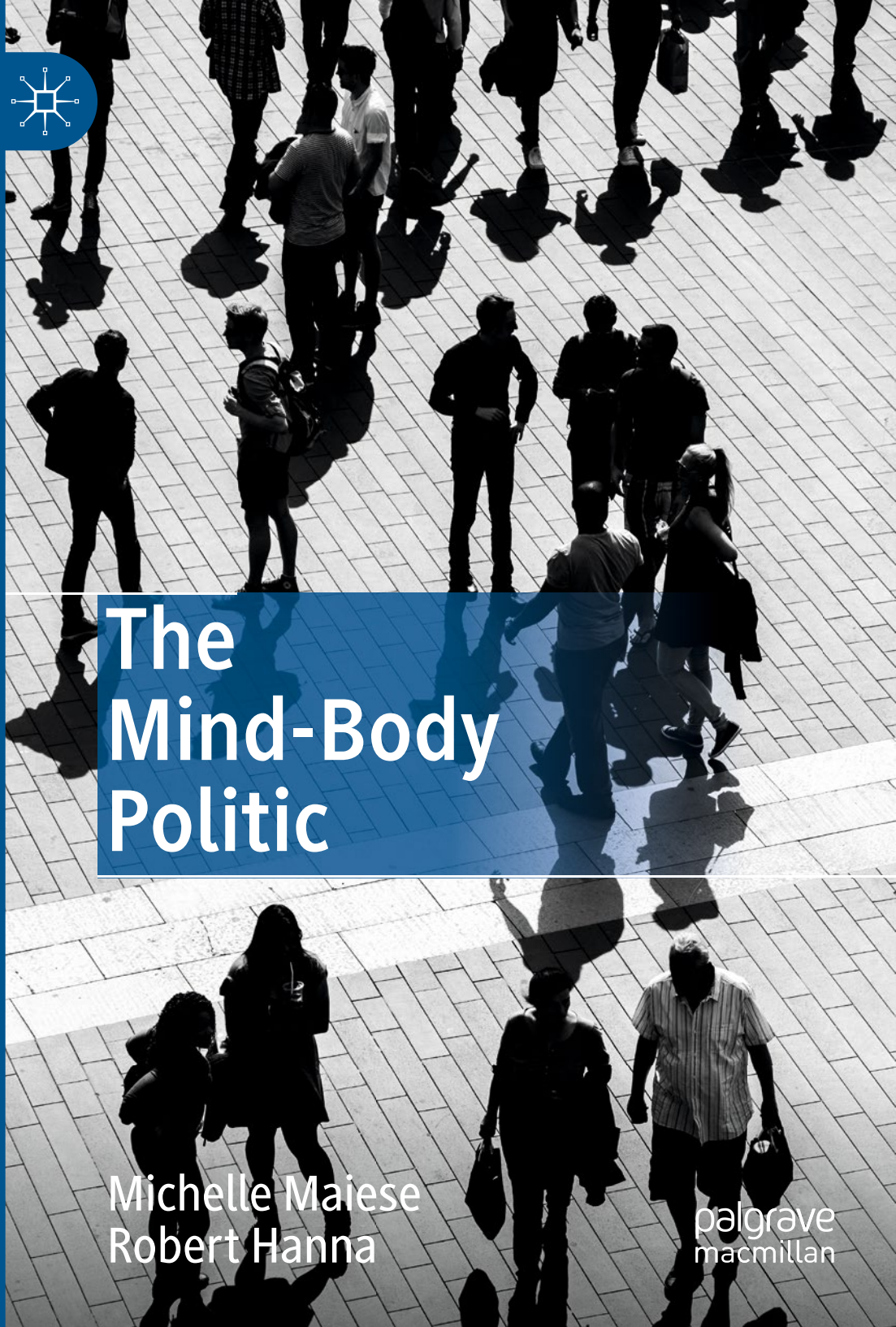

The Mind-Body Politic

Michelle Maiese
Robert Hanna

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Michelle Maiese
Emmanuel College
Boston, MA, USA

Robert Hanna
Independent Philosopher
Boulder, CO, USA

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Preface

A few months ago, Michelle asked her students, on the first day of their Fall Semester class on "Theories of Human Nature," to consider their *level of agreement* with respect to a series of claims about human nature and motivation. The four corners of her classroom were labeled "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Disagree," and "Strongly Disagree." As she read out each claim, students moved to different parts of the classroom. Some topics were more controversial than others. When it came to God and gender, for example, views were highly mixed. Some students indicated their strong belief that in order to gain a better understanding of human nature, we need to talk about God, whereas others said that they thought God was irrelevant. Some students expressed their belief that human nature did not vary according to biological sex, whereas others said they believed that there were inborn differences between men and women.

One topic, however, attracted widespread agreement: "In their natural state, humans are fundamentally competitive and self-interested." At this point in the class, almost all of the students were huddled together under the "strongly agree" or "agree" labels. When asked to explain why they agreed, several students cited our human drive to survive, and also added that their primary reasons for attending college were to compete in the workforce and advance their own interests.

A few of them lingered in the center of the classroom, which Michelle had designated as a space for those who were uncertain. One of the

students said she thought that parents sometimes exhibited genuine self-sacrifice, but then a student who "strongly agreed" with the statement expressed a classical Hobbesian view nowadays called "psychological egoism": she asserted that all human choice and action are inherently self-interested and that even behavior that *appeared* altruistic was in fact motivated, at bottom, by self-interest.

Why are so many of us convinced that this Hobbesian view is true? And why is it that whenever contemporary college or university professors query students about their reasons for pursuing post-secondary education, they begin to describe their future career plans without missing a beat? Why do other concerns—such as becoming a more informed voter or a more engaged citizen; gaining knowledge about social injustice; being able to think more critically about politics and current events; pursuing a morally good life; or crafting a meaningful philosophy of life—so rarely even *get mentioned*?

To be sure, these concerns have not *completely* disappeared from the lives of people under the age of 40. Look, for example, at the sharp rise in interest in *democratic socialism* and *social anarchism* (aka *anarcho-socialism*) displayed by millennials since the Occupy movement in the late 00s, and especially since The Age of Trump-POTUS began in 2016. However, it's clear that the *main* focus of these current students lies elsewhere, namely on their future career prospects. As a result, their natural curiosity and love of learning for its own sake, or for the sake of other higher intrinsic values like "living a good life" or "living a meaningful life," has greatly diminished, and many even view their university education as nothing but a burden that they must endure. It's something that they *have to do*, and that they *dread*, as part of the obligatory pathway to "gainful employment." They resent being told that it's a privilege or that they are lucky to be in college or university. Even those few who retain their love of learning for its own sake, or who still think about living a morally good life or crafting a meaningful life-philosophy, come to view their stint in higher education in largely instrumental terms, as nothing but a means to an end.

For many or even most of them, the very idea of making carefully thought-out choices about which academic programs to pursue, in light of their unique interests and passions, is largely irrelevant; above all, they

think they need to follow a path that will lead them to a comfortable middleclass or upper-middleclass lifestyle. Subjects like philosophy, which offer no such clear path to this goal—or even worse, which may seem to offer only a long and winding road *away* from this goal—take on an air of futility, or at best, of mystery. "What can you *do* with a degree in philosophy?" students and administrators alike frequently ask. And if a professor replies that someone can do *anything* after majoring in philosophy, people are likely to be deeply dissatisfied with this response. Whereas philosophy once was thought to play a crucial role in critical, reflective self-knowledge and in educating people for their role as citizens, today's all-encompassing emphasis on economic "innovation" and competitiveness, *as an inevitable feature of human life*, can make studying or pursuing philosophy seem like an utter waste of time and effort. Unfortunately, and not surprisingly, many colleges and universities are responding to this "crisis in the humanities" by cutting back, or even eliminating, their philosophy programs.

According to this way of thinking, going to college or university is just for *professional advancement* and *landing a "good" job*, and even more distressingly, it's not *only* the students who think so. During professional academic faculty and administrative meetings, there is all-too-frequent talk about "competitor schools," "value for the money," "sustainability," and the need for "a return on investment." Educational "outcomes" increasingly are defined and assessed in relation to what sort of job undergraduate students have obtained one to five years after graduation. At tuition-driven liberal arts colleges, in particular, professors and administrators need to be very skillful at gauging the level of student interest in various subjects, and tailoring their curriculum to whatever the students say they want. There is a demand to "market" their courses, their departments, and their colleges and universities, so that students will show up in sufficient numbers and they won't have to close their doors. The sad and even tragic fact is that at most contemporary institutions of higher education, a department's "performance" is measured solely by the number of undergraduate majors and graduates, the total number of students enrolled in courses, the number of graduate students who get professional academic jobs, the number of publications produced by faculty members, and discipline-wide rankings.

Perhaps most sadly or tragically of all, many contemporary professional academic faculty members actually *embrace* this way of thinking with enthusiasm, unabashedly speaking *not* about the intrinsic value of their subject, but instead about how their programs will "increase enrollments," tap into new "markets," or provide significant career preparation, thereby satisfying all-important "learning outcomes." These trends are so pervasive and prominent, in fact, that even those professional academic *philosophers* who deeply resent and want to resist this market-driven orientation, also feel a strong need, when pushed into a corner, to defend themselves in terms of the very thing they most despise, in their heart of hearts; that is, they are driven to assert that studying or pursuing philosophy is, in fact, *great preparation for getting a good job*. Recently, one of Michelle's friends and colleagues told her that, given economic pressures surrounding student loans, high rates of unemployment, and stagnating wages in many fields, *we have no choice* but to adopt a capitalist, market-driven orientation.

No doubt the economic pressures are real; but it appears that many of us have adopted this view of higher education rather unthinkingly or wholeheartedly, not as a regrettable response to economic realities, but rather as the "natural" way to view the world. Such observations indicate that a new and pervasive kind of social reality has emerged, one in which every aspect of human life is managed and evaluated in relation to market demands. Market logic now prevails in higher education, and many professors now understand the university's role in society primarily in relation to capitalist economic imperatives. Other sorts of values that might be associated with a higher education, such as developing a capacity for critical inquiry, civic engagement, and the interrogation of the fundamental assumptions and values of one's society, have begun to fade from sight. Aristotle's claim that knowledge of the world around us is good for its own sake, regardless of its instrumental usefulness, and Kant's even bolder claim that we should dare to think and know for ourselves—*Sapere aude!*—not only for its own sake, but also for the sake of "the highest good" of rational, moral, and political *enlightenment*, have come to seem virtually incomprehensible to many. Even those of us who agree with Aristotle or Kant are likely to find, upon honest self-critical reflection, that we all-too-frequently view our teaching and scholarship primarily as

a means to an end—to get promoted, publish our work in high-status journals, gain professional prestige and higher salaries, and perhaps even become a *professional academic philosophy superstar.*

But why has this market orientation become so dominant and widespread? Why do we think that the *economic* dimension of life is both fundamental and inevitable? And is it true that *we have no choice* but to adjust our thoughts, affects, and actions accordingly? Not surprisingly, the causes and deeper explanation lie in the larger "real world" outside the professional academy. More precisely, we strongly believe that these attitudes are largely the result of a larger, worldwide moral, political, and economic ideology known as "neoliberalism" (also known as "neoconservativism" or "centrism"). In the USA, in particular, this insidious set of ideas, values, and assumptions began to take hold in the late 1970s, became widespread in the 1980s, and increasingly has been guiding our thought and action ever since.

On this neoliberal view of things, economic efficiency is the highest value, capitalist market considerations always take priority, and market-interference or regulations should be avoided wherever possible—except, of course, whenever *protectionist* policies are deemed necessary for cornering a market and making a profit. Needs formerly met by public agencies, or via government provision, or through personal relationships in communities and families, are now supposed to be met by private companies selling services. Neoliberalism in its specifically democratic guise emphasizes the values of individualism, self-reliance, consumerism, and personal gain; and these market values significantly determine what we regard as rational and responsible forms of human agency. It is considered "rational and responsible," for example, to focus on increasing one's own "human capital," and downright *irrational* and *irresponsible* to engage in either short-term activities or life-pursuits that are not valued in the marketplace. "Success" consists essentially in having a nice home, a fancy car, stylish clothing, lots of extra money to spend on brief, furtive holidays and trendy leisure, and a large and ever-increasing number of followers on social media. And then personal and collective happiness are assumed to flow directly from such "success."

This way of thinking has become so customary and widespread that one can rightly say it is now part of our cultural everyday *common sense*.

It is deeply embedded in the workings of various social institutions, including the health care system, the educational system, and the political system. It fundamentally guides political discourse and action, heavily influences pop culture, and shapes our various modes of social interaction. It is so all-pervasive and ingrained, in fact, that, like white noise, it all-too-often escapes detection. What is more, even though it continues significantly to determine how we think, feel, and behave, we rarely stop to ask whether its influence is beneficial or harmful.

In *The Mind-Body Politic*, we use fundamental ideas in the *philosophy of mind* in order to formulate and defend the thesis that the influence of neoliberal ideology is largely *destructive and deforming*, and that it prevents us from fulfilling our true human needs. Instead of motivating us to seek work that we love and find inherently meaningful and self-sustaining—call it *lifework*—it prompts us to seek out careers with the highest pay check and/or highest social status, even if they are what David Graeber has aptly dubbed "bullshit jobs"—namely, jobs that are basically meaningless and unproductive, even though they may pay very well and/or look impressive on our *Curriculum Vitae* and resumes. Rather than promoting intimate human relationships, empathy, solidarity, and collective action as inherently good and meaningful, neoliberalism primes and encourages mutual antagonism, egoism, "winner-takes-all" competition, "networking," and endless, robotic efforts to increase our "social capital."

Part the reason why this ideology has become so dominant and pernicious is that it is so all-pervasive. Like white noise, or the air we breathe, it generally escapes our self-conscious notice and therefore also hides from our critical scrutiny: it has become so commonplace that many of us simply cannot even *imagine* things otherwise. And like racism, sexism, ableism, xenophobia, and other rationally unjustified and immoral ideologies and practices that violate *human dignity* and *oppress* people, it all-too-frequently remains hidden from critical consciousness and popular consciousness alike. But how can a set of ideas, attitudes, and practices become so dominant that it turns into white noise, even as it continues to *harm us* in fundamental ways?

The short-and-snappy version of the answer we are offering in this book is: because these ideas, attitudes, and practices *are realized in social institutions*, and because *social institutions literally shape our minds*, very

often without any self-conscious awareness whatsoever of their influence on the part of the people affected. Furthermore, we believe that this process of mind-shaping is as much emotional and bodily as it is cognitive and intellectual, and that social institutions exert their formative influence by cultivating a specific *affective orientation*. We begin with the commonsense observation that social relationships and norms have a powerful *molding effect* on the human mind. From our earliest days, we look to other people for approval and recognition. Our caregivers direct our attention to various objects, we mimic their facial expressions and gestures, and we learn how to use tools by watching others use them. Over the course of learning and socialization, we acquire various bodily skills and habits that allow us to engage effectively with our surroundings. Through our embodied interactions with others, we also develop characteristic attitudes and affective stances and particular ways of interpreting objects and events. Over time, we gain a feel for the "rules of the game" associated with various social contexts and deepen our understanding of how we are expected to behave. Once we have *internalized* various social norms and rules, we can function more effectively in various social settings without having to pause and think about what to do next. These ingrained patterns of feeling, thought, and behavior shape our sense of what is possible and appropriate and comprise our habitual ways of understanding ourselves and our world. But at the same time, the habits of mind that have been cultivated via the rules, laws, and basic structures of social institutions take on a socially-created existence and life of their own and make it difficult for us to feel, think, and act otherwise. Ultimately, then, the many social institutions that we belong to literally shape our minds, and thereby fundamentally affect our lives, for worse or better.

In order to escape from the social institutions that shape people's minds *for the worse*, and in order to build new social institutions that shape people's minds *for the better*, we need to gain a deeper understanding of the complex, multifaceted, psychological and social dynamics at play. How do social norms and cultural values mold our feeling, thought, and behavior? How does inhabiting a particular social institution shape the way that we selectively attend to and interpret our surroundings, focusing on some considerations while ignoring others? What is it about social

interaction and the influence of other people's emotions, desires, and expectations that exerts such a strong influence over us?

After an Introduction that's intended to provide the reader with a general theoretical and practical orientation for understanding our philosophical project, we move onto an examination of the mind-shaping influence of contemporary neoliberal social institutions that overtly or covertly coerce and mentally enslave us. Here we hope to shed philosophical light on how this big-capitalist market orientation has become so influential, how it has modified people's outlooks and actions, and how it impedes and undermines human flourishing, self-realization, and solidarity. In particular, we will discuss how this way of viewing the world has infiltrated higher education and mental health practice, so much so that those who belong to these institutions frequently adopt this perspective as if it's just a matter of common sense.

Then we proceed to describe what we take to be the central features of constructive, enabling social institutions that cultivate our capacities for autonomy and empathy, and radically liberate us. And finally, we offer substantive suggestions about how we can begin to create and sustain these emancipatory social institutions. Transformative education, we believe, not only *can be* but also *should be* life-changing and world-changing, and thereby can serve as a model for emancipatory social institutions more generally. This in turn expresses our radical "philosophy of philosophy," which unabashedly asserts it to be a critical and reflective enterprise that is at once intellectual, practical, essentially embodied, and fully affective.

Boston, MA — Michelle Maiese
Boulder, CO — Robert Hanna

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1

Introduction: Political Philosophy of Mind

In Meditation XVII of his "Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions," John Donne poetically and correctly described a fundamental aspect of the human condition:

> No man is an island entire of itself; every man
> is a piece of the continent, a part of the main;
> if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe
> is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as
> well as any manner of thy friends or of thine
> own were; any man's death diminishes me,
> because I am involved in mankind.
> And therefore never send to know for whom
> the bell tolls; it tolls for thee. (Donne 1624, Meditation XVII).

In other words, human beings are, necessarily, *social* beings. They both influence, and are influenced by, other people as well as social institutions more generally. But as C. Wright Mills so aptly noted in his breakthrough 1956 study of institutional structures and power-relations in the USA, *The Power Elite*:

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> The kind of moral and psychological beings men become is in large part determined by the values they experience and the institutional roles they are allowed and expected to play…. Although men sometimes shape institutions, institutions always select and form men. (Mills 1956/2000, pp. 15 and 123, texts joined)

And as Jan Slaby and Shaun Gallagher have recently noted:

> [T]he notion of a cognitive institution is itself a helpful tool for developing a critical stance that allows us to scrutinize current institutional practices. Critique here takes the form of assessments of an institution's modes of operation and de facto impacts, analyzed against the background of its official and unofficial aims, purpose and directions. How does the operational reality of an institution and its specific effectiveness measure up to the ideas and principles that have led to its creation? On a more general level, critique also implies asking whether some given institutional procedures improve (or impede, or distort) our understanding, our communicative practices, our possibilities for action, our recognition of others, our shared and circumscribed freedoms, and so forth. (Slaby and Gallagher 2014, p. 6)

So, in a nutshell: human beings are, necessarily, social animals (Donne); but although people "sometimes shape institutions, institutions always select and form" people (Mills); and "the notion of a cognitive institution is itself a helpful tool for developing a critical stance that allows us to scrutinize current institutional practices" (Slaby and Gallagher 2014, p. 6).

Starting out with those basic ideas, and then adding some of our own, we do two things in *The Mind-Body Politic*. First, we work out a new critique of contemporary social institutions, by deploying the special standpoint of the philosophy of mind, and in particular, the special standpoint of the philosophy of what we call *essentially embodied minds*. And second, we make a set of concrete, positive proposals for radically changing both these social institutions and our essentially embodied lives, for the better.

More specifically, we undertake a deeper, generalized, and explicitly political critical analysis of essentially the same set of social-institutional phenomena pointed up by Donne, Mills, and Slaby and Gallagher, from

the standpoint of the philosophy of mind, and also updated to the second decade of the twenty-first century. Our particular focus is social institutions encountered by people living in contemporary neoliberal nation-states, insofar as those people are also essentially embodied minds, and specifically insofar as these social institutions select, form, and literally shape the conscious, self-conscious, affective, cognitive, and agential minds of those people. But this mind-shaping, and its correspondingly fundamental effects on our lives, can be for *worse* or for *better*. We argue that in contemporary neoliberal nation-states, standard social institutions mind-shape us and fundamentally affect us radically for *the worse*—hence they are, to that extent, dystopian—but also that a careful critical analysis of this unhappy phenomenon enables us to formulate a positive theory of individual and collective social-institutional change that is radically for *the better*.

Clarity and distinctness—appropriately scaled to the inherent difficulty/simplicity and murkiness/lucidity of one's subject-matter, of course—are leading philosophical virtues, so we will start by defining some terms we will use frequently in what follows. For our purposes, a *social institution* is any group of people whose subjective experiences, feelings and emotions, thoughts, and intentional actions are collectively guided and organized by shared principles or rules that function as *norms*—that is, evaluative standards, ideals, codes of conduct, and/or imperatives—for that group. By *democracy*, we mean any social institution that is governed by the rule of the majority of people qualified to vote, who in turn elect or appoint a minority of those people to "represent" and govern them.[1] And by *neoliberalism*, we mean the political doctrine that combines:

i. *classical Hobbesian liberalism*, according to which people are essentially self-interested and mutually antagonistic, hence require a coercive central government to ensure their mutual non-interference and individual pursuit of self-interested goals,
ii. *the valorization of capitalism*, especially global corporate, worker-exploiting, technocratic capitalism (aka "big capitalism"), and

iii. *technocracy*, the scientifically-guided control and mastery of human nature and physical nature alike, for the sake of pursuing individually and collectively self-interested ends.

In our contemporary world, the basic elements of neoliberalism in big-capitalist, democratic nation-states also smoothly implicitly generalize to "neoconservativism," "centrism," and even to "state capitalism" in state-socialist or other non-democratic nation-states. Of course, there are superficial variations in political rhetoric and ideology. However, underneath all these superficial variations are the basic elements just mentioned: classical Hobbesian liberalism (and the corresponding view that humans are essentially self-interested and mutually antagonistic), the valorization of capitalism, and technocracy. This is what we are calling "neoliberalism."

What Henry Giroux (2002) rightly describes as "the dystopian culture of neoliberalism" emphasizes market-based values, relationships, and identities, and defines individual and social agency through big-capitalist, market-oriented notions of individualism, competition, and consumption. In all contemporary neoliberal nation-states *worldwide*, every one of us belongs to, participates in, or falls under the jurisdiction of, a multiplicity of different social institutions, many of them overtly or covertly neoliberal and dystopian, and all of them overlapping and interrelated in complex ways, for example:

- families
- churches or other spiritual organizations, including cults
- schools of all kinds, including higher education and social arrangements involving research in the humanities and the sciences
- clubs or teams of all kinds
- social arrangements involving sports, leisure, and exercise activities of all kinds
- jobs and workplaces
- social systems for the production of material goods of all kinds
- social systems for the provision of services of all kinds
- economic social systems more generally, including banking systems and other monetary systems

- consumer social systems of all kinds
- medical social systems of all kinds, including social arrangements involving mental or physical health, especially hospitals and other care facilities, and social arrangements surrounding dying and death
- social arrangements involving the internet, the telephone system, the postal system, and other communication systems
- social arrangements involving the fine arts, performances and aesthetic appreciation, and crafts
- mass entertainment social systems of all kinds, including literature, music, movies, and television
- journalism and news media
- architectural and urban planning of all kinds, including social arrangements involving gardening, farming, landscape planning, and forest management
- social arrangements involving marine and water management
- social arrangements involving personal or mass transportation
- legal systems, including social arrangements involving incarceration and prisons
- the police, including private, local, regional, and national security organizations of all kinds
- the military
- political systems of all kinds, including all governments and nation-states

Granting this maximally broad conception of social institutions, then, the fundamental question we want to address and answer in this book is:

> How do social institutions in contemporary neoliberal nation-states—with special concentrations on *higher education* and *mental health treatment*—systematically affect our conscious, self-conscious, affective, cognitive, and agential minds, thereby fundamentally affecting our lives, for worse or better?

Or even more precisely:

> How do social institutions in contemporary neoliberal nation-states—with special concentrations on higher education and mental health treatment—systematically affect our consciousness and self-consciousness, affects, beliefs, judgments, thoughts, intentional actions, interpersonal interactions, practical agency, agential autonomy, and relational autonomy, insofar as we are *essentially embodied minds*, thereby fundamentally affecting our lives, for worse or better?

By *consciousness*, we mean an animal's capacity for subjective experience, including cognitions and thoughts of all sorts. Insofar as an animal is capable of subjective experience, then it is thereby the conscious *subject* of those experiences. By *self-consciousness,* we mean a conscious human animal's capacity for consciousness-of the acts, states, and (phenomenal or intentional/representational) contents of her own consciousness, and for forming self-directed beliefs or judgments about those acts, states, and contents. Insofar as a conscious human animal subject is also capable of self-consciousness, then it is thereby also a human *self*. By *affects*, we mean a conscious human animal's capacities for having desires, feelings, emotions, and passions. By *practical agency*, we mean a conscious human animal's power to choose or do things freely in the light of principles or reasons, including but not restricted to *moral* principles or reasons, on the basis of self-conscious processes of deliberation and decision, all in view of the subject's affects. By *agential autonomy*, we mean a conscious human subject's practical agency according to principles of her own choosing, aka *self-legislated* principles. Insofar as a conscious human subject or self is capable of agency and agential autonomy, then s/he is also thereby a human *person*. And by *relational autonomy*, we mean the coordinated practical agency of each of the members of a group of people, according to shared principles of their own choosing, aka *multiply self-legislated* principles.

As we've already noted, insofar as it critically examines the selective, formative, and mind-shaping impact of social institutions on our human subjective experiences, cognitions, self-consciousness, selfhood, affects, agency, and mutual agential interactions with others, *The Mind-Body Politic* is at once a study in the philosophy of mind and also a study in emancipatory political theory.

On the philosophy of mind side, this book is intended to be a 10-years-after sequel to our earlier co-authored book, *Embodied Minds in Action* (Hanna and Maiese, 2009), and it also builds on Robert Hanna's follow-up books, including *Rationality and Logic* (Hanna 2006) and the five-volume series, THE RATIONAL HUMAN CONDITION (Hanna 2018a; Hanna 2018b; Hanna 2018c; Hanna 2018d; Hanna 2015), as well as Michelle Maiese's follow-up books, *Embodiment, Emotions, and Cognition* (Maiese 2011) and *Embodied Selves and Divided Minds* (Maiese 2015). Moving forward radically from these philosophical starting points, it then extends those accounts to the new sub-field of what Jan Slaby aptly calls *political philosophy of mind* and what Suparna Choudhury and Slaby (2012) equally aptly call *critical neuroscience*. In addition to our earlier books, and groundbreaking recent work by Slaby and others,[2] we also draw on contemporary work on *collective intelligence* (see, for example, MIT Center for Collective Intelligence 2018), John Dewey's notion of "habit," Pierre Bourdieu's (1977) notion of "habitus," and J.J. Gibson's notion of "affordances."

And on the emancipatory political theory side, our account draws significantly on Immanuel Kant's philosophy of *enlightenment*,[3] as extended to Friedrich Schiller's *aesthetic* version of Kantian enlightenment (Schiller 1794), on Søren Kierkegaard's *existentialism* (Kierkegaard 2000), on the *existential humanism* of the early Karl Marx (Marx 1964; and Fromm 1966), on Frankfurt School *Critical theory*,[4] on Michel Foucault's notion of *governmentality* (Foucault, 1993, 1995), and on Hanna's *Kant, Agnosticism, and Anarchism* (Hanna, 2018d). In this latter connection, our project also bears certain similarities to Gilles Deleuze's and Félix Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* and *Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze and Guattari 1977; Deleuze and Guattari 1987), John Protevi's *Political Physics* (Protevi 2001) and *Political Affect* (Protevi 2009), and Manuel DeLanda's *New Philosophy of Society* (DeLanda, 2006), by virtue of its fusing metaphysics, social theory, and radical politics. In particular, Deleuze and Guattari significantly anticipate and prefigure our emphasis on the fundamental role of essentially embodied affect in sociopolitical life; our critique of destructive, deforming social institutions, especially including neoliberal nation-States; the salient connection between social-institutional

dysfunction in neoliberal nation-States and mental illness; and our thesis that philosophy and emancipatory politics are indissolubly one.

Where our project differs significantly from these earlier works, however, lies in our special focus on the *metaphysics* of mind, and on the philosophy of mind more generally, as a novel and importantly illuminating starting-point and methodological guide for radical sociopolitical inquiry. Like Protevi (2009), we find it unfortunate that proponents of enactivism and embedded cognition rarely thematize the social fields within which cognitive practices are developed (p. 4); one of our central aims is to investigate how insights about the essentially embodied, enactive, embedded mind can be developed to better understand the mind-shaping influence of social institutions.

More specifically, however, in *The Mind-Body Politic*, we start with the following basic thesis, drawn from our earlier work—

1. Human minds are necessarily and completely embodied (*the essential embodiment thesis*).

Then we proceed from there to argue for three new basic theses:

2. Essentially embodied minds are *neither* merely brains *nor* over-extended "extended minds," yet all social institutions saliently constrain, frame, and partially determine the social-dynamic patterns of our essentially embodied consciousness, self-consciousness, affect (including feelings, desires, and emotions), cognition, and agency—that is, they *literally shape* our essentially embodied minds, and thereby fundamentally affect our lives, for worse or better, mostly without our self-conscious awareness (*the mind-shaping thesis*).

(Sidebar note to the reader: Our use of the term "literally" in the phrase "literally shape" is intended to emphasize the important point that if the essential embodiment thesis is true, then insofar as social institutions, *actually-and-in-real-spacetime*, shape our bodily comportment, habits, and intentional actions by getting us to move our bodies in certain ways that we would not otherwise have done, they also, *actually-and-in-real-spacetime*, shape our minds. That is, if our minds are essentially embodied,

then the actual neurobiological dynamics and body movements in real space time that directly express the larger social-institutional framework in which they are embedded, are *also* actual dynamics and movements of the human mind itself in real spacetime. So the mind-shaping here is not just notional or metaphorical; it is *literal* and happening *literally*. Nevertheless, while insisting on the importance of this usage, we also recognize that some readers might find it slightly awkward or distracting; so we hereby apologize in advance for that and beg the reader's pardon).

3. *Many or even most* social institutions in contemporary neoliberal nation-states literally shape our essentially embodied minds, and thereby our lives, in such a way as to alienate us, mentally enslave us, or even undermine our mental health, to a greater or lesser degree (*the destructive Gemeinschaft/collective sociopathy thesis*).
4. Nevertheless, *some* social institutions, working against the grain of standard, dystopian social institutions in contemporary neoliberal nation-states, can make it really possible for us to self-realize, connect with others in a mutually aiding way, liberate ourselves, and be mentally healthy, authentic, and deeply happy *(the constructive Gemeinschaft/collective wisdom thesis*).

It should be noticed that the kind of destructive, deforming mind-shaping described in thesis 3 inherently admits of degrees—greater or lesser—whereas, by sharp contrast, the kind of constructive, enabling mind-shaping described in thesis 4 is categorically different from the kind of literal mind-shaping that occurs in standard, dystopian neoliberal social institutions. Hence the existence, creation, and development of constructive, enabling social institutions represents an absolute, radical break with the social-institutional *status quo* in contemporary neoliberal societies.

So understood, the conjunction of our four basic theses yields what we call *the enactive-transformative principle:*

> Enacting salient or even radical changes in the structure and complex dynamics of a social institution produces corresponding salient or even

> radical changes in the structure and complex dynamics of the essentially embodied minds of the people belonging to, participating in, or falling under the jurisdiction of, that institution, thereby fundamentally affecting their lives, for worse or better.

In short, we can significantly change our own and other people's essentially embodied minds, and in turn, their lives, whether for worse or better, *by means of* changing the social institutions we and they inhabit.

The enactive-transformative principle, in turn, motivates a philosophico-political *clarion call* whose simple, yet world-transforming message is that we can freely, systematically, and even radically change existing destructive, deforming social institutions in contemporary neoliberal nation-states into new constructive, enabling social institutions; and this, as a consequence, enables us to transform our own and other people's essentially embodied minds and lives significantly or even radically *for the better*.

1.1 The Philosophy of Mind

Simply but also synoptically put, the philosophy of mind is philosophical inquiry and theorizing that is focused on any or all of four basic problems:

i. *The Mind–Body Problem*: What explains the existence and specific character of conscious, intentional minds like ours in a physical world?
ii. *The Problem of Mental Causation*: What explains the causal relevance and causal efficacy of conscious, intentional minds like ours in a physical world?
iii. *The Problem of Intentional Action*: What explains the categorical difference between the things we consciously and intentionally do, and the things that just happen to us?
iv. *The Problem of Mental Representation*: What explains our mind's capacity to represent the world and ourselves, and what is the nature of the mental content of our mental representations?

In view of these problems, for us, *the methodology* of the philosophy of mind is a systematic triangulation[5] that simultaneously draws on and synthesizes the results of three distinct sub-methods:

i. *phenomenology*, that is, the first-person introspective descriptions of conscious, intentional human experience, including intersubjective experience,
ii. *cognitive or affective neuroscience*, that is, the empirical scientific study of cognitive or affective states, acts, and processes in human or non-human animals, and
iii. *classical philosophical reasoning about the mind*, that is, either conceptual analysis and/or real, substantive metaphysics (see, for example, Unger 2014), directed to exploring the nature of minds like ours.

Needless to say, philosophy of mind in any or all of these senses has a long history, especially including Plato's *Phaedo*, Aristotle's *De Anima*, and Descartes's *Meditations on First Philosophy*. Fast-forwarding now from Descartes to the mid-twentieth century, it also encompasses a standard array of recent doctrines that we will now very briefly describe in order to situate our project in its contemporary philosophical context (see, for example, Chalmers 2002 and Kim 2006).

Classical Cartesian interactionist substance dualism in the philosophy of mind holds that the human mind and the human body are essentially distinct substances, one of them fundamentally non-material or non-physical, and the other one fundamentally material or physical, hence fundamentally non-mental. These distinct substances are held together by metaphysically mysterious contingent causal relations, including both mind-to-body or mind-to-mind causal relations (aka "mental causation") and body-to-mind causal relations. By sharp contrast, philosophy of mind in the mainstream Anglo-American Analytic tradition, running from roughly 1950 up to the beginning of the twenty-first century, can be doubly characterized by

i. its official rejection of classical Cartesian interactionist substance dualism, and

ii. its central, ongoing commitment to *brain-bounded materialism* (aka "brain-bounded physicalism") as regards the nature of the mind-body relation and the nature of cognition.

At the same time, however, even despite its official anti-Cartesianism, this tradition remains implicitly committed to a three-part metaphysical presupposition that we call *Cartesian Fundamentalism*, according to which

i. the mental is *fundamentally* (that is, inherently, necessarily. and exclusively) *non-physical*,
ii. the physical is *fundamentally* (that is, inherently, necessarily, and exclusively) *non-mental*, and
iii. no substance can have a *complementary dual* essence that is inherently and necessarily *both* mental *and* physical.

All classical Cartesian interactionist substance dualists and all materialists or physicalists, alike, are committed to Cartesian Fundamentalism. They differ only as to whether, on the one hand, the mental and the physical possess equal but opposite ontological status, which is classical Cartesian interactionist substance dualism, or, on the other, the mental asymmetrically ontologically depends on the physical, which is materialism or physicalism.[6] Hence all materialists or physicalists, at bottom, are *Cartesian* physicalists.

Now *materialism* or *physicalism*, as such, says that properties of or facts about the human mind are constitutively determined by fundamentally physical facts. But there are two different types of materialism or physicalism:

i. *reductive* materialism or physicalism, and
ii. *non-reductive* materialism or physicalism.

Reductive materialism or physicalism says that all properties of or facts about the human mind are wholly constitutively determined by fundamentally physical properties or facts. That is: the human mind is nothing over and above the fundamentally physical world. This is also known as "the logical supervenience of the mental on the physical."[7] Non-reductive

materialism or physicalism, by contrast, says that some but not all properties of or facts about the human mind are wholly constitutively determined by fundamentally physical properties or facts. That is: certain causally inert properties or facts about the human mind—for example, about the normative character of rational intentionality, or about the qualitative specific character of consciousness—vary independently of fundamentally physical properties or facts, even though all of the human mind's causally efficacious properties or facts are still wholly constitutively determined by fundamentally physical properties or facts. This is also known as "the natural or nomological but not logical supervenience of the mental on the physical."[8] *Brain-bounded* materialism or physicalism, whether reductive or non-reductive, says that properties or facts about the human mind are constitutively determined by fundamentally physical facts about the human brain. For example, a very popular mainstream view first articulated in 1950s, the *Materialist or Physicalist Mind-Brain Identity Theory*, holds that all mental properties and facts are asymmetrically or "downwardly" identical to, hence "nothing over and above," brain-properties and brain-facts.

Over the first two decades of the twenty first century, philosophy of mind in the mainstream Anglo-American Analytic tradition (see, for example, Hanna 2001) also has been significantly influenced by *the extended mind thesis*,[9] which challenges the specifically brain-bounded component of brain-bounded materialism or physicalism. This thesis says that the fundamentally physical constitutive ground of mental properties or facts extends into the natural and/or social environment beyond the human body, either by means of external vehicles of mental content or by means of external vehicles of consciousness. That is: the human mind is essentially spread out into the world.

By sharp contrast to philosophy of mind in the mainstream Anglo-American Analytic tradition, however, we reject materialism or physicalism (whether reductive or non-reductive), the brain-bounded thesis, *and* the extended mind thesis, alike. And at the same time, we *also* reject classical Cartesian interactionist substance dualism. Our double rejection of materialism or physicalism (whether reductive or non-reductive) on the one hand, and classical Cartesian substance dualism on the other, is rationally motivated and entailed by our thoroughgoing rejection of Cartesian

Fundamentalism. Hence for us, the mental is not fundamentally non-physical; the physical is not fundamentally non-mental; and it is also really possible for a substance to have a complementary dual essence that is inherently and necessarily both mental and physical. Indeed, according to our view, it is actually the case that some substances have a complementary dual essence that is inherently and necessarily *both mental and physical*, since creatures like us are those very substances. Very simply put, according to our view, creatures like us are nothing more and nothing less than *minded human animals*.

More specifically, we hold that *consciousness* is a minded human animal's capacity for subjective experience; *self-consciousness* is a minded human animal's capacity for becoming and being conscious of the acts, states, and (phenomenal or intentional/representational) contents of her own consciousness, and for forming beliefs or judgments about those acts, states, and contents; *intentionality* is the directedness of a minded human animal's conscious acts, states, or processes to any sort of target, existing or non-existing, including the minded human animal herself; and *mental causation* is how a minded human animal is able to move her own body, and initiate and/or control her own thinking, as an ultimate source of free agency. Correspondingly, our metaphysics of the mind-body relation, as worked out and defended in *Embodied Minds in Action*, is *The Essential Embodiment Theory.* This theory centers on the following six core theses:

1. *The Essential Embodiment Thesis*: Creatures with conscious, intentional minds are necessarily and completely neurobiologically embodied.
2. *The Essentially Embodied Agency Thesis*: Basic acts (for example, raising one's arm) are intentional body movements caused by an essentially embodied mind's synchronous trying to make those very movements and its active guidance of them.
3. *The Emotive Causation Thesis*: Trying and its active guidance, as the cause of basic intentional actions, is primarily a pre-reflective, desire-based emotive mental activity and only derivatively a self-conscious or self-reflective, deliberative intellectual mental activity.
4. *The Mind-Body Animalism Thesis*: The fundamental mental properties of conscious, intentional minds are:

i. non-logically or strongly metaphysically (that is, synthetically) a priori necessarily reciprocally intrinsically connected to corresponding fundamental physical properties in a living animal's body (aka *mental-physical property fusion*), and
ii. irreducible truly global or inherently dominating intrinsic structures of motile, suitably neurobiologically complex, egocentrically-centered and spatially-oriented, thermodynamically irreversible living organisms (aka, *neo-Aristotelian hylomorphism*).

5. *The Dynamic Emergence Thesis*: The natural world itself is neither fundamentally physical nor fundamentally mental; instead, it is essentially a causal-dynamic totality of forces, processes, and patterned movements and changes in real space and real time, all of which exemplify fundamental physical properties (for example, molecular, atomic, and quantum properties). Some but not all of those physical events also exemplify irreducible biological properties (for example, being a living organism), and some but not all of those biological events also exemplify irreducible fundamental mental properties (for example, consciousness or intentionality). And both biological properties and fundamental mental properties are dynamically emergent properties of those events.
6. *The Intentional Causation Thesis*: A mental cause is an event or process involving both consciousness and intentionality, such that it is a necessary proper part of a nomologically jointly sufficient essentially mental-and-physical cause of intentional body movements. In so doing, it is a dynamically emergent structuring cause of those movements. Then, under the appropriate endogenous and exogenous conditions, by virtue of synchronous trying and its active guidance, conscious, intentional, essentially embodied minds are mental causes of basic acts from their inception in neurobiological processes to their completion in overt intentional body movements.

In this way, The Essential Embodiment Theory says that our dynamically emergent, irreducible, sentient and sapient minds are also necessarily interdependent with our own living organismic animal bodies and not essentially distinct from them; that we are far-from-equilibrium,

asymmetric, complex, self-organizing thermodynamic systems; that we act by intentionally moving our bodies by means of our desire-based emotions and trying; and that our conscious, intentional, caring, and rational minds are basically causally efficacious precisely because they are metaphysically continuous with our biological lives, and life is basically causally efficacious in physical nature. The simple upshots of The Essential Embodiment Theory, then, are these two synoptic claims:

i. In thinking about the mind-body problem, we should decisively replace the early modern Cartesian and Newtonian *ghost-in-the-machine* metaphysics with a post-Cartesian and post-Newtonian, but also at the same time neo-Aristotelian, *immanent-structure-in-the-non-equilibrium-thermodynamics* metaphysics.
ii. The conscious, intentional, caring minds of cognizers and agents *grow naturally in suitably complex living organisms*, as irreducible, non-dualistic, non-supervenient, asymmetric thermodynamic immanent structures *of* those organisms.

Correspondingly, we are committed to a *body-bounded* constitutive ground of mindedness, and neither to a *brain-bounded ground* nor to an *extended ground beyond the living human body*. We will say more about this in Chap. 2.

In this connection, it is also to be especially noted that there is a natural affinity between The Essential Embodiment Theory and the theory of enactivism presented by theorists like Evan Thompson and Francisco Varela (Varela, Thompson, and Rosch 1991; Thompson and Varela 2001; Weber and Varela 2002; and Thompson 2007).[10] Their enactivist account centers on the notions of autopoiesis and autonomy, and describes living beings as autonomous agents that actively generate and maintain their own coherent patterns of activity. In simplest terms, *autopoiesis* is the process whereby the constituent processes of living systems "produce the components necessary for the continuance of those same processes" (Thompson 2007, p. 98); and *basic autonomy* is the capacity of a system to manage its own flow of matter and energy so that it can regulate and control both its own internal, self-constructive processes, as well as its

processes of exchange with the environment (Thompson and Stapleton 2009, p. 24). Central to this enactivist view is the notion of *sense-making,* which is the process whereby autopoietic, autonomous living systems create and maintain their own domain of meaningfulness through efforts to maintain and preserve their identity. One striking aspect of living systems is that their patterns of interaction with the environment are inherently bound up with their own viability constraints. A living system has to make sense of the world and supplement itself with what it lacks in order to maintain itself. Sense-making therefore can be understood as the process whereby a living organism interprets environmental stimuli in terms of their "vital significance." The basic idea is that a living organism helps to determine what counts as useful information on the basis of its structure, needs, and the way that it is structurally coupled with its surroundings.

Proponents of enactivism now acknowledge that autopoietic conservation on its own is insufficient for sense-making, and that there must be "some particular way of realizing autopoiesis that admits of graded notions such as lacks and breakdowns" (Di Paolo, 2005, p. 436). It is only by virtue of being *adaptive* that organisms can appreciate their encounters with their surroundings "in a graded and relational manner" (Di Paolo, 2005, p. 439) and regulate their environmental engagement so as to best serve their needs. And what counts as adaptive engagement obviously depends on the structure, form, and capacities of the living body. Along these lines, Thompson (2007) has emphasized that the body that serves as a constituent in sense-making processes is a *living body*, that is, a biological organism that dynamically engages with its environment. In his view, sense-making centrally involves three modes of bodily activity: self-regulation, sensorimotor coupling with the world, and intersubjective interaction (Thompson 2005, p. 408). Likewise, our essential embodiment thesis emphasizes the connection between sense-making and the living body. This thesis has two logically distinct parts:

i. the *necessary* embodiment of conscious minds in a living organism, and
ii. the *complete* neurobiological embodiment of conscious minds in all the vital systems, organs, and processes of our living bodies.

The first part emphasizes the deep continuity between mind and life (Thompson 2007), while the second part emphasizes how mindedness is shaped and structured by the fact of our embodiment. Thus, both enactivism and the essential embodiment theory emphasize the connection between mindedness and the living body. In Chap. 2, we draw on these enactivist ideas to develop an account of habit formation and mind-shaping.

1.1.1 Situated Cognition and Affectivity

Recent work in philosophy of mind has also examined the extent to which mindedness is situated in the surrounding environment. To say that cognition and affectivity are situated is to say that they "[draw] significance from, and [participate] in, wider circles, which engage other cognitive agents and sociocultural institutions through ordinary cognition, language, and social practices" (Kirmayer and Ramstead 2017). There has been a vigorous debate about whether processes occurring within social and cultural institutions partially *constitute* cognitive processes (so that we conceive of the mind as extended), or instead are simply *causal* supports for cognition (in which case, cognition continues to occur only within the organism).

Building on previous work on extended cognition by Andy Clark and David Chalmers (Clark and Chalmers 1998; and Clark 2008b), Shaun Gallagher has argued that the mind is *socially extended* and that many of our judgments emerge only in the context of large and complex institutions. He claims that if we think of the mind as a dynamic process involved in problem-solving and action, then it makes sense to suppose that "we extend our cognitive reach by engaging with tools, technologies, [and] institutions" (Gallagher 2013). It is important to contrast this extended mind thesis with Rupert's (2004) hypothesis of "embedded cognition," which says that "cognitive processes depend very heavily, in hitherto unexpected ways, on organismically external props and devices and on the structure of the external environment in which cognition takes place" (p. 393). Rupert's account holds that there are "complex, cognition-sustaining interactions between organism and environment"

(2004, p. 396) and that the environment can play a crucial role in supporting certain kinds of cognitive processes without partially constituting them.

However, Sterelny's (2010) notion of "scaffolding" sidesteps this debate insofar as it leaves open the question about whether cognition can ever be extended, or rather merely embedded. Because it makes the weaker claim that environmental sources play a crucial role in *causally supporting* cognitive processes, the scaffolded mind thesis is able to avoid many of the objections that have been raised against the extended mind thesis. In addition, the niche-constructivist framework that Sterelny prefers is more general than the extended mind framework. He believes that environmental supports vary in at least three dimensions, each of which is a matter of degree and corresponds to a functional relationship between an environmental resource and an agent. These dimensions are trust, individualism /entrenchment, and collectivity. When we focus on highly trusted, individualized and entrenched, single-user resources, it may turn out that we have an instance of extended cognition. However, this is just one of many ways in which cognition can be environmentally scaffolded.

Sterelny's niche-construction hypothesis says that "many animals intervene in their environment, shaping it in ways that improve the adaptive fit between the agent and the world" (Sterelny 2010, p. 466). For example, animals construct nests, burrows, and dams; and human agents alter the informational character of their environment with the assistance of various tools. By modifying their environment, agents are able to "alter the informational character of their environment in ways that make crucial features more salient" (Sterelny 2010, p. 470). Thus, ants lay scent trails between their nest and food source, and hawks choose a roost that maximizes their view of their hunting territory. This has cross-generational effects in the sense that it reshapes the developmental environment of the next generation. Once the beaver has built a dam, this changes the environment where it lives, which in turn affects the behavior of both the beaver and its offspring. Similarly, as human children develop into mature members of a community, previously established environmental resources structure and amplify their cognitive processes. These "cumulatively provided tools for thinking" might be viewed as cognitive technologies afforded by a culture and include language, arithmetical notation, maps,

road signs, and diagrams. "Technology" in this sense encompasses the knowledge and skills handed down from previous generations, and then further developed by those who inherit this legacy; this practical rationality and skill accompanies and guides productive activity, and thus is enmeshed in the social relations in which people are educated and trained (Burkitt 2002, p. 223).

In what follows, we treat the mind as *socially scaffolded* and *literally shaped by dynamic patterns of essentially embodied activity* rather than socially extended. We believe that our proposed notion of *mind-shaping* captures the basic insight that cognition and affectivity are active and relational, and that they cannot exist or be understood adequately without reference to the social environment. In our view, the essentially embodied mind is best understood as enactively generated via the specific interactions between a minded living organism and its environment, and as deeply embedded in the surrounding world. We hold that people's thoughts, affects, and actions are not merely influenced by social norms and values, but also partially causally determined and shaped by their essentially embodied engagement with surrounding social institutions.

It is not our central goal in this book to undertake a detailed critical discussion of the extended mind thesis. Nonetheless, since this thesis *does* occupy a fairly nearby location in logical and conceptual space, and therefore could be wrongly confused with our view, we must provide at least a preliminary indication of the reasons why we do *not* endorse this outlook, even though we have profited philosophically from studying it.

The extended mind thesis has been widely discussed in the literature and numerous objections have been raised. For example, according to Adams and Aizawa (2009), to suppose that we have a case of extended mind whenever elements of the environment play an active role in driving cognitive or affective processes is to commit the so-called "coupling-constitution" fallacy. Even if elements of the surrounding world play a crucial causal role that must be acknowledged in any adequate explanation, this hardly shows that these elements partially constitute any particular cognitive or affective process. After all, the existence of a cup of coffee cannot be explained adequately without reference to a coffee maker, but this does not mean that the cup of coffee extends. Likewise, to explain an important historical event (e.g., an invasion), we may very

well need to say a great deal about a country's economic conditions, but this does not mean that the economic conditions are constitutive parts of the invasion (Rupert 2004, p. 396). A central question, Rupert (2004) believes, is whether the Hypothesis of Extended Cognition offers superior explanations of the phenomena of interest to cognitive scientists. If it does not, then all other things being equal, we should endorse the Hypothesis of Embedded Cognition over Clark's HEC, "by dint of the methodological principle of conservatism" (p. 395). It is unclear what is to be gained from endorsing the more radical thesis that mindedness can be extended, rather than merely embedded.

From our perspective, however, the most important reason to resist the extended mind thesis is that it is in tension with both the essential embodiment thesis as well as enactivism. Formulated in terms of Clark's parity principle, the extended mind thesis centers on the notion of multiple realizability. This principle says that "if, as we confront some task, a part of the world functions as a process which, were it to go on in the head, we would have no hesitation in accepting it as part of the cognitive process, then that part of the world is (for that time) part of the cognitive process" (Clark 2008b, p. 77). In Clark's view, the specific materiality of the substrate doesn't matter to cognition, outside of the fact that it must be able to support the required functional profile. However, as Shapiro (2004) very persuasively argues, this thesis of "body neutrality" is in tension with the notion that the mind is fully embodied. Notably, Clark (2008a) himself recognizes that that "we cannot stably reconcile functionalism and full sensitivity to details of embodiment."

According to theorists such as Di Paolo (2009) and Colombetti (2015), however, the full embodiment of the mind can be reconciled with the extended mind thesis. We simply need to abandon a functionalist approach to mind and instead approach the questions posed by extended mind theorists from an enactivist perspective. In their view, the non-biochauvinist approach of extended mind theorists usefully complements enactivism's relational view of mentality. According to Di Paolo, for example, it is clear that nothing like an internalist approach to mind is intended by enactivism. What allows certain adaptive, autopoietic systems to be *agents* is their capacity to originate the regulation of structural coupling with the environment (Di Paolo 2009, p. 15). On the enactivist

view, sense-making (cognition) is an embodied engagement that "involves the structuring of the immediate milieu with the consequent building of regularities, which feed back into the organism itself" (Di Paolo 2009, p. 12). And because sense-making is *relational*, there is a sense in which it has no location. According to Di Paolo, such insights fit quite well with the extended mind thesis, which holds that neither the organic brain nor the skin sets a boundary on the vehicles of cognition.

While we agree that sense-making is relational, we believe that the notions of scaffolding and environmental embeddedness are sufficient to capture this insight. It is unclear what explanatory value is gained (Rupert 2004) by making the further claim that mindedness is extended. Moreover, Maiese (2018) has argued that theorists who embrace so-called autopoietic or autonomic enactivism cannot consistently also embrace the extended mind thesis. This is because once one takes seriously the central tenets of enactivism, it becomes implausible to suppose that life and sense-making can extend. According to enactivism, the entities that enact a world of meaning are autonomous, embodied agents with a concerned point of view. Such agents are spatially situated, differentiated from the environment, and intentionally directed towards things that lie *at a distance*. While the extended mind thesis blurs the distinction between organism and environment, the central tenets of enactivism and the essential embodiment thesis emphasize differences between the two. Indeed, the fact that there is a center of sense-making which remains intact across a wide range of intentional engagements with the environment indicates that living organisms are closely coupled with, yet remain separate from, objects in their surroundings. Although sense-making does indeed loop out into the world, it does not stand on its own. Instead, "it requires an entity that is doing the processing" (Baker 2009, p. 646); and whatever "self-stimulating loops of interaction with worldly materials" (Colombetti and Roberts 2015, p. 1248) take place must, on the enactivist view, be driven by a living body that remains distinct from those materials. And given how enactivism emphasizes that an organism constitutes and affirms its identity by *differentiating* itself from its surroundings, proponents of this approach should investigate the ways in which sense-making is *shaped* by environmental resources without being partially constituted by them.

As we noted previously, Robert Rupert's (2004, 2009) ideas about "embedding" and Kim Sterelny's (2010) notion of "scaffolding" are somewhat similar to our mind-shaping thesis in that they also—

i. are committed to partial-determination-style, or *shaping*, theses,[11] and
ii. emphasize our entanglement with social institutions.

One crucial difference between them and us, however, is that their views are purely causal and reductive-materialist or physicalist, whereas our view is not. Sharply on the contrary, we argue in Chap. 2 that mind-shaping is not merely *causal,* but also *irreducibly normative.* There we draw on insights from contemporary autonomic enactivism, leaving aside the questionable further commitment to the extended mind thesis made by many of its proponents.

Another important contrast between our view and those of at least some enactivists is our explicit willingness to combine insights from enactivism with a robust metaphysics of the mind-body relation; with philosophical anthropology—and in particular, with what Hanna calls *rational anthropology*; with an equally robust metaphysics of free will, practical agency, and persons; with an existentially-oriented moral philosophy; and with radical political philosophy (Hanna 2018a; Hanna 2018b; Hanna 2018c; Hanna 2018d). So, if the worry of these enactivists is that a "naturalistic" approach to human beings, when taken together with robust metaphysics, philosophical anthropology, existentially-oriented moral philosophy, and radical political philosophy, might somehow necessarily lead to a *reductive* or *scientistic* naturalism about human beings, then their worries are quite unfounded. Our approach, which is consistently and explicitly a version of *liberal* naturalism, is thoroughly *non-reductive* and *anti-scientistic*, while still being *pro-science*. It says that primitive mental properties and primitive normative properties are essentially included along with primitive physical properties at the basic level of nature, and also that (to quote Nagel 2012, p. 17) "rational intelligibility is at the root of the natural order."

For obvious reasons of space-economy, and also in order to avoid redundancy across books, we will not undertake to re-present or re-defend The Essential Embodiment Theory here. At the same time, we

will presuppose the truth of its six central theses, as having already been sufficiently elaborated and justified in *Embodied Minds in Action*, in order to use them for our present philosophical purposes. To orient readers looking specifically for that elaboration and justification, however, we will also indicate the relevant corresponding chapters or sections of *Embodied Minds in Action* whenever we are drawing or relying on that material.

1.2 Emancipatory Political Theory

As we noted above, *The Mind-Body Politic* is not only a study in the philosophy of mind, but also a study in radical, emancipatory political theory, drawing on Kant's theory of enlightenment, Schiller's aesthetic extension of Kant's enlightenment theory, Kierkegaard's existentialism, early Marx's existential humanism, Foucault's insights about governmentality, Frankfurt School Critical theory, and Hanna's *Kant, Agnosticism, and Anarchism*. For our purposes in this book, here is what we understand by those doctrines.

Kant's theory of enlightenment says that in order to liberate ourselves from our own self-imposed rational, moral, and political immaturity, we must dare to think and act autonomously, both as individuals and also publicly or relationally, under the guidance of individually and multiply self-legislated universal ethical principles that require sufficient respect for human dignity. Such respect entails *never* treating anyone, including ourselves, *either* as mere instrumental means to self-interested ends or collective happiness *or* as mere things, hence as non-persons.

Schiller's aesthetic extension of Kant's enlightenment theory says that the life-process of liberating ourselves from our own self-imposed rational, moral, and political immaturity, and daring to think and act autonomously, is neither merely an *intellectual* process (which Schiller dubs the "formal drive" or *Formtrieb*), nor merely a *sensory* process (which he dubs the "sensible drive" or *Sinnestrieb*). Instead, by way of reconciling, harmonizing, and transcending the other two processes, the emergence of human autonomy is fundamentally a *creative, playful process* (which Schiller dubs the "play drive" or *Spieltrieb*) of developing one's capacities

for meaningful self-expression, the appreciation of beauty and other aesthetic qualities, artistic production, feeling, and emotion.

Kierkegaard's existentialism says that our recognition of universal ethical principles must be combined with fundamental spiritual values in the radical absence of certainty about God's existence or non-existence, and freely worked out by the individual herself over the course of her entire life. All the while, the individual must be guided by the ideal of authenticity, according to which "purity of heart is to will one thing."

Early Marx's existential humanism says that the alienating "commodification" (instrumentalization and mechanization) of all aspects of human life under the system of large-scale capitalism can be overcome only by self-liberating, self-realizing activity in which all laborers or workers freely create and control both the means of production and its products.

Foucault's work on "governmentality" says that any government's techniques for coercing and controlling individuals are tied to the ways those individuals monitor and control themselves, aka "subjectivation." More specifically, self-shaping practices of subjectivation consist of "processes through which the self is constructed or modified by himself" (Foucault 1993, pp. 203–204), so as to sustain particular behaviors, namely those coercively compelled or "nudged" within specific power structures and social institutions. By internalizing norms that impede overall human flourishing, a subject "becomes the principle of his own subjection" (Hamann 2009, p. 51).

Frankfurt School Critical theory says that an essential preliminary to the full recovery of our seriously-diminished capacities for autonomous rational agency in the modern world, including the liberation of our aesthetic and affective (that is, sensible, desiring, and emotional) selves, is our self-conscious, reflective awareness of the pathological impact of the multifarious systems of ideology and thought-control in advanced capitalist states. These toxic arrangements include totalitarian fascist state-capitalist systems, totalitarian communist state-capitalist systems, and all neoliberal nation-states, whether democratic or non-democratic.

And finally, in *Kant, Agnosticism, and Anarchism*, Hanna uses Kant's eighteenth century philosophical ideas, together with nineteenth and twentieth century social anarchist (aka anarcho-socialist) doctrines, especially those developed by Peter Kropotkin, in order to develop a

contemporary *Kantian radically agnostic* doctrine in the philosophy of religion, philosophical theology, and real-world spirituality, and also a contemporary *existential Kantian cosmopolitan social anarchist* doctrine in political philosophy and real-world politics (Hanna 2018d).

By "emancipatory political theory," then, we mean any political theory that promotes and sustains—

i. *a critical consciousness* about ourselves and our basic relationships to social institutions,
ii. *a cognitive and practical resistance* to destructive, deforming institutions, and
iii. *a radically enlightened self-education that is at once intellectual, moral, aesthetic, affective, religious/spiritual, and existential,* via our collective creation of, and individual engagement with, constructive, enabling institutions.

More specifically, we believe that *the enactive-transformative principle* should be directly deployed in service of our critical consciousness, cognitive and practical resistance, and radically enlightened self-education. So this book is an attempt to renew and extend radically enlightened, existentially-informed, emancipatory philosophical projects in the tradition of Kant, Schiller, Kierkegaard, early Marx, Kropotkin, Foucault, and the Frankfurt School, in the context of contemporary philosophy of mind.

* * *

In the coming chapters, we apply ideas from philosophy of mind and emancipatory political theory to the concrete, real-world context of higher education and mental health practice as they exist in contemporary neoliberal democratic societies. This raises a question about our choice of case studies. No doubt there are a wide array of social institutions and ideologies that adversely mold human thought, feeling, and action, so why focus on higher education, mental health, and neoliberalism? Part of the rationale is pragmatic: because higher education and mental health are two social institutions of which we have extensive background knowledge, it seemed sensible to focus on what we know

best in our case studies. But in addition to that, in the contemporary world, education and mental health care are two ubiquitously influential social institutions whereby *all* human subjectivity is formed, and whereby *all* people learn what is expected of them as responsible and well-functioning members of society. Therefore, these social institutions provide especially striking examples of how neoliberalism exerts a powerful mind-shaping influence.

But why focus on neoliberalism, rather than sexism, racism, ableism, xenophobia or some other ideology that adversely molds human subjectivity? In a nutshell, *we believe that neoliberal ideology has become part of the contemporary world's "common sense" and is now regarded by the vast majority of people in democratic and non-democratic societies alike to be the most "natural" way of viewing the world and human existence*. Along these lines, what Mark Fisher (2009) calls "capitalist realism" is "the widespread sense that not only is capitalism the only viable political and economic system, but also that it is now impossible even to *imagine* a coherent alternative" (p. 2). Fisher maintains that for most people, in fact, it is easier to imagine the end of the world than it is to imagine the end of capitalism.

Indeed, neoliberal ways of thinking, feeling, speaking, and acting have become so ingrained that they typically are accepted unreflectively and without question, even for scholars who have devoted their careers to studying the harmful impact of *other* toxic ideologies. This suggests that many highly intelligent people simply have not given sufficient thought to the harmful influence of neoliberalism in all its guises, nor critically considered the extent to which this ideology *hegemonically* sways the way in which they think, feel, speak, and act. As a result, this mindset "has stealthily crept into the consciousness of many people" (van der Walt 2017, p. 2), including those working in the fields of education or mental health care. What is more, these attitudes have gained such a strong grip and become so thoroughly internalized that in all likelihood they will continue to exert a significant residual influence even *after* someone has subjected them to serious critical scrutiny. In this book, then, we hope to shed critical light on a set of ideas and assumptions that shape the lives and minds of people living in contemporary neoliberal societies, in order thereby to gain a better critical understanding of how

social forces can exert such a powerful influence; to present a constructive strategy for counteracting this influence; and finally but by no means least, to demonstrate the life- and world-changing potentials of political philosophy of mind.

Notes

1. There are, of course, other concepts of democracy, for example, democracy as *an open social process*, or democracy as *a commitment to certain moral values such human dignity, autonomy, mutual aid, and ending human oppression*. And these concepts of democracy are each logically independent of one another, even if consistent. But democracy as *majoritarian, representative rule* suffices as a minimalist conception.
2. See, for example, Slaby (2016a, 2016b); Slaby et al. (2017); Slaby and Gallagher (2014); and Gallagher (2013).
3. See, for example, Kant (1996, 17–220); and Kant (1979, part 1, section 2, pp. 43–47).
4. See, for example, Horkheimer (1947); Marcuse (1964); Geuss (1981); Hartmann and Honneth (2006); and Honneth (2009). See also Mills (1956/2000).
5. In *Consciousness Reconsidered*, Owen Flanagan describes and recommends what he calls "the natural method," which uses Rawlsian reflective equilibrium to triangulate phenomenology, cognitive psychology, and neuroscience (1992, pp. 11–20). Our methodological triad intersects with Flanagan's on phenomenology, but, following various unifying tendencies in the sciences of the mind over the last 25 years, we also combine cognitive psychology and neuroscience into a single empirical science of the mind, *cognitive and affective neuroscience*, and assign it to one corner of the triangle. Moreover, as against Flanagan's Quinean radical empiricist, broadly pragmatist tendencies, we also reserve the third corner for classical a priori philosophical reasoning, both analytic and synthetic.
6. For simplicity's sake, we leave aside classical *idealism*, which holds that the physical asymmetrically ontologically depends on the mental. Ironically enough, classical idealists like Berkeley, and subjective or phenomenal idealists more generally, in covert agreement with materialists or physicalists, are *also* committed to Cartesian Fundamentalism. It

should also be noted that Kantian *transcendental* idealism, Hegelian *absolute* idealism, and *panpsychism*, although all importantly related to classical idealism, are *metaphysically different kettles of fish* that we will leave aside too, again for simplicity's sake.

7. On the concept of supervenience and the standard distinction between "logical" supervenience and "natural" or "nomological" supervenience, see Kim (1993); and Chalmers (1996).
8. See note 7 above.
9. See, for example, Clark and Chalmers (1998); Clark (2008b); and Gallagher (2011).
10. Other varieties of enactivism include "sensorimotor enactivism" (O'Regan and Noë 2001; Noë 2004), which centers on the way in which perception rests on knowledge of sensorimotor contingencies; "radical enactivism" (Hutto 2011; Hutto and Myin 2013), which characterizes basic cognition as non-representational and constituted by situated organismic activity; and "computational enactivism," which centers on predictive processing and the free energy principle (Kirchoff 2016; Kirchoff and Froese 2017; Ramstead et al. 2017).
11. Unlike Rupert's view and our view, however, Sterelny's view does not rule out the possibility of genuine instances of mind-extension.

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2

Three Theses Unpacked: Mind-Shaping, Collective Sociopathy, and Collective Wisdom

In the mid-nineteenth century, Karl Marx wrote this:

> [W]e do not set out from what people say, imagine, or conceive, nor from what has been said, thought, imagined, or conceived of human beings, in order to arrive at humanity in the flesh. We begin with real, active human beings, and from their real life-process show the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process…. Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life. (Marx 1964, p. 75)

We fully agree with Marx here. As we pointed out in Chap. 1, in this book we are accepting one basic thesis from our earlier work, and then arguing for three new basic theses and one basic principle that expresses the conjunction of the three basic theses, as follows—

1. Human minds are necessarily and completely embodied (*the essential embodiment thesis*).
2. Essentially embodied minds are *neither* merely brains *nor* over-extended "extended minds," yet all social institutions saliently constrain, frame, and *partially determine* the social-dynamic patterns of our essentially embodied consciousness, self-consciousness, affect,

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cognition, individual action, mutual interaction, and thus our individual and collective agency. That is, *they literally shape our essentially embodied minds*, and thereby *fundamentally affect our lives*, for worse or better—mostly without our self-conscious awareness (*the mind-shaping thesis*).

3. *Many or even most* social institutions in contemporary neoliberal nation-states literally shape our essentially embodied minds, and thereby our lives, in such a way as to alienate us, mentally enslave us, or even undermine our mental health, to a greater or lesser degree (*the destructive Gemeinschaft/collective sociopathy thesis*).
4. Nevertheless, *some* social institutions, working against the grain of standard, dystopian social institutions in contemporary neoliberal nation-states, can make it really possible for us to self-realize, connect with others in a mutually aiding way, liberate ourselves, and be mentally healthy, authentic, and deeply happy *(the constructive Gemeinschaft/collective wisdom thesis*).

The enactive-transformative principle:

> Enacting salient or even radical changes in the structure and complex dynamics of a social institution produces corresponding salient or even radical changes in the structure and dynamics of the essentially embodied minds of the people belonging to, participating in, or falling under the jurisdiction of, that institution, thereby fundamentally affecting their lives, for worse or better.

What we want to do in this chapter is to unpack each of three new theses (i.e., 2.-4.) more carefully, and also to offer some preliminary considerations, both empirical and philosophical, in support of each.

2.1 The Mind-Shaping Thesis

Let us suppose that it is true, as we argued in Chap. 1, that the mind of a minded human animal constitutively extends to the limits of its living organismic body, but no further. Moreover, let us suppose that it is also

true, as Donne so profoundly meant to say by writing "no man is an island," that we are necessarily *social beings*, which is to say that we are necessarily *social minded human animals*. And finally, let us suppose that it is also true, as C. Wright Mills put it, that

> [t]he kind of moral and psychological beings men become is in large part determined by the values they experience and the institutional roles they are allowed and expected to play…. Although men sometimes shape institutions, institutions always select and form men.

Then it is entirely reasonable to hold that our essentially embodied minds are *partially determined*, and *literally shaped*, by the social institutions we belong to, participate in, or fall under the jurisdiction of, in contemporary neoliberal societies.

More precisely, however, just what does *The Mind-Shaping Thesis* mean? And can we provide a preliminary indication of its truth?

2.1.1 Its Meaning

By a "partial determination" and "literal shaping" of our essentially embodied minds by something *X*, we mean that *X* affects us, and thereby has an influence on us, as minded human animals, in a salient, significant way that is at once—

i. causal,
ii. itself partially determined and literally shaped by means of complex dynamic, self-reflexive feedback-loops, and
iii. irreducibly normative.

What is *causal influence*? We hold that *X* has a *causal influence* upon *Y* just in case:

i. *X* has some sort of necessary, efficacious role to play in the production, at a time, or over time, of some mental or physical properties of or facts about *Y* (*causal necessity and efficacy*),

ii. there is some sort of iterable or general, distinctively rule-like or law-like connection governing the production of *Y*-properties or *Y*-facts by *X* (*causal lawfulness*), and
iii. had *X* not existed, then those *Y*-properties or *Y*-facts would not have existed (*causal counterfactual control*).

Furthermore, we hold that something *X* is itself partially determined and literally shaped *by means of complex dynamic, self-reflexive feedback-loops* just in case:

> *X*'s characteristic properties and facts are partially determined and shaped reciprocally by our own active and reactive contributions and responses to *X*, according to complex dynamic patterns of action and reaction in the real natural and social world that surrounds us and *X*.

So far, this account of "partial determination" or "shaping" is quite similar to Rupert's (2004, 2009) hypothesis of "embedded cognition" as well Sterelny's (2010) notion of "scaffolding," both of which emphasize that natural and social environmental resources can play a crucial role in supporting and sustaining certain kinds of cognitive processes. To suppose that cognition is embedded or scaffolded is to regard natural and social environmental dependence as "*immediate* and *active*" (Stephan et al. 2014, p. 71), and as crucial for the continuation of those processes. If this general outlook is correct, then there are important feedback loops between living agents and their natural and social environment, and "we can properly understand the traditional subject's cognitive processes only by taking into account how the agent exploits the surrounding environment to carry out her cognitive work" (Rupert 2004, p. 395).

However, these accounts face several limitations.

First, while both Rupert and Sterelny focus exclusively on cognition, there is good reason to think that natural and social environmental resources also support and amplify human affective capabilities. What Giovanna Colombetti and Joel Krueger (2015) call "affective niches" are "instances of organism-environment couplings (mutual influences) that enable the realization of specific affective states" (p. 4).

Second, it is important to emphasize that natural and social environmental resources have the potential not only to support and positively contribute to cognitive and affective processes, but also to *distort* these processes.

Third, neither Rupert nor Sterelny examines the *irreducibly normative* aspect of the causal contribution made by the natural and social environment. What is *irreducible normativity*? We hold that something *X* is *irreducibly normative* just in case—

i. *X* directly concerns or expresses human evaluative standards, ideals, codes of conduct, and/or imperatives (normativity), and
ii. *X* cannot be adequately explained by anything that is not itself already normative (irreducibility).

So in defending the mind-shaping thesis, we are working with three key ideas: first, that the natural and social environment influences both our essentially embodied cognitive and affective processes in a way that fundamentally pre-formats and molds the complex dynamic contours of our minded animal lives; second, that it can do so in either beneficial or detrimental ways; and third, that this natural and social environmental influence is irreducibly normative.

Note that our mind-shaping thesis is *metaphysically stronger than* a mere "causation thesis" but also *metaphysically weaker than* a "constitution thesis," and thus it splits the metaphysical difference between those two theses. That is, for us, feedback and irreducible normativity, together with literal shaping/partial determination, make the salient metaphysical difference between mere causation and constitution. This is because, on the one hand, there can be causally identical systems with inherently different kinds of feedback and irreducible normativity (this is what contemporary metaphysicians would call the "non-supervenience" of feedback and irreducible normativity on physical causation—see Hanna and Maiese 2009; Hanna 2015); and on the other hand, given what we have called the "spontaneity of consciousness" (Hanna and Maiese 2009; Hanna 2018), no social institution completely determines either the phenomenal characters or the intentional contents of our conscious minds, or our intentional actions. Rather, individuals and social institutions are tightly coupled; a social

institution exerts normative constraints on minded animals that partially determines their patterns of behavior and attention; but each conscious subject has the potential to resist these influences and to act so as to reshape that social institution and its corresponding "rules," and thus each subject's behavior over time is not fully determined by the social institution. Instead, minded animals are in a relationship of dynamic reciprocal causation with the social institutions they inhabit.

2.1.2 Enactivism, Affective Framing, and Habits

In order to develop these ideas, we look to insights from *enactivism*. As articulated by theorists like Thompson and Varela, enactivism depicts cognition as a capacity of autonomous, adaptive living organisms, and asks us to trade in a Cartesian view of mind in favor of a more Aristotelian view that emphasizes the *biological* character of mentality (Hutto 2011, p. 45). Enactivism says that a living animal does not simply passively receive and process stimuli from an external world, but rather actively participates in the creation of meaning. Cognition, or what Thompson (2007) calls *sense-making,* is a process of ongoing sensorimotor engagement between a living organism and its surroundings. In order to regulate and sustain themselves, living organisms must continuously exchange matter and energy with the environment. What counts as a useful resource depends on their structure, needs, and the way that they are structurally coupled with their surroundings. Physical and chemical phenomena in and of themselves therefore have no particular significance, but rather take on meaning only to the extent that they relate positively or negatively to the "norm of the maintenance of the organism's integrity" (Thompson 2007, p. 70). By defining itself and distinguishing between self and world, "the organism creates a perspective which changes the world from a neutral place to an *Umwelt* that always means something in relation to the organism" (Weber and Varela 2002, p. 188). This is because a living, striving being needs to be open and sensitive to what is conducive to its survival and well-being. However, what is conducive to survival and well-being is context-sensitive and agent-relative, and thus very much a matter of an organism's current predicament, concerns, embodied feelings, emotions, and passions.

The discriminative capacity that allows a living organism to monitor and regulate itself with respect to its conditions of viability is cognitive, to be sure; but at the same time, it is an *affective-evaluative* capacity that involves the living organism being "affected or struck by the suitability of an event for its own purposes" (Colombetti 2014, p. 19). This suggests that sense-making is simultaneously world-directed (intentional) and affective, that input from the world is organized in terms of a subject's needs, interests, and capacities, and that cognition and affectivity are thoroughly intertwined and interdependent. In our earlier books—especially *Embodied Minds in Action* (Hanna and Maiese 2009), *Embodiment, Emotions, and Cognition* (Maiese 2011), and *Embodied Selves and Divided Minds* (Maiese 2015)—we have drawn attention to the affective quality of bodily sensitivity and sense-making and maintained that sense-making is possible only insofar as meaning and personal significance are conveyed *in-and-through-the-body*. Following but also extending Heidegger, we hold that our essentially embodied capacities for *cognitive, affective, and practical intentionality*, aka "care," is what allows us to apprehend the world "as a significant whole, an arena of possible projects, goals, and purposes" (Ratcliffe 2000, p. 289). More precisely, we have proposed that the modes of sense-making and appraisal found in minded animals should be understood in terms of *affective framing*.

One way to characterize an affective frame is as "affective mode of presentation" whereby "significant events or states of affairs [are] disclosed through diffuse, holistic bodily feelings" (Slaby 2008, p. 437). Affective framing is a spontaneous, non-inferential, and pre-reflective way of discriminating, filtering, and selecting information that allows us to reduce the overwhelming clutter of information to something first-personally manageable and confer upon it specific cognitive significance. As we navigate our way through the world, we do not process all of the stimuli and information that are potentially available; instead, affect draws our attention to specific features of our surroundings and implies a "dynamic gestalt or figure-ground structure" whereby "some objects emerge into affective prominence, while others become unnoticeable" (Thompson 2007, p. 374). While the brain clearly plays a crucial role in selective attention, affective framing is best understood as distributed over a complex network of brain and bodily processes; it engages not just the brain,

but also metabolic systems, the endocrine system, the musculoskeletal system, and the cardiovascular system.

The cognitively- and practically-engaged, felt, desiderative, and emotional interpretations that constitute affective framing are physically grounded in "organismic processes of self-regulation aimed at sustaining and enhancing adaptive autonomy in the face of perturbing environmental events" (Thompson and Stapleton 2009, p. 27). Affective framing selectively attunes the organism to its environment and allows it immediately to appraise the relevance of particular factors in light of its own particular needs, body size, ways of moving, and current situational factors (Dreyfus 2007, p. 265). Affective framing patterns thus can be understood as "emergent features of the whole complex system (animal or person) as it enacts an emotional interpretation" (Colombetti and Thompson 2008, p. 59). Such framing is crucial for survival insofar as it is a means of focusing attention that allows living organisms to deal with the complexity of the surrounding world. The basic idea, as most fully worked out in Maiese's *Embodiment, Emotions, and Cognition*, is that selective attunement to the environment operates at the level of pre-reflective bodily consciousness, so that the animal makes sense of its surrounding *through* its affectively aroused body. Once appraisal is understood as distributed over a complex network of brain and bodily processes, and as thoroughly corporeal, sense-making can be characterized as a matter of active engagement on the part of the *whole embodied and situated living animal*.

Of course, detecting relevance and significance in complex social settings goes well beyond mere survival and self-maintenance, and has much to do with *adapting* and *faring well* in a specific socio-cultural context. Among complex human animals with sophisticated nervous systems, engagement with the environment takes on an especially sophisticated form, such that they develop a concerned point of view. Objects of desire and need that are placed at a distance in space and time are conceptualized as "goals," pursuit of which requires coordinated movement and leads to the formation of enduring patterns of engagement and response. Associated bodily feelings of "grabbiness" serve to focus their attention and highlight those features that are most relevant, given their specific cares and concerns.[1] Over the course of learning and socialization, human subjects

thereby become selectively attuned to particular aspects of their surroundings, develop a concerned point of view, and begin to exhibit recurring patterns of bodily expressivity and response. Protevi (2009) uses the term 'political affect' to capture all the various ways "in which a body is patterned by the social system into which it is acculturated" (p. 32). Like Protevi, we think that the notion of *habits* is central here, and look to insights from philosophy of mind and psychology to investigate the nature of habit-formation.

In this connection, Ezequiel Di Paolo (2005) describes a kind of self-sustaining, self-generating dynamic form in animal behavior and in neural and bodily activity that is reflected in postural habits, perceptual invariants, and organized action. Likewise, Tom Froese and Di Paolo (2011) hold that cognition involves "the adaptive preservation of a dynamical network of autonomous sensorimotor structures sustained by continuous interactions with the environment" (p. 18). These autonomous structures (habits) encompass parts of the nervous system, physiological and structural systems of the body, and patterns of behavior and attention. As living creatures operating in a complicated environment, we cannot exist without habits: "the lenses through which we perceive, interpret, and experience the world necessarily have habitual sediments" (Kennedy 2012, p. 424).

Through the formation of habits, a subject acquires bodily know-how and a specific style of being. As Bourdieu (1977) describes it, the habitus encompasses "a way of walking, a tilt of the head, facial expressions, ways of sitting and using implements, always associated with a tone of voice, a style of speech, and (how could it be otherwise?) a certain subjective experience" (p. 87). This particular manner of engaging with others and with the world "emerges from the body's capacities, from habituated expressive postures, and ways of feeling, thinking, acting, and responding to others" (Käll and Zeiler 2014, p. 112). Relatedly, Maxine Sheets-Johnstone (2011) describes how, over the course of learning to move our bodies, we forged a large number of dynamic patterns that became habitual. For example, brushing one's teeth, tying a knot, and writing one's name all were woven into our bodies as familiar dynamics, and came to "bear the stamp of our own qualitatively felt movement patterns, our own familiar synergies of meaningful movement" (Sheets-Johnstone

2011, p. 160). Developing a similar line of reasoning, Colombetti (2014) describes emotional expression as a "coordinative structure" and holds that "adult expressions can be characterized as relatively recurrent and fixed patterns whose specific shape has been carved in development as certain structures occurred more frequently" (p. 62). This includes breathing patterns, facial expressions, postures, and characteristic gestures, which together form a subject's emotional comportment and patterns of bodily attunement.

Correspondingly, then, we maintain that these self-sustaining, dynamic structures and "highly integrated configurations" can and should be understood as affective framing patterns, and that they allow for the synergies of meaningful movement and response that Sheets-Johnstone describes. Over time, these characteristic patterns of behavior, response, and attention[2] become more ingrained and play a significant role in shaping a subject's customary manner of engagement and sense-making. Merleau-Ponty (1962) uses the Husserlian notion of intentional "sedimentation" to describe how past experience can feed into, form, and constrain our modes of bodily engagement with the world: once an attitude toward the world has been adopted frequently, it acquires a favored status for us (p. 441). Sedimented affective framing patterns constitute a subject's particular *bodily-affective style* or *temperament*; and they comprise "a form or structure of comportment, a perceptual and motor attunement to the world" (Thompson 2007, p. 80), whereby an organism shapes its world into a meaningful domain.

Over time, different elements of the musculoskeletal system become "entrained" and exhibit particular configurations that depend on both external and internal constraints. Biology, developmental factors, and environmental influences all play a role in shaping a subject's neurobiological patterns and range of responses. The ability to learn from prior experience and the establishment of patterns of attention and response that have proved effective in the past help subjects to adapt and fare well in their surroundings. In creatures that are sufficiently neurobiologically complex, these highly integrated patterns of behavior and response become quite extensive and sophisticated; and they not only constrain and modulate behavior, but also allow for new forms of coordinated activity that were not possible before.

Everyday examples of highly coordinated activity include: dance, sport, driving a car, using tools and technology, social engagement, and working together with others to achieve a task (Mühlhoff and Slaby 2017). The execution of these tasks involves a corresponding complex dynamical network of affective framing patterns embodying concerns surrounding survival and adaptivity, as well as concerns "that are not immediately related to ongoing physiological or environmental events" (Froese and Di Paolo 2011, p. 18). For example, a subject driving a car may be concerned not just about avoiding car accidents, but also about having others think he or she is a competent driver. This is to say that the formation of affective framing patterns over the course of growth, development, and ongoing interaction with the environment results in values and purposes not directly linked to brute survival, so that the development of such patterns constitutes "a novel process of identity generation underdetermined by metabolism" (Di Paolo 2009, p. 52). Indeed, as noted previously, many of the cares and concerns that lend shape and contour to human subjects' affective framing patterns, and thus to their essentially embodied minds, concern *faring well* in a particular social and cultural environment. Habits and values, in the form of affective framing patterns, emerge out of the dynamics associated with the self-production and self-regulation of living systems; but once formed, they qualify as autonomous structures that assume a life of their own.

As Di Paolo (2005) notes, "cultural interaction provides the foundation for cumulatively building on previous more or less viable ways of living" (p. 28), and this is because engagement with a culture gives rise to more developed affective framing patterns and habits that equip human subjects to meet the demands of the interpersonal and cultural sphere in which they are situated. Humans acquire their habits of mind in conditions set by prior customs, that is, institutionalized sets of activities; and these customs tend to persist because each generation is brought up under the conditions of previous ones (Burkitt 2002, p. 227). The reproduction of habits across time thus depends on the network of social relations in which individuals are embedded. Through "training" provided by socialization, individuals develop the habits, capacities, and skills that mark them out as members of a particular social and cultural group. As Dewey (1922) rightly notes, habits are socially acquired responses, formed under

the influence of other people, which we come to amass over the course of a lifetime. And Bourdieu's account of the habitus even more heavily stresses social influences. He holds that the individual, family, school, and state are all embedded within a still larger social system, and that all of these subsystems mutually influence one another. By way of habit formation, the minded body becomes "charged with a host of social meanings and values" (Bourdieu 1977, p. 87).

Many of the habits developed within social institutions can be understood as bodily skills. Artists, artisans, musicians, and athletes all undergo thorough training to acquire the necessary "movement repertoire" and learn how to use particular tools. What Thomas Buhrmann and Di Paolo (2015) call "sensorimotor coordinations" are particular sensorimotor patterns that an agent reliably uses to perform a task, and which depend on that agent's environment, body, and context. But in addition to habits associated with handling a tool, painting a picture, or driving a car, social institutions also encourage the development of specific habits of interpretation and judgment. Such *habits of mind* encompass schemas for interacting and engaging with one's environment, and include, for example, a tendency to notice particular features of people and events while ignoring others; to ascribe status and authority to some people while discounting the views of others; and to trust some sources of evidence while remaining suspicious of others. In addition, some social institutions inculcate specific habits of judging, reasoning, and weighing evidence (Dewey 1916, chap. 4). Along these lines, Shaun Gallagher and Anthony Crisafi (2009) describe how our cognitive systems are enmeshed with and enabled by "mental institutions" such as legal systems and scientific practice. In the case of legal systems, jurists, judges, and lawyers rely on principles, precedents, and procedures as a set of tools that can help them to resolve disputes. As a result, they do not have to think through cases alone, but rather can build upon others' previous cognitive work. Likewise, the scientific community's practice of sharing and comparing theories and hypotheses provides scientists with cognitive resources and tools to build upon and modify scientific research.

Our cognitive systems also are enmeshed with and enabled by various normative practices. What Rietveld and Kiverstein (2014) call "situated normativity" encompasses norms of adequacy and inadequacy associated

with particular sociocultural settings. As children engage with particular aspects of the environment, their performance is subject to normative assessment as better or worse, and as more or less correct given the specific demands of the situation. Many of these demands are sociocultural in origin. As a child attempts to name various colors, for example, she receives feedback about the appropriateness of her responses, and thereby acquires a "feel" for which uses are acceptable and which are not. Which color names are better or worse, correct or incorrect, and adequate or inadequate depends in part of the specific, concrete material setting in which color naming takes place (Rietveld and Kiverstein 2014, p. 332). Whereas a more coarse-grained categorization may be appropriate and optimal when it comes to traffic signs, for example, clothing and home décor may call out for a more nuanced naming of particular shades. What counts as adequate-color naming will vary, of course, depending on the specific society and culture, and this is because adequacy depends partly on agreement with what other members of a sociocultural practice do. Along similar lines, the child will learn to care about the "right things" and to focus her attention on some facts and considerations rather than others; she thereby acquires the concerns of her community, so that she cares about the things that they care about and focuses her attention accordingly. And when she fails to do so, she will receive feedback that alerts her to this. She will, for example, be corrected, scolded, or formally sanctioned, and also encouraged to adjust her attitudes and behavior. Social norms thereby provide a framework within which we form values, attitudes, and desires, think thoughts, and execute intentions.

What Buhrmann and Di Paolo (2015) call "sensorimotor strategies" or "schemes" are organizations of several sensorimotor coordinations—bodily habits—that typically are deployed against the backdrop of some normative framework, for example, considerations of efficiency. Likewise, clusters of habits of mind can be understood as "frames of reference" that "selectively shape and delimit our perception, cognition, and feelings and come to serve as the point of view from which we construe meaning" (Mezirow 2009, p. 92). What Bourdieu (1977) calls the "socially informed body" encompasses tastes and distastes, a sense of reality, a sense of beauty, a sense of responsibility, a sense of absurdity, a sense of humor, and a sense of what's practical. Such habits of mind serve as the backdrop

against which all of our everyday sense-making and interpretations unfold, including highly complex cognitive processes. Consider, for example, how many philosophers develop the habit of presenting their arguments as syllogisms, or how scientists are trained to formulate hypotheses and value "objectivity." Or, consider how in forming a judgment about a statement, someone might have a disposition to critically examine it and its assumptions in relation to existing data; this could be understood as a habit of reflective thinking.

Both sensorimotor schemes and habits of mind clearly require the contribution of cultural and contextual factors, and develop via learning and enculturation, so that a subject's "existing repertoire of sensorimotor schemes is modulated or transformed over time such as to address new behavioral challenges" (Buhrmann and Di Paolo 2015). What is more, agents often are involved in regulating their own coupling with the environment so as to influence the formation of particular sensorimotor schemes—for example, they may arrange their work environment or structure their tasks so as to encourage certain habits and patterns of attention deemed especially good and praiseworthy in that social institution (Mühlhoff and Slaby 2017). Arranging their work environment in this way may allow them to carry out their tasks more effectively, and also solicit particular thinking patterns. As Cash (2010) points out, "our institutions, our languages, and the very cognitive and normative practices within which we cognize have been shaped by us to make cognition easier, and they have, in turn, shaped the cognitive abilities that language-enabled humans possess" (p. 664).

Such observations illustrate that the development of affective framing patterns is an ongoing, largely collective matter that is based on shared normative practices. Importantly, the relationship between affective framings and normative practices is reciprocal. In Chap. 1, we said that according our view, something *X* is itself partially determined or shaped *by means of complex dynamic, self-reflexive feedback-loops* just in case:

> *X*'s characteristic properties and facts are partially determined and shaped reciprocally by our own active and reactive contributions and responses to *X*, according to complex dynamic patterns of action and reaction in the real natural and social world that surrounds us and *X*.

An essentially embodied minded animal subject is not only shaped by the social world, but also helps to shape the social environment through her active, reactive, and interactive contributions and responses. This means that individual behavior and patterns of attention are both anchored in, and contribute to, these shared normative practices. When people accept prevailing norms and sanction or encourage particular kinds of behavior, they thereby reinforce those practices and norms. Individuals begin to comport themselves jointly in ways that are conducive to the smooth operation of the social domain in question, and through the broad participation of many different individuals, "meaning is enacted collectively and in line with the functioning principles" and values of that particular social institution (Slaby 2016, p. 17).

In this connection, the habitual body, which we take to be constituted by affective framing patterns, has a two-fold structure.

On the one hand, affective framings bring us into immediate relation with the world and provide us with possibilities for perceiving, engaging with, and responding to our surroundings. Both "sensorimotor coordinations" and habits of mind gain their effectiveness—their ability to bring us into various settings as effective agents—by virtue of the fact that we have developed particular ways of being in the world that are "on tap" and ready to use in an instant (Proctor 2016, p. 254). Because they integrate past experience and dynamically guide our actions and perceptions, they make possible "the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks" (Bourdieu 1977, p. 95). Thus, habits should not be understood as rigid or mechanical responses, but rather in terms of a situation-sensitive, flexible, and adjustable ability to engage with the world (Standal and Aggerholm 2016, pp. 272–273). The affective framings that comprise the habitual body give us a sense of familiarity and ease, provide us with ways of engaging with the world that can be used in multiple contexts, and render us capable of spontaneous action. Along these lines, Wheeler (2005) describes engagement with the world as an ongoing adaptive process with continuous action-oriented perception. A creature displays "online intelligence" when it produces "a suite of fluid and flexible real-time responses to incoming sensory stimuli" (Wheeler 2005). This sort of bodily intelligence involves a feeling of contextual familiarity and a pre-reflective sense of one's own body as the "possessor of certain capacities

for action" (Krueger 2014, p. 40). Habits and skills help to anchor a subject in the world, allow her to gauge what sorts of response a situation calls for, and enable her to carry out fine-grained adjustments in order to meet the demands of her current circumstances. This embodied sensitivity to one's surroundings is the basis for bodily attunement and provides for a range of behavioral and interpretive possibilities.

Moreover, it is because the habitual body "takes over" and renders conscious reflection unnecessary in certain respects that we find ourselves with the mental and practical "space" to think about other things and potentially acquire new skills and insights. After all, there are many instances in which antecedent intentions or deliberate reasoning would render bodily movements clumsy and awkward. In order for an individual to engage flexibly and fluidly and take advantage of the wide range of possibilities offered by the environment, her reflective consciousness must offload many of its tasks to automatic, yet rationally intelligible, bodily habits and skills (Levine 2012, p. 264). Thus, habits pave the way for practical wisdom and allow us to act quickly, yet in a thoughtful and effective way. The ability to learn from prior experience, together with the establishment of patterns of attention and response that have proved effective in the past, helps subjects to adapt and fare well in their surroundings.

On the other hand, however, because the development of affective framings occurs via repetitive action, and because habits bring the past into life by acting out that which we have acquired over time, sedimented habits can become increasingly difficult to transform. This means that even as affective framings make it possible to have an open future, the formation of habits also has the potential to block the possibility of an open future. In many cases, habits operate as "acquired sensori-motor coordinations that are automatically exercised in response to certain types of circumstances" (Levine 2012, p. 262). Lisa Käll and Kristin Zeiler (2014) give the example of Ed, who repeatedly avoids social interactions, so that this mode of non-interaction and disengagement becomes an integrated part of his habitual ways of behaving (p. 113). There is a sense in which this sedimented bodily way of being-in-the-world puts restrictions on Ed in terms of what kinds of behaviors he is

likely to display. While some actions will come easily to Ed, others will appear to be relatively closed off, so that "future possibilities are transformed into more or less likely probabilities" (Käll and Zeiler 2014, p. 113). While it is possible for people to behave unexpectedly, certain kinds of actions become highly unlikely or even seemingly impossible. At the extreme, inflexible habits can become compulsions or addictions, which include both rigid behaviors as well as intransigent thinking patterns. When someone gets caught in a rut or feels stuck, it is because overly rigid habits have begun to inhibit spontaneous action and self-growth.

Cuffari (2011) describes this two-fold structure in terms of an ambiguity or tension between stability and plasticity. Habits are developed through the sedimentation of experience into knowledge and know-how that enables meaningful and intelligible being-in-the-world and allows for spontaneous action. This is the stability of habits. However, as life continues to unfold, cognitive plasticity is required in order for individuals to adapt to ongoing environmental changes. Thus, there is a sense in which habits inherently oscillate between sedimentation and spontaneity—between stability and plasticity; and because they anchor individuals in their past experiences, there is always danger that if they become overly rigid, they will limit a person's ability to adapt and grow. Thus, the development of flexible habits is central to learning and self-development: "to learn every day, we must be ready to be different every day" (Cuffari 2011, p. 544).

Directly and instantly changing an individual's habits is not possible, according to Dewey (1922). For example, it is impossible to get people to change their habitual way of walking or talking simply by giving them verbal instructions to do so. Instead, we can change habits only by progressively changing the social structures and institutions through which they are instilled in us (Burkitt 2002, p. 229). However, customs tend to persist because each generation is brought up under the conditions established by the previous generation, and therefore acquires its set of habits. This can become problematic and even disastrous when customs encourage rigid and inflexible habits and do not allow space for the questioning of traditional ways of acting and thinking (Fromm 1941).

2.1.3 Affordances and Enculturated Expectations

It is theoretically useful to look to ecological psychology and its leading notion of "affordances" as a good way of fleshing out (pun fully intended) the notion of habit. According to J.J. Gibson (1979), "the affordances of the environment are what it offers the animal, what it provides or furnishes, either for good or ill" (p. 127). Joel Krueger (2014) more richly describes affordances as

> action possibilities in a perceiver's environment that are specified relationally, that is, both by (i) the particular structural features of the environment and things in it, as well as (ii) the repertoire of sensorimotor capacities the perceiver employs to detect and respond to these structural features. (p. 2)

The basic idea is that the environment dynamically offers various possibilities for interaction and engagement (Gibson 1979; Chemero 2009), but only in relation to an organism with particular capacities. Someone's possibilities for interaction, given to them through their bodily capacities, previous responses, and habitual modes of relating to the environment, "provide an embodied know-how that is manifest in perception and the way [they] perceive affordances for future actions" (Brancazio 2018).

Building on these ideas, Ramstead et al. (2016) introduce an expanded concept of affordance that applies to sociocultural forms of life. What they call "natural affordances" are possibilities for action that depend on an organism or agent leveraging reliable correlations in the environment with its set of abilities; and what they call "conventional affordances" are possibilities for action, the engagement of which depends on agents' skillfully leveraging explicit or implicit expectations, norms, conventions, and cooperative social practices (p. 2). Along similar lines, what Van Dijk and Rietveld (2017) call "canonical affordances" encompass the sociocultural significance and meaning of things and are part of might be called wider "standing practices." Successful engagement with these affordances requires that agents have the ability to correctly infer the cultural expectations associated with the settings in which they are immersed. Affordances are prescriptive in the sense that "they specify the kinds of action and perception that are available, situationally appropriate, and, in the case of

social niches, expected by others" (Ramstead et al. 2016, p. 5). By virtue of being embedded in a particular sociocultural context, humans develop unique embodied skills and practices, in part by way of what Gibson (1979) calls the "education of attention" (p. 254). Skilled practitioners selectively introduce novices to affordances offered by particular aspects of the environment, and caregivers help children to learn what to notice and how to engage effectively with their surroundings (Rietveld and Kiverstein 2014, p. 331). In Sect. 2.2, we will claim that the development of this *practical sense* occurs via behavioral coordination, mimicry, and bodily-affective resonance.

Any given environment typically will afford an extremely wide range of behavioral possibilities, many of which will not be actualized. This is because many affordances that are offered by the environment will be irrelevant to the agent insofar as they do not relate to standing sociocultural practices or have no bearing on the individual's concerns or interests at the time. While the *landscape* (or "total ensemble") of affordances is comprised of the entire set of affordances that are available to a particular organism in a given environment at a specific time, the *field* of affordances consists of the relevant possibilities for action that a particular individual is responsive to in a concrete situation, which depends in large part on that individual's concerns (Rietveld and Kiverstein 2014). In other words, only a small sub-set of affordances that are offered by the environment will stand out on the horizon as potentially relevant. This field thus can be understood as the "situation-specific, individual 'excerpt' of the general landscape of affordances" (de Haan et al. 2013, p. 7).

For an affordance to have relevance is for it to "solicit" the individual and beckon certain forms of perceptual-emotional appraisal and bodily engagement (Ramstead et al. 2016, p. 4-5). An affordance becomes a solicitation "when it is relevant to our dynamically changing concerns," takes on a "demand character" and becomes manifest at the bodily level in a state of "action readiness" (Rietveld and Kiverstein 2014, p. 342). Similarly, Dewey (1922) characterizes habits as "demands for certain kinds of activity." What sorts of affordances a context provides, and which become solicitations or demands, depends partly on the surrounding environment, partly on a particular agent's skills, needs, and concerns, and partly on *cultural norms and expectations*. Human conventions and

shared expectations solicit certain kinds of action and modulate the specific kinds of worldly engagement that are effective in a given community. Thus, social institutions and culture not only provide a rich landscape of affordances, but also call forth or solicit specific sorts of action and create particular "paths of least resistance."

Laurence Kirmayer and Maxwell Ramstead (2017) describe how cultural norms are internalized and enacted not only as individual habits, but also as forms of coordinated social interaction and institutional routines. In these interactions, there is a reliable expectation that others will respond to, complement, or complete one's own actions. These shared expectations allow each participant to play a particular part in social interaction and to act in situationally appropriate ways. In order to adapt to external constraints and norms, individuals develop characteristic patterns of behavior and attention. According to Bourdieu (1977), the habitus ensures the *appropriateness* or *fit* between our actions and appraisals, on the one hand, and the objective social world in which we live, on the other. For those operating within a social practice, "certain models of expectancy come to be established, and the patterns, which over time emerge from these practices, guide perception as well as action" (Roepstorff et al. 2010, p. 1056). In order to be successful in navigating the social world, individuals need to develop *a feel for the game*, which consists in part in behaving in accordance with what others expect. The "collective habitus," as Bourdieu understands it, functions as the unconscious second nature that grounds the common sense for society's members. The general idea, then, is that we think and behave as we expect that others will expect us to think and behave (Ramstead et al. 2016). Shared cultural practices thereby scaffold individual enactments of meaning by "prescribing and normalizing certain modes of experience and action while proscribing (and perhaps pathologizing) certain others" (Kirmayer and Ramstead 2017). Cultural expectations solicit certain forms of action and experience, particular sequences of thought and action become routine, and these habitualized patterns are ratified and reinforced by way of institutional norms and social approval. Thus, various aspects of the socio-cultural environment play a crucial role in the formation of an embodied subject's characteristic patterns of attention, engagement, and response.

Insofar as the way in which we are socially situated pre-formats and frames the way in which we perceive the world, others, and ourselves, our bodily style of minded animal life is partially causally determined and shaped by social interactions, expectations, relations, and structures. For example, we may perceive a dark parking lot very differently depending on the way our bodies are sexed. How we perceive the lot is informed by our past experiences of walking on empty sites at night, and also by "sedimented social and cultural sanctions of how different bodies are allowed to move in different spaces without being at risk of assault" (Käll and Zeiler 2014, p. 114). Related social norms also modulate how people behave at parties, how they speak to their colleagues at work, and even how they walk down the street or sit on an airplane. Even if people are not forced to act in a particular way, they may feel that they cannot behave differently because the potential penalties or sanctions are too great. Successfully navigating a social setting requires that one engage effectively with conventional affordances, which in turn requires that one conform to social norms and maintain standing practices.

Commonsense observation suggests that social disapproval, even when expressed simply by way of facial expressions or intonation, often functions as an effective sanction. Becoming attuned to the environment and receptive to relevant affordances has to do with improving one's situation, and because we are necessarily social creatures who yearn for acceptance and human connection, it is inevitable that the views and opinions of others will have significant impact and allure. As a result of these strong social influences, "engaged, active collectives are capable of exerting a forceful affective pull on individuals" (Slaby 2016, p. 10); and in some cases, individuals come to exhibit feelings, thoughts, expressions, and acts that are completely alien or even contrary to what they ordinarily are inclined to feel, think, or do. Social institutions enhance particular affective tendencies and solicit specific modes of engagement by providing a normative framework that rewards or punishes certain kinds of stances and behaviors. When people endorse and comply with these norms, they thereby reinforce particular kinds of practices. Thus, "social structures of the larger cultural context tend to become translated into embodied social structures," and these habits, in turn, serve to reproduce those very social structures (Kennedy 2012, p. 427). In this way, the relationship

between essentially embodied intentional agents and their social environment are reciprocal and involve complex dynamic, self-reflexive feedback loops. Individuals begin to comport themselves jointly in ways that are conducive to the smooth operation of the social domain in question and thereby reinforce the norms of that institution. Through the broad participation of many different individuals, "meaning is enacted collectively and in line with the functioning principles" and values of that social institution (Slaby 2016, p. 17). The concrete material and discursive arrangements of these institutions, which encompass physical layout, explicit rules, language, informal codes of conduct, and favored styles of interaction, "exert formative pressures on individuals to habituate in line with the dynamic patterns prevalent in the domain" (Slaby 2016, p. 19).

A social institution thereby significantly modulates affective framings, substantively molds overall bodily comportment, and literally shapes the minded bodily habits of the subjects involved. They all come to be bound together in a certain kind of social *dance* that is characterized by specific norms and a particular affective atmosphere, so that the social institution serves as "the organizing plane" on which the affective lives of individuals unfold (Slaby 2016, p. 21). This modulation in affective framings changes how subjects *enact* meaning via continuous reciprocal interaction with their environment and dramatically alters their sense of what is relevant and important. Social roles then can be understood as a set of interlocking habits of mind and sensorimotor schemes that form and develop against the backdrop of particular sociocultural contexts and supply a specific set of affordances and solicitations. To be a "good student," a "successful account executive," or a "responsible citizen," there are a range of attitudes and behaviors that one is expected to display. People who inhabit a particular sociocultural context generally acquire a particular style of engaging with available affordances through repeated action and without self-conscious reflection.

In response to sociocultural or institutional sanctions, there often develop "paths of least resistance": to navigate through a social environment successfully and receive social recognition or approval, people must develop affective framings that allow them to adapt to that particular domain. Certain values and norms are incorporated within social institutions in the form of organizational policies, power hierarchies, standard-

ized practices, rules of etiquette, and rhetoric. Individuals are expected, encouraged, or even compelled to fashion their manner of speaking and behaving in accordance with these rules, often out of practical necessity (Hamann 2009, p. 50). Someone who does not act in accordance with established rules, practices, or policies in a workplace may be socially shunned, publicly criticized and warned, demoted, or even fired; conversely, if they behave "optimally" and as expected within that institution, they will be socially included, publicly praised and encouraged, promoted, and above all rewarded (Mühlhoff and Slaby 2017). The upshot is that people participating in social institutions generally develop habits in accordance with values that have not been freely chosen by them.

Via the entrainment of brain and bodily dynamics and the formation of organizational properties (namely, habits of mind and behavior), there is a genuine sense in which an individual *internalizes* social influences and norms, so that so that her living minded body becomes "socially saturated" and socio-normatively laden. The enactivist approach emphasizes that the identity of an autonomous system is self-generated (aka "autopoietic") and lies in its complex dynamic organization. This identity can be understood as a "pattern which, given the adequate initial and boundary conditions, recursively contributes to its own maintenance" (Moreno and Barandiaran 2004, p. 13). Nevertheless, discussions of autonomous identity and agency should not be limited to basic biological organization or metabolic self-maintenance. As we mentioned previously, Buhrmann and Di Paolo (2015) propose that the "behavioral analogue to biological agency is a network of precarious but interactively self-sustaining sensorimotor schemes" or a "sensorimotor repertoire." Similarly, we have proposed that a new mode of autonomy and agency, one not fully determined by biological constraints, arises at the level of behavior and attention, in the form of affective framing patterns. The formation of such integrated patterns encompasses neural-somatic systems, sensorimotor processes, metabolic processes, the circulatory system, and the respiratory system. Affective framing patterns thereby operate as self-organizing structures that constrain various neural and bodily processes and change the probability of an individual's cognitive and behavioral options. This can be understood in terms of the self-maintenance of coherent neurobiological and behavioral patterns, namely—again—habits. We all acquire habits

from our earliest years, and these habits incline us toward particular activities and responses.

Among creatures that are sufficiently neurobiologically complex, these integrated neurobiological configurations and patterns of engagement become quite extensive, giving rise to a characteristically human, personal form of life, or what might be deemed a *self*. Along these lines, Dewey (1922) holds that habits form our effective desires, furnish us with working capacities, and rule our thoughts to such a great extent that "we *are* the habit" (italics added). The notion that the self can be understood as a particular form or structure builds on the idea that the identity of a living system consists in its autonomous organization—that is, its self-maintaining internal organization (Maiese 2015, ch. 2). In the case of biological self-maintenance, the non-trivial assertion of individuality entails that without the system's activity, its component processes will cease to exist. This also applies to sensorimotor organizations: many of our behaviors are habitual in nature and reinforced through repeated practice. Habits that are not repeatedly exercised "tend to decay in the absence of frequent enough enactments" (Buhrmann and Di Paolo 2015) and thus are in danger of being extinguished. As part of a greater network, particular habits may depend on other behaviors and habitual expressions as conditions for their exercise. Through the formation and reconfiguration of habits, sensorimotor organizations and patterns of attention begin to shift, and the subject's minded bodily form is altered. What is modulated, we have argued, is the individual mind's or self's form or structure, which in turn can be understood in terms of the reconfiguration of affective framing patterns. The metaphysically robust notion that affective framing patterns constitute our *personal form of minded animal life* thus reflects the commonsense idea that habits form the basis of our character, or what we regard as our own self (Burkitt 2002, p. 225).

By way of socioculturally-mediated affective framing, or habit formation, the living bodies of human animals are thoroughly socially embedded and partially determined by the sociocultural world. Indeed, it is important to acknowledge the extent to which human biology itself is deeply embedded in the social world and fully bound up with culture. By virtue of being tightly coupled with the environment, living beings "come with cellular, social, ecological, and cultural legacies bequeathed to them

from earlier generations," and their actions, in turn, "substantially influence the evolutionary process" (Stotz 2014, p. 2). About two million years ago, cultural evolution became the primary driver of our species' genetic evolution. Joseph Henrich's (2015) work examines how culture has driven the expansion of our brains, honed our cognitive abilities, and modified our social motivations. He points out that "once cultural information began to accumulate and produce cultural adaptations, the main selection pressure on genes revolved around improving our abilities to acquire, store, process, and organize" the skills, practices, and information provided by others in one's cultural group (p. 57).

Our proposed mind-shaping account accommodates these insights from cognitive anthropology by emphasizing that life and human biology are deeply embedded in the sociocultural world and cannot be understood apart from that world (Maiese 2018); and it adds to these insights the robust metaphysics and theory of agency entailed by The Essential Embodiment Theory. The human body and self are trained through practices that instill habits, capacities, and skills, as well as certain attitudes and beliefs (Burkitt 2002, p. 221), Since subjects' bodily habits are causally dependent on social relations and norms, and since they make sense of the world in and through their living minded animal bodies, the social world thereby brings about literal mind-shaping.

Self-evidently, and sadly, there are a great many cases in which the habits and affective framings that have been co-generated by via our entanglement with social institutions have a more or less detrimental impact. Because these institutions very often demand a highly repetitive and unreflective style of action, habits can ossify and ultimately stunt the development of human capacities (Burkitt 2002, p. 235). In many cases, there emerge autonomous, self-sustaining structures of affective framing or habit that actually are *in essential conflict* with basic values associated with fundamental human needs and overall well-being. What are conventionally called "bad habits" are a prime example of this. As Dewey (1916) describes them, these are "habits so severed from reason that they are opposed to the conclusions of conscious deliberation and decision" (ch. 4). Sometimes emergent patterns of organization were adaptive in the short-term insofar as they helped the subject to cope with her surroundings (for example, smoking as a way to alleviate feelings of stress, or

cut-throat competition as a way to get ahead in the workplace), but prove to be maladaptive and harmful in the long-term. What is harmful about such bad habits, in part, is that they put an end to plasticity, so that they possess us instead of our possessing them (Dewey 1916). The continuation of these patterns of sensorimotor interaction can become goals in themselves, as affective framing patterns become more engrained and a minded animal gets "locked into" particular modes of movement and response. Of course, except in extreme, pathological cases, these patterns are not absolutely fixed or static, but rather *loosely assembled* (Colombetti 2014) and susceptible to ongoing change as a result of continued learning and development. This means that short of extreme pathology, there is always the potential to modify one's affective framings and develop new habits of attention, thought, and feeling.

Our central claim, then, is that social institutions not only contribute to and importantly influence, but also *literally shape* individuals' emotional repertoires, expressions, behavioral responses, and essentially embodied habits of mind. As we will discuss further in later chapters, this influence can—

either (i) cultivate adaptive habits that *promote and sustain* human flourishing and autonomy,
or (ii) contribute to maladaptive habits of mind that *undermine or even destroy* autonomy, lead to psychological fragmentation, and generally interfere with or even eradicate overall well-being.

2.1.4 Its Truth

Having clarified the meaning of the mind-shaping thesis, it is easy enough to see how, in general terms, we could go about proving it: namely, by showing that for any given social institution, our engagement with it satisfies the basic individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions of causal influence, complex dynamic self-reflexive feedback-loops, and irreducible normativity. Let us take, for example, what is perhaps the most obvious case: the social institution of the family as it exists in contemporary neoliberal nation-states, aka "the contemporary

family." As specifically applied to the contemporary family, the mind-shaping thesis then says:

> the family affects us, and thereby has an influence on us, as essentially embodied minded human animals, in a salient, significant way that is at once (i) causal, (ii) itself partially determined and shaped by means of complex dynamic, self-reflexive feedback-loops, and (iii) irreducibly normative.

Literature, art, movies, and popular sources of encyclopedic information vividly show this claim to be self-evidently true. Just watch the films of Yasujiro Ozu, widely considered to be one of the world-masters of twentieth century cinema, especially, for example, *Tokyo Story*. Now consider two of the most famous and insightful phenomenological observations ever made about families, the first line of Leo Tolstoy's [1939] *Anna Karenina* and the first line of Philip Larkin's [1974] "This Be The Verse":

> Every happy family is the same, but every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.
> They fuck you up, your Mum and your Dad.

Then consider the Wikipedia entry that appears under the heading, "Family" (2018a). This entry describes a family as a group of people affiliated via birth, marriage, or co-residence, and whose members include spouses, parents, brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews, nieces, and/or siblings-in-law. Importantly, the entry describes the family as "the principal institution for the socialization of children" and states that "one of the primary functions of the family involves providing a framework for the production and reproduction of persons, biologically and/or socially." This can occur via the sharing of material resources such as food and shelter, the giving and receiving of care and nurture, and moral and sentimental ties. Moreover, the production of children historically has been tied to the formation of an economically productive household. Contemporary society often views the family as a haven from the world, a realm where individuals may escape the competition and pressures of modern commercial society and enjoy the sort of warmth and tenderness that is missing in the public sphere.

Popular wisdom sees family structures of the past as superior to those of today, and holds that families were happier and more stable when people did not have to deal with problems such as illegitimate children and divorce. However, whether or not one regards the family as "declining" depends on one's definition of family. Today, marriages no longer are arranged for economic, social, or political gain, and children no longer are expected to contribute to family income. Instead, people choose mates based on love, which indicates a societal shift toward emphasizing emotional fulfillment and relationships. The Wikipedia entry further notes that many countries, particularly in the West, have changed their family laws in recent years in order to accommodate diverse family models. There have been efforts, for example, to ensure that children born outside marriage are provided with legal rights.

Such observations confirm not only the truism that the social institution of the family has a significant individual and collective influence on people's lives, but also the substantive further thesis that the family has a *literally mind-shaping, fundamental impact* on their lives. Such influence, we've asserted, is at once causal, itself partially determined and shaped by self-reflexive feedback-loops, and irreducibly normative. Because family interactions begin to shape and mold us from our earliest days, they have the potential to either (i) undermine our mental health and well-being (and thereby "fuck [us] up," as Larkin puts it), or (ii) enable us to be mentally healthy, authentic, and deeply happy. Indeed, since virtually every one of us who lives in a modern neoliberal society belongs to *some* sort of family or another, at *some* time or another, we need only raise and seriously attempt to answer *these five philosophical thought-experimental questions*, in order to recognize the truth of the mind-shaping thesis as it applies to the contemporary family—

On the supposition that *my own or someone else's* actual family history had been different in such-and-such specific ways, then:

i. how would my own or someone else's minded animal life have unfolded in these-and-those specific ways?,
ii. how would my own or someone else's minded animal life be unfolding now in these-and-those specific ways?,

iii. how would my own or someone else's particular bodily-affective style have been different?,
iv. how would my own or someone else's habits of emotional response be different?, and
v. how would my own or someone else's patterns of interpersonal engagement and, for example, conflict management style, be different?

As a political philosopher of mind, one can then generalize the same argument-strategy to *any other* social institution in contemporary neoliberal nation-states (for example, jobs and workplaces, legal systems, medical systems, or political systems) as follows. In each case of *a social institution in a contemporary neoliberal nation-state*—

first, consider a broad range of more-or-less ordinary but also especially insightful phenomenological observations about people's engagements with that social institution,
second, consider a broad range of historical, sociological, and empirical psychological evidence about people's engagements with that social institution, and
third, conduct philosophical thought-experiments in order to isolate and track the specific characters of the various *mind-shaping impacts* of that social institution on ourselves and other minded human animals like us.

In fewer and plainer words, a political philosopher of mind will isolate, study, and critically analyze precisely the sorts of bad or good habits of mind, feeling, and action that are generated in any given social institution, and also examine the social processes by means of which this particular institution cultivates, promotes, and sustains these habits.

2.2 The Collective Wisdom Thesis

2.2.1 Its Meaning

According to contemporary sociologists, political scientists, and cognitive scientists, *collective intelligence* (see, for example, Wikipedia 2018b)

is an emergent property of human (or otherwise animal) mindedness that is constituted by the cognitive capacities and cognitive activities of a group. Such activities include group-reasoning, group brain-storming and innovation, the social production of written texts and other kinds of social media, group deliberation, and participatory decision-making. By *collective wisdom,* then, we mean a relatively high level of social group coordination, creativity, problem-solving, and productivity, aka constructive "communal activity" or *Gemeinschaft*. Recent work in cognitive psychology, social psychology, and organizational studies shows that collective wisdom is determined by high levels of socially-open, non-hierarchical, free-thinking, and non-conformist, but at the same time also mutually comfortable, mutually communicative, mutually respectful and principled, mutually sensitive, mutually supportive, and highly dialogical collaborative activities within groups (see, for example, Duhigg 2016), and that it is not a function of high average IQ levels among the group's individual members (Association for Psychological Science 2016).

Central to collective wisdom is what Hanne De Jaegher and Di Paolo (2007) call "participatory sense-making." Their proposed account of social cognition rests on the assumption that engaging with another *as a person* involves adopting a personal stance, comprised of affective and bodily relatedness. Interpersonal engagement ordinarily is fully embodied to the extent that communication relies heavily on individuals' postures, gestures, and facial expressions. Subjects involved in face-to-face interaction can perceive others' desires and feelings on the basis of their expressions and movements, to which they become attuned by way of a "bodily cognitive-emotional form of understanding" (Colombetti 2010, p. 147). Individuals are disposed to affect others, and to be affected by them, in a wide variety of ways, and shared meanings are generated over the course of this mutual affection. Thus, in addition to being an active process of meaning-construction, *sense-making is fundamentally social*.

This means that subjects do not enact meaning on their own or in isolation, but instead via ongoing engagement, communication, and *coordination* with their interaction partners. De Jaegher and Di Paolo (2007) characterize "coordination" as the non-accidental correlation between two or more coupled systems, so that their behavior matches to a degree far beyond what is expected given what those systems are capable

of doing. Interactors co-construct meaning during social interaction, in part by way of coordinating their utterances, gestures, and other bodily movements. Instances of mutual coordination in the realm of human activity include synchronization, mirroring, anticipation, and imitation, all of which are displayed by infants from a very early age. Indeed, even something as commonplace as a father or mother matching his or her facial expressions to those of a child, or instances of so-called emotional contagion, illustrate how intersubjectivity is a matter of reciprocal bodily attunement (Stanghellini 2004, p. 91). Behavioral coordination is particularly evident in dance and sport, in moments where there is a great deal of motor mimicry and complementary movements or gestures. It also is evident in kissing, where someone's being a "good kisser," just like being a good dancer, is largely a matter of his or her being appropriately attuned to another's bodily orientation. This mutual coordination of essentially embodied animation, movements, and orientation is what allows subjects to share meanings and to understand each other, so that they thereby come to make sense of their surroundings *together with other people*.

As the behavior of interaction partners becomes coordinated in the way De Jaegher and Di Paolo describe, the nature of the interaction process as a whole importantly influences what each partner is likely to think or do next (2007, p. 492). Joint and shared attention alters the field of affordances by directing the agent to engage with specific possibilities, marking them out as relevant, and making them more salient (Ramstead et al. 2016, p. 16). To coordinate with others, the actors involved need to grasp the situation from the perspective of others and selectively engage with affordances in a way that complements the behavior of other actors. While the individuals involved do remain autonomous interactors, the relationship that arises between them has its own properties that constrain and modulate individual attention and behavior. Once two or more interactors become part of a coupled system, their bodily dynamics and attention patterns become entrained to some extent, so that each person's expressions, behaviors, and desires modulate those of the other(s). In this way, the larger framework—that is, the network of interpersonal interactions—in which they are embedded redefines them, modulates their affective framings, and shapes how they can and are likely to act. In

addition, the dynamics of the interpersonal interaction as a whole causally affect and constrain the outlook and behavior of each party involved in the interaction by carving out a field of affordances. Given the nature of the social setting and the dynamics of that specific interaction, subjects become attuned to some possibilities but not others. Social environments and their associated practices solicit particular patterns of coordinated action and attention rather than others, and subjects' sense-making activities are pervasively shaped and molded by the norms of the social encounter in which they find themselves.

While social coordination is particularly evident in cases of dancing, kissing, and sport, it also occurs in instances where there is no direct interaction among the people involved. Van Dijk and Rietveld (2017) give the example of being seated in a "silence area" in a train, so that talking is not really an option; nor is drinking from the bottle of water that belongs to one's neighbor. When one simply sits in this area and writes, one shows a responsiveness to the whole socially significant situation; and by typing away in silence, one reinforces social expectations and helps to maintain this setting's status as a "silence area." The authors rightly point out that "this way of responding and contributing to the maintenance of a behavior setting is a form of social coordination" because it acknowledges social norms and standing practices (p. 2). Being optimally responsive to the "whole socially significant situation" that one inhabits includes both being responsive to opportunities for action offered by the material environment as well as the opportunities for social engagement offered by other people. This requires that one act in accordance with shared sociocultural practices.

Social coordination has the potential both to constrain and limit the participants, and also to empower them or enable them to do things they could not do alone. On the one hand, now that they are components of a larger system, the individual interactors are extremely unlikely to do certain things (such as break off a conversation mid-sentence without explanation, or talk loudly in a "silence area"); and they also are constrained in terms of which factors they are likely to highlight as important and which they are likely to ignore. Once affective framings entrain and become coordinated, the subjects involved also begin to view and interpret things in accordance with shared social practices. Such constraint

can be negative insofar as it makes it difficult for people to acknowledge alternative possibilities or become open to a full range of relevant affordances. As we will see in Chaps. 4 and 5, standing practices and social norms can lead to forms of coordinated action and attention that fundamentally undermine human flourishing. However, social constraints also can be fundamentally positive. For example, workplace dynamics characterized by mutual respect and good humor tend to "rule out" disrespectful behavior, or at least make it far less likely that someone will "act out" or "act up," and behave rudely to colleagues.

On the other hand, the relational whole has a qualitatively different repertoire of states and behaviors, and thus has greater potential than the previously uncorrelated parts. To see this, consider, for example, how much can be accomplished during successful highly collaborative joint projects or brainstorming sessions. Insofar as their patterns of bodily responsiveness and attention are correlated and coordinated, two or more interactors become *interdependent*, and their desires and point of view are mutually altered. Through this coordination of intentional activity, "individual sense-making processes are affected and new domains of social sense-making can be generated that were not available to each individual on her own" (De Jaegher and Di Paolo 2007, p. 497). In short, new meaning is generated over the course of social engagement.

Many instances of participatory sense-making and coordination involve one partner's efforts to reorient the attention of the other. For example, when one person visually scans the room in search of a lost object, and the other grabs his attention and points to it, the sense-making activity of one person influences the sense-making of the other. The simple, effective example that De Jaegher and Di Paolo (2007) present is that of Janet, who stands in front of an open window and takes an appreciative breath of fresh air in such a way as to make sure that John notices it. This is a communicative act, whereby Janet is trying to adjust "John's cognitive and affective take on the world" so that he sees the world the way that she is currently seeing it (p. 499). Janet wants John to attend to a particular part of the world, "to engage imaginatively with certain possibilities which these things present," and "to frame the visible world in a certain way" (p. 499). This interaction changes the way that John makes sense of his surroundings and modifies the salience of par-

ticular features and considerations. This alteration in attention, which we have conceptualized as a shift in affective framing patterns, is partially constituted by changes in his bodily dynamics, including galvanic skin responses, hormone fluctuations, and changes in heart rate and blood pressure.

Likewise, during a game of charades, all of the participants must adjust their sense-making so that it converges towards the "right" gesture and the "right" interpretation. The meaning of gestures is jointly constructed and transformed during the game, and the social interaction that unfolds thereby affords new possibilities for sense-making and joint understanding. And this is made possible, of course, partly by the fact that people have common goals and make themselves quite receptive to the desires of others. The sort of mutual influence that occurs during a game of charades is rooted in "a distinctive kind of bodily responsiveness comprised, at least in part, of patterns of motor-readiness and an affective sensibility to gestures and expressions" (Ratcliffe 2007, p. 158). Other people's desires and needs impact how each player attends to and interprets things, and this coordination of behavior and attention allows them to participate in a shared cognitive activity and to construct meaning together.

Some participatory sense-making involves salient simple gestures and expressive orientation. For example, in a classroom setting, one student might direct others' attention to factors that had previously gone unnoticed by pointing or speaking to the group as a whole. But in cases with particularly high levels of participation, sense-making becomes *a fully coordinated, shared, and multiply self-legislated activity*, so that students in the classroom engage in what might even be described as a process of *joint cognition*. Likewise, a good brainstorming session unfolds as a highly coordinated interaction in which many actors participate and there are fluid patterns of communication and response. This sort of participatory sense-making goes well beyond orienting one party's attention to another party's perspective or cognitive domain. During joint cognition, the sense-making activities of the individuals involved become truly intertwined, so that new meanings are generated and existing meanings are transformed (Di Paolo et al. 2010, p. 72). While engaging in jointly cognizing group work or other forms of genuinely "open" academic collaboration, participants sometimes are able to achieve a completely new

vantage point on a problem or interpret results in novel ways. As the participants direct one another's attention to specific details or brainstorm solutions, they combine cognitive forces, and the collaborative whole clearly is greater than the sum of its individually agential parts.

High levels of bodily attunement and coordination also can pave the way for *mutual perspective-taking* and the adoption of new points of view. In educational settings, for example, this opportunity to see issues from others' standpoints allows students to "increase the scope of their perceptions [and] begin to direct their observations towards previously inconspicuous phenomena" (Freire 1970, p. 70). Insofar as it is bound up with the dynamics of emotional contagion and bodily resonance, empathy is a central component of participatory sense-making. Empathy involves modulation of one's mental and emotional state by way of bodily contact, so that one *feels along with another person*. Perception of this person's body comportment spontaneously triggers various responsive movements, such as turning to face a speaker or looking her in the eye. One also may find her emotions to be infectious, so that one suddenly finds oneself mimicking the facial expressions and posture of the other person. Due to this bodily attunement, one comes to share some of her feelings and thereby gains a better understanding of her perspective. Social interaction becomes a sort of shared dance in which each party's outlooks and patterns of bodily responsiveness are influenced and modified and they begin to make sense of their surroundings in new ways. This has the potential to yield new insights that each individual would have been incapable of on her own.

It is clear, then, that when people come together in social interaction, their sense-making activities are constrained by social context and by the other people with whom they are interacting. This raises an important question about the nature of autonomy: "what does it mean to be autonomous when one's cognition is influenced and supported by a milieu of environmental factors?" (Cash 2010, p. 645). Some feminist theorists have criticized narrowly individualist accounts of agency and autonomy that focus entirely on the internal structure of an agent's will. According to the relational and social conception of autonomous agency that these feminist theorists recommend, autonomy is either scaffolded and supported, or undermined and impaired, by a wide range of social and nor-

mative factors (Mackenzie and Stoljar 2000). Thus, it is a mistake to view the self as an unencumbered individual who thinks and acts without influence from external sources. On the contrary, our beliefs, values, and attitudes all are developed in and through social relationships, and shaped (whether in positive or negative ways) by the teaching, guidance, advice, examples, and normative practices of our communities (Cash 2010, p. 659). During participatory sense-making, the interaction process that unfolds itself takes on the character of *relational autonomy*, so that it is not reducible to the *agential autonomy* of individually self-legislated, free intentional actions. Instead, autonomous action is something that individuals undertake together with other individuals. To acknowledge that autonomy is always, at least in part, relationally and socially determined, is to transcend a conception of autonomy that focuses exclusively on the individual, and also to focus one's attention on the necessary and literally mind-shaping role of social institutions in autonomous agency.

Still, while autonomous persons are not independent of social forces, they are also able, at least in principle, to reflect on them critically, examine how these forces shape their values, desires, and attitudes, and endorse some influences while rejecting and resisting others. Moreover, these abilities to critically reflect and imagine the world otherwise can be buttressed by other people. For example, belonging to a feminist consciousness-raising group can scaffold and support one's ability to reflect on social norms, develop skills for resistance, and work together with others to undermine problematic social norms and values. This sort of group activity, in turn, is a vivid example of "relationally enhanced, socially equipped autonomous engagement with—and attempts to improve—one's self, one's relationships, and the norms and practices of one's community" (Cash 2010, p. 660). In such cases, one's effectiveness as an agent cannot be understood apart from the external factors that shape, scaffold, and support one's cognitive and affective capacities.

Moreover, social pressure can be constraining in a positive sense if it causes us to adhere to prior commitments and to uphold standards that are beneficial to us. For example, Diana Meyers (2005) presents the example someone with a metabolic condition that requires a dietary restriction, but one that she is tempted to break from time to time in order to eat delicious foods (pp. 32-33). This individual tells many of her friends about her condition and then finds that because they are aware of

it, she is less tempted to break the dietary restriction when she is in their company. It appears that "her autonomous will to stick to the dietary restriction is partially offloaded onto her relationships with friends and acquaintances" (Cash 2010, p. 660). Similarly, a commitment to keep up with a workout regimen or to quit smoking can be scaffolded and supported by other people, so that social pressure and social reinforcement solicit certain (wanted) behavior and discourage other (unwanted) behavior.

Autonomy, therefore, should not be understood as a matter of choosing and acting in ways that are wholly independent of the social and relational forces that shape our minds, attitudes, and behaviors. The social and cultural context that we inhabit socializes us and instills within us the community's intelligence and wisdom, as well as its norms and attitudes. By way of "education of attention," members of society learn how to notice and engage effectively with relevant affordances and develop a "feel for the game" that makes it unnecessary for them to rely on explicit rules to tell them what to do. Instead, they adapt continuously to the people around them and let the situation constrain their behavior, so that they know, for example, how to adjust their behavior appropriately depending on whether they are at home or out in public. And they work together with others to find solutions to their problems and achieve their goals.

Building on these ideas, *the Collective Wisdom Thesis* says that *some* social institutions, working against the grain of standard, dystopian social institutions in contemporary neoliberal nation-states, make it really possible for us to self-realize, connect with others in a mutually aiding way, liberate ourselves, and be mentally healthy, authentic, and deeply happy. In other words, as we have described things, every collectively wise social institution is *constructive* and *enabling*.

Can we make this idea of a constructive, enabling social institution more concrete and specific? One way to do it is through the concept of *solidarity*. So, for example, Henry Pickford, building on Ashley Taylor's notion of "robust solidarity" (Taylor 2015) and some ideas from early Marx, develops the concept of what he calls *anthropological solidarity* (2017). According to Taylor, robust solidarity entails that members of group incur positive obligations by virtue of their membership. These positive obligations must satisfy four jointly necessary conditions:

1. Members must share a *joint* "executive" *interest* or aim that defines the group.
2. There must be a reciprocal *identification* with and recognition from the group; whether or not it is explicitly identified by all individuals, the group's executive interest is the goal which is linked to members' well-being.
3. There must exist a shared *disposition to empathy*: individuals who identify with a group united around a single executive interest share the emotional experience involved in having those interests.
4. The previous conditions must yield a goal-specific *trust* among members of the solidarity group.

If all four conditions are met mutually or reciprocally, robust solidarity also generates warranted reliance: members are warranted in trusting one another with respect to the group's executive interest.

Pickford argues that Marx's notion of social production fulfills all four conditions of robust solidarity as outlined by Taylor. In his *1844 Manuscripts*, Marx describes social "human production" as a mode of "productive activity" that finds the end or goal internal to its action in the fulfillment of another's need, and then is mirrored by finding one's own need fulfilled by the product made by another. Such mutual production constitutes mutual recognition of their common species-being and life-function, namely, creative human activity. Humans manifest social production, as a life-activity, as part of what it means for the human species collectively to live well. According to Pickford, social production qualifies as an example of robust solidarity: The "joint executive interest" is the satisfaction of the essential human needs of the collective. The mutual recognition inherent within social production, grounded cognitively in each member's final end, the intentions with which she acts, and grounded non-cognitively in the enjoyment of another's product and bond ("love") between them, entails a reciprocal identification with the group, disposition to empathy with the group, and mutual trust among members of the group. In this way, social production fulfills the four conditions that Taylor holds are required for robust solidarity.

Otherwise put, a social institution is *constructive* and *enabling* in our senses of those terms if and only if, in early Marxian terms, *it manifests robust solidarity via social production*.

2.2.2 Its Truth

As in the case of the mind-shaping thesis, we can demonstrate the truth of The Collective Wisdom Thesis by means of an appropriate minor modification of the same general strategy, as follows. For each case of a social institution *that is constructive and enabling*

first, consider a broad range of more-or-less ordinary but also especially insightful phenomenological observations about people's engagements with that social institution,
second, consider a broad range of historical, sociological, and empirical psychological evidence about people's engagements with that institution, and
third, conduct philosophical thought-experiments in order to isolate and track the specific characters of the various *collectively wise mind-shaping impacts* of that social institution on ourselves and other minded human animals like us.

For example, consider Will McGrath's description of Fort Lyon in "Radical Efforts to End Homelessness: A Sober Utopia" (McGrath 2017). Just a few miles from the Purgatoire River in Colorado, Fort Lyon has a complicated history. In 1864, it served as the staging grounds for the Sand Creek Massacre, in which United States militia members slaughtered a village of Cheyenne and Arapaho women, children, and elderly men. In 1906, it was converted into a Navy tuberculosis sanatorium, and, in the 1930s, it was reopened as a neuropsychiatric hospital by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Beginning in 2001, it operated as a minimum-security prison run by the state of Colorado for a decade. Then, in 2013, Fort Lyon reopened as a rehabilitation center for the drug-addicted homeless. Although this move generated great controversy, in just over three years of operation, Fort Lyon had enough success to

quiet many of its critics. More than 800 of Colorado's hardcore homeless have been served there, via housing, substance-abuse support, and education, and the program's 38 percent dropout rate is considerably lower than the national average for rehab programs.

According to James Ginsburg, director and co-founder of Fort Lyon, the vision was to let the needs of the people who came there drive the structure of the program, rather than create a rehab program and then force people to comply. He described Fort Lyon as "person-centric, not program-centric." When one man proposed building kaleidoscopes as part of his recovery, the staff at Fort Lyon found a way to get the man the materials he needed to build kaleidoscopes, and they later were displayed around campus and for sale at the store. "Instead of always looking at pathology, you can look at the other side of the coin," Ginsburg said…. "Why don't we try to enhance their strengths instead of trying to fix their pathology?" Everything at Fort Lyon has sprung from this mindset—what social workers refer to as a "strengths-based approach."

Throughout McGrath's lunch meeting with him, Ginsburg spoke of flattening the hierarchy, of empowering people, and of inherent human dignity. Residents at Fort Lyon are given great individual freedom. During the first 30 days, they are expected to attend drug- and alcohol-education classes and work with case managers to formulate a recovery plan. The ongoing expectation is that they attend a community meeting three mornings a week. Beyond that, it's up to them to decide how to spend their time. Every resident whom McGrath spoke with marveled at this radical autonomy. The standard rhythms of rehab, rushing from meeting to chore to counselor to another meeting, were absent at Fort Lyon. Ginsburg indicated that this was by design, an attempt to break the addict mindset: "always onto the next thing, the next stimulus, the next score." Colorado claims that homeless people cost the state an average of $46,000 per person per year. Fort Lyon, in contrast, spends just $19,825 per year to actively rehabilitate and reintegrate them into society, returning them to housing and into the workforce.

It is clear that Fort Lyon is a real-world example of a social institution that makes it really possible for people to self-realize, connect with others in a mutually aiding way, liberate themselves, and be mentally healthy, authentic, and deeply happy. Therefore, it is a constructive, enabling

social institution. Correspondingly, Fort Lyon also clearly manifests robust solidarity via social production: there is joint commitment to the needs of the collective, mutual trust, a disposition to empathy, and an emphasis on self-realization and autonomy.

Further proof of these claims can be extracted from McGrath's (2017) descriptions of the first-person observations of Richard, a then-current member of the Fort Lyon community. According to McGrath, Richard felt optimistic about how his recovery was unfolding at Fort Lyon. While he found band practice immensely therapeutic, even more significant was the fact that he had reunited with his daughter. With the encouragement of the girl's foster mother, he had begun visiting her every month. Because they hadn't seen each other for more than six years, Richard initially felt worried about how his daughter would react. However, at their first meeting, both father and daughter were overjoyed, and it was if they were never apart.

One night as McGrath and Richard talked outside the theater, Richard said that he had started planning for future employment and was looking into a renewable energy program offered by a nearby community college. Encouraged by the staff, he also had begun collecting scrap metal for recycling, and his operation had grown to the point that he needed to hire another resident to assist him. Richard shook his head in amused wonder as he explained to McGrath that he was now someone else's employer. He reported that with his next scrap load, he'd have saved enough money to buy a tablet that would allow him to start video-chatting with his daughter. Also, she had started taking piano lessons, and with the tablet he would be able to accompany her on drums.

Before he headed back to band practice, Richard also told McGrath about the day he arrived at Fort Lyon. McGrath writes:

> He'd heard about this strange program from a social worker in Denver and decided to see what might happen for him there. But when the van pulled up he realized he already knew the place—he had been incarcerated there in 2001, when Fort Lyon was a prison.
> "I was like, 'Oh my God! There ain't no fence!'"

Finally, consider the following philosophical thought-experimental question:

> "Had Richard not belonged to the Fort Lyon community, then how would his life have gone and how would his life now be different?"

Highly plausible answers to the two parts of that compound question, in view of the actual empirical evidence, are: (i) *unhappily*, and (ii) *in all likelihood, he would now be dead.*

2.3 The Collective Sociopathy Thesis

2.3.1 Its Meaning

Precisely because social institutions, as such, inherently have the potential to scaffold and support our abilities, values, and emerging sense of self by helping us to develop habits and skills that that we need to navigate our surroundings, they also inherently possess the potential to detract from our well-being, impede collective wisdom, and instead cultivate *collective stupidity*. By *collective stupidity*, we mean a relatively low level of social group coordination, creativity, problem-solving, and productivity, and correspondingly a relatively high level of group dysfunctionality, aka destructive *Gemeinschaft*. Here constraint is not spread diffusely throughout the group and freely and mutually negotiated, but rather imposed top-down by those in power. What results is not the well-coordinated social interaction we see in the case of participatory sense-making; instead, individual members are out of sync and out of step with one another, acting in mutual resistance, covertly or overtly undermining each other, or even maligning each other. Such groups suffer from blind spots, limited perspective, and blind conformity, and resulting decisions do not reflect a full range of perspectives. Rather than being authentically collaborative and allowing activities to unfold dynamically, such groups force people into a particular mold and channel their activities toward some pre-specified goal. Resulting decisions often are short-sighted and foolish.

In our view, neither collective wisdom nor collective stupidity should be understood exclusively in intellectualist or cognitivist terms. Instead, effective cognitive functioning is largely a matter of adaptive affective attunement. Just as mutually supportive and highly dialogical collaborative activity within groups serves to modulate and coordinate subjects' affective framings, so too does destructive and toxic group interaction. In each case, there is a web of shared norms and practices, and, correspondingly, a particular affective atmosphere that primes or solicits participants to think, feel, and behave in certain ways rather than others. Thus, the same recent work in cognitive psychology, social psychology, and organizational studies that we cited earlier in support of the thesis of collective wisdom also highlights the potential for collective stupidity. Such research indicates that collective stupidity is determined by high levels of socially-closed, top-down, conformist, but at the same time mutually antagonistic and competitive, non-collaborative, zero-sum, winner-takes-all, gaming-the-system-style activities within social groups. In such contexts, there is a collective lack of empathy, little interest in participatory sense-making, and heavy reliance on coercive measures to get others to do what you want them to do. As a result, even groups made up *entirely of people with very high IQs* can manifest very high levels of collective stupidity.

A more aggravated manifestation of collective stupidity is what we will call *collective sociopathy*. Collective sociopathy occurs when collectively stupid social institutions stop asking altogether whether what they are doing is morally right or wrong or seriously consider alternative ways of conducting their affairs; instead, they concentrate entirely on efficient ways of implementing established policies and on coercively imposing the directives of the group's administrative and/or governing elite. Those who belong to, or are under the jurisdiction of, those institutions often lack the power to effectively push back, resist, or even offer their input. As a result, these groups involve especially high degrees of coercion and vanishingly few opportunities for authentic collaboration. Perspective-taking and empathy become very, and sometimes even impossibly, difficult. At the same time, however, the "power elite," consisting of those individuals who administer, control, and/or directly govern sociopathic institutions, may seem to be otherwise quite normal, sane, and socially

well-adjusted individuals: they are "good, law-abiding citizens," and they love, look after, and more generally care for their partners, their children, their extended family and friends, their dogs, and so-on, and so forth. But, in an operative sense, they are social-institutional *sociopaths*.

The real-life, catastrophic paradigm of this, of course, was the Nazi bureaucracy's increasingly effective, increasingly satanic "solutions" to the "Jewish question." Eichmann, at least as portrayed by Arendt in *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, was the perfect "company man" or "organization man" in the modern world's most evil, murderous example of institutional sociopathy (similar institutionally sociopathic dynamic patterns can also be traced, e.g., in the brutal repression of the Paris Commune in 1871—see Merriman 2014). But in a slightly less satanic and more mundane, although equally important and currently urgent sense, many or even most social institutions in *contemporary neoliberal nation-states* likewise exhibit collective sociopathy. Indeed, some of the crucial insights from Czeslaw Milosz's (1955) classic critical essay on institutional sociopathy in post-War communist eastern Europe, *The Captive Mind*, can be extended to the cultural and political world-situation of the early twenty-first century. What these various social institutions have in common is that they operate on the assumption that the effective top-down implementation of policies and directives, without any serious critical reflection on the rational justifiability or moral permissibility of those policies and directives, is their be-all and end-all (see, for example, Schmidt 2000). As our examination of the case studies in Chaps. 4 and 5 will show, the result is that many or even most important social institutions in contemporary neoliberal societies manifest collective sociopathy, or at the very least, high levels of collective stupidity, to a greater or lesser degree.

We contend that such institutions, existing all around us, systematically shape our lives in such a way as to alienate us, mentally enslave us, or even undermine our mental health, to some salient degree. And in extreme cases—for example, widespread police brutality, gun violence, and *de facto* public executions of the kind loudly and rightly decried by the Black Lives Matter movement—they can also seriously injure us, torture us, or kill us. More generally and pervasively, these sociopathic institutions systematically *alienate us* in the sense that they create distance between our actual, essentially embodied lives and the satisfaction of our deepest human concerns and interests, to a salient degree. Such deep-rooted human interests include our desires for social connection, for cre-

ative activity, and for meaningful work that is autonomously chosen by us. Authentic collaboration *satisfies* these needs, whereas destructive, deforming social institutions systematically *frustrate* their satisfaction. Moreover, such institutions also *mentally enslave people*, in that they cultivate habits that are detrimental to their fundamental well-being and yet exceptionally difficult to resist. In large part, this is because people are systematically *praised* and *rewarded* for adopting these habits and systematically *reprimanded* and *punished* for rejecting them. These incentivized and coerced habits of attention, valuation, and response shape subjects' sense of what is relevant and important to such a great extent that it becomes extremely difficult, or even cognitively and affectively near-impossible, to question them or imagine things otherwise.

That being so, then many or even most social institutions in contemporary neoliberal democratic societies, to varying degrees, have a systematically *destructive* and *deforming* impact on the essentially embodied lives of all the minded human animals like us—"we, the people"—who belong to them, participate in them, or fall under their jurisdiction. They do so by systematically cultivating bad habits that etiolate human flourishing and thereby undermine people's ability to satisfy their deep-seated human needs. While such habits may allow people to survive inside and under the jurisdiction of these social institutions, they effectively distort and undermine their broader capacities for authentic interpersonal engagement, creativity, collaboration, and autonomous action. That, again, is The Collective Sociopathy Thesis.

2.3.2 Its Truth

Moreover, we can demonstrate the truth of this thesis by means of an appropriate minor modification of the same general strategy we proposed in the case of the mind-shaping thesis and the collective wisdom thesis, as follows. For each case of *a sociopathic social institution*—

first, consider a broad range of more-or-less ordinary but also especially insightful phenomenological observations about people's engagements with that social institution,

second, consider a broad range of historical, sociological, and empirical psychological evidence about people's engagements with that institution, and

third, conduct philosophical thought-experiments in order to isolate and track the specific characters of the various *collectively sociopathic mind-shaping impacts* of that social institution on ourselves and other minded human animals like us.

Consider, for example, the social institution of *gun ownership and use in the USA*, under the Second Amendment to the US Constitution, which reads:

> A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.

Phenomenologically, now consider your own responses to Howard Hawks's 1932 *Scarface*, Joseph H. Lewis's 1950 *Gun Crazy*, Martin Scorsese's 1990 *Goodfellas*, the Coen Brothers 1996 *Fargo* and 2007 *No Country for Old Men*, the real-life assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King Jr, Robert Kennedy, and John Lennon, the "contagious" social epidemic of gun violence in Chicago, especially including police shootings of young black men, in recent years (see, for example, Martell 2017), and the appalling daily and weekly record of mass murder due to gun violence during, for example, 2017 and 2018 (see, for example, Gun Violence Archive 2018).

Then empirically consider the *Wikipedia* entry that appears under the heading, "Gun Violence in the United States" (Wikipedia 2018c). This entry points out that gun violence results in thousands of deaths and injuries in the United States each year, and that of the 2,596,993 total deaths in the US in 2013, 1.3% were related to firearms. In 2010, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 67% of all homicides in the U.S. were committed using a firearm. In that same year, gun violence cost U.S. taxpayers approximately $516 million in direct hospital costs. Although mass shootings have received great attention in the media, they account for a small fraction of gun-related deaths, and the frequency of these events steadily declined between 1994 and 2007 (but

rose again between 2007 and 2013). Also relevant is the fact that the gun and ammunition industry in the USA has an annual revenue of *13.5 billion dollars* (see, for example, Popkin 2015).

Finally, also consider the following philosophical thought-experimental question:

> Had the American people repealed the Second Amendment in 1865, and instead had put in its place in that year an amendment for *the abolition of guns*, comparable to the 13th Amendment for *the abolition of slavery* that was actually enacted in 1865, then how many lives would have been saved since then, and how would our everyday lives be different now?

In view of actual empirical evidence, it is possible to provide at least an educated philosophical guess towards a partial answer to that question. Since 1968, that is, over the last 49 years, more than 1.5 million people have been killed by guns in the USA (see, e.g., Kristof 2015; Jacobson 2015). Since the American Revolution, 1.4 million people have died in wars on US soil, most of them by means of guns (Kristof 2015; Jacobson 2015). Since the American Revolution, four wars have occurred on US soil: the American Revolutionary War (1775-1783), the War of 1812 (1812-1815), the Civil War (1861-1865), and the Spanish-American War (1898). So 1.4 million people have died in all wars on US soil over a 16 year period, most of them by means of guns. Therefore, roughly 2.9 million people have been killed by guns over a period spanning only slightly more than one-quarter of US political history, i.e., 49 + 16 = 65 years. Now, how many people were killed by guns in the USA during the 103 years between 1865 and 1968, but not in wars? There are no precise data on this, but let us say, very conservatively, 1 million people. This would mean that the total number of people killed by guns between 1865 and 2017 is, *at the very least*, 1 million people + 1.5 million people = 2.5 million people. Therefore, had the American people repealed the Second Amendment in 1865, and had they put in its place in that year an amendment for the abolition of guns, comparable to the 13th Amendment for the abolition of slavery that was actually enacted in 1865, *then, at the very least, 2.5 million people would have lived longer lives, many of them significantly longer lives*, and, *other things being equal, no one living in the USA since 1865 would have had to fear being coerced or killed by guns*.

Let us briefly consider another example, by no means peculiar to the USA. One obvious and indeed globally-employed way to increase corporate capitalist profits in contemporary neoliberal societies is to convince the majority of voters that a particular group of people—in most cases, recent immigrants or refugees, whether legal or illegal, belonging to a single racial, ethnic, or foreign-language-speaking class—is naturally well-suited to perform low-wage, unpleasant, soul-destroying work. This conviction, in turn, then serves

not only (i) as an implicit or explicit rationale for oppressively and immorally exploiting their labor,

but also, both hypocritically and maliciously, (ii) as an apparently sufficient reason to blame and hate this particular group for supposedly causing serious levels of unemployment among those who are not recent immigrants or refugees, and simultaneously to call for an immediate stop to immigration and also demand that well-armed police relentlessly chase down and deport all "illegal aliens" (see, for example, Hernández 2010).

2.4 Mind-Shaping Inside Sociodynamic Systems

As we pointed out in Chap. 1, in view of The Essential Embodiment Theory, creatures with conscious, intentional minds like ours are *necessarily and completely neurobiologically embodied*, which is to say that creatures like us are nothing more and nothing less than *minded animals*. More precisely, our dynamically emergent, irreducible, sentient and sapient minds are also necessarily interdependent with our own living organismic animal bodies and not essentially distinct from them; we are complex, self-organizing thermodynamic systems; we act by intentionally moving our bodies by means of our desire-based emotions and trying; and our conscious, essentially embodied minds are causally efficacious precisely because they are metaphysically continuous with our biological lives, and life is basically causally efficacious in physical nature. Furthermore, our

animal mindedness is *body*-bounded, and neither *brain*-bounded nor *extended* beyond the living human body.

Mindedness consists fundamentally of affective framings, which encompass an embodied subject's temperament, bodily-affective style, and habitual modes of expression and response. All other forms of human mindedness, even those as seemingly abstract and recherché as doing higher mathematics, formal logic, or philosophy, grow out of the essentially embodied matrix of affective framings. This is because affective framing is crucial for solving the so-called frame problem; it allows minded human animals to gauge what is relevant and selectively focus their attention (Maiese 2011). If so, then even the selection of particular philosophical premises, or of a particular move during a game of chess, is modulated by affectivity and bodily feelings of import. If subjects did not rely on affective framing, then they would be faced with a potentially endless array of possible cognitive and interpretive options, and would be unable to function effectively.

Such affective framings are shaped over the course of learning and development and continuously formed and reformed through interaction with the environment. Because our animal mindedness, which consists fundamentally in affective framing, is the same as the complex dynamic, immanent structure of our living bodies, then both our essentially embodied minds as well as our lives are partially determined and literally shaped by the social institutions to which we belong. Therefore, both the destructive, deforming activities of collectively sociopathic institutions in contemporary neoliberal societies, as well as the constructive, enabling activities of collectively wise institutions, constitute ancillary, external *sociodynamic systems.* Such sociodynamic systems have a causal, irreducibly normative influence on the complex, self-organizing neurobiological processes that constitute our essentially embodied minds.

But as our mind-shaping thesis states, there is reciprocal causality at work here. Just as individuals are molded by way of social institutions, their actions and responses "feed back to change the environment in niche-construction" (Protevi 2009, p. 21). This notion of niche construction (Sterelny 2010) emphasizes that minded animals not only adapt to their social environment, but also can alter and reshape that environment to suit their interests and needs. Individuals and social groups therefore

are linked in what Deleuze calls "mutual presupposition"; the behavior of the individuals is "patterned by the social group to which they belong; and it is this very patterning [of individuals] that allows the functioning of the social group" (Protevi 2009, p. 39). Through their active and reactive responses, individuals can influence the workings of social institutions. John Protevi rightly points out that the dynamics at work are incredibly complicated. He points to a wide array of socializing practices, including gendering, racializing, classing, religionizing, and nationalizing. All of these differential practices are part of the complex dynamic phase space for the production of individuals and social groups, with shifting attractor layouts as these various formative influences clash or resonate with each other (Protevi 2009, p. 41). These socializing practices also enter into complex feedback relations with particular individuals, who have their own unique psychological and biological histories and habits, and who succumb to or resist these socializing practices to varying degrees. This is further complicated by the fact that people engage with the sociodynamic systems of these institutions not merely as individual subjects, but also *intersubjectively*. How does the intersubjectivity of minded human animals, especially those who belong to social institutions in contemporary neoliberal societies, manifest itself?

In *Embodied Minds in Action*, we described embodied minds as intentional, motile, suitably neurobiologically complex living organisms—namely, as minded animals. We argued that just as we have conscious feelings and spontaneously move our own living bodies because of, and by means of, those feelings, so, too, do other minded animals. We perceive this, and affectively respond with some further bodily movements of our own. To the extent that we are all doing this, we are all empathically mirroring each other. This leads to a reciprocal, mutual modulation of affective framings, whereby we mimic one another's habits of engagement and interpretation. Correspondingly, our theory of social institutions, in effect, significantly and also radically extends and updates classic Weberian and phenomenologically-oriented studies like Alfred Schutz's *Der sinnhafte Aufbau der sozialen Welt*,[3] but in the new metaphysical context of The Essential Embodiment Theory.

This makes it possible for us, in turn, for us to provide a fundamentally deeper and richer account of how participatory sense-making and genu-

ine collaboration emerge, insofar as they essentially depend on bodily attunement and the mutual modulation of subjects' affective framings. Particularly in instances of direct, face-to-face social encounters, subjects undergo a pronounced "affective re-orientation" that changes how they view and interpret their surroundings. This is because once two interactors become part of a coupled system, their bodily dynamics and affective framing patterns become entrained to some extent, so that each person's expressions, behaviors, and desires modulate those of the other person. This entrainment of affective framing patterns is well exemplified by the many examples of so-called "motor resonance," bodily reverberation, affective transformation, bodily attunement, and bodily coordination that we highlighted earlier. During second-personal (I-thou) or multi-personal (I-us) interaction, the cares and concerns of each party shift and the bodily dynamics of individual interactors are modulated. Habit, posture, and body alignment begin to resonate, so that other people exert a contagious pull—often without our being self-consciously aware of it. As a result, our affective framing patterns are continuously being mutually influenced and reshaped by the feelings, desires, emotions, cares, and concerns of others.

Such considerations suggest that when it comes to our embeddedness in social institutions, the second-person relation is primary (Protevi 2009, p. 45). This sort of bodily attunement and mutual modulation begins when we are infants, and then grows more complex and sophisticated over time. As we get older, our felt needs and desires become more wide-ranging and varied, and we develop a range of projects that involve a great many aims and goals and require a vast array of bodily skills. Many or even most of these goals require us to interact with others, to exchange information with them, and to enlist their assistance. To a large extent, navigating particular social institutions rests on background knowledge about social roles, social norms, and the functions of various artifacts, such as telephones, computers, and cars. Such artifacts afford certain kinds of action, and which action opportunities they offer is integral to our sense of what they are. Labor is divided according to certain roles, signs cue and solicit particular actions, and there are particular patterns of activity that regularly occur (and come to be expected) in specific social situations. The assumption is that others inhabit the same social

world we do, so that "as one coordinates one's activities with others, one need not attribute intentional states but can instead work on the implicit assumption that they will do 'what people are supposed to do' in that kind of environment" (Ratcliffe 2007, p. 91).

No doubt, the norms which express "what people are supposed to do" play an integral role in constraining people's behavior, priming it, and soliciting or demanding some forms of action and expression rather than others. All our habits are normative insofar as they are acquired through training, instruction, or socialization, and are subject to evaluation or assessment (Burkitt 2002, p. 233). We then can speak of "institutional habits of mind": individuals come to be habituated in line with the norms, affective patterns, and expectations prevalent in that social domain.

At first glance, it is *co-institutionalized agents themselves,* aka *"colleagues,"* who predominantly act as "mutual normative enforcers, keeping one another in line" (Slaby 2016, p. 25). But on further examination, we recognize that each individual subject inside or under the jurisdiction of a social institution, *also keeps herself in line*, by way of various processes of self-monitoring, self-policing, and self-governing. Along these lines, Foucault says that "subjectivation" and "technologies of the self" can be understood as "processes through which the self is constructed or modified by himself" (Foucault 1993, p. 203-204). Norms become anchored within the acting subject through more or less internalized social controls (Allen 2009, p. 17). Individuals act upon themselves to sustain particular behaviors and cultivate specific traits and habits, namely those that are expected or encouraged in the context of a specific social institution. Subjects' capacity for self-control and self-governance thereby is directed at sustaining the habits of mind demanded by that social setting. This occurs in part because habituation and the development of particular modes of thought and behavior begin from the time we are born, and well before we are capable of self-examination or self-reflection. By virtue of the human need for social recognition and connection, some form of social attachment likely is necessary for psychic survival. Because children cannot distinguish between subordinating and non-subordinating modes of identity, they are vulnerable to becoming attached to and invested in

habits of mind and forms of subjectivity that are oppressive (Allen 2009, p. 25).

Moreover, detrimental habits of mind often have some sort of affective pull, in large part because there are immediate rewards associated with their cultivation. Such rewards often have much to do with our natural desire for to fit in and be accepted by others, and to emulate modes of subjectivity that society has deemed ideal. Consider, for example, the oppressive beauty ideal of "being skinny" and how many women (and also men) derive rewards from their efforts to live up to this ideal, despite the fact that it also harms them in important ways. Obsessive dieting emerges as a "technology of self" whereby subjects perform operations on their own body, thoughts, and conduct in order to transform them, and yet harm themselves in the process. Once someone "gears" his or her freedom to an oppressive situation, there may not be any acknowledgement of other alternatives. Thus, by internalizing social norms, a subject can become "the principle of his own subjection" (Hamann 2009, p. 51).

Our *social-institutional life*, as minded human animals, therefore should be understood as *a set of shared normative forms of human life,* each of which—

i. is made manifest through the intentional body movements of essentially embodied agents, which *empathically mirror* and directly respond to the intentional body movements of other essentially embodied agents, and
ii. has its *own specific structure and sociodynamics*, whether destructive and deforming (collective sociopathy), or constructive and enabling (collective wisdom).

In Chap. 6, we will work out a general account of constructive, enabling social institutions. But before we can do that, it is necessary to undertake a more detailed account of their cognitive, affective-emotional, practical, ethical, and political *contrary*, that is, destructive, deforming social institutions inside contemporary neoliberal nation-states.

Notes

1. Although the feelings, desires, and emotions of affective framing do typically occur outside of reflective self-awareness, they are integral parts of our lived bodily experience.
2. It is also worth noting that Froese and Di Paolo (2011) describe the self-organization of these structures strictly in terms of neural dynamics and maintain that the relative independence of the nervous system from the rest of the living body is what allows for the emergence of these autonomous structures. Their approach thereby contains remnants of BRAINBOUND and reflects the notion that cognition and consciousness are only *instrumentally* dependent on bodily dynamics. Instead, we hold that these autonomous structures should be described in terms of *both* brain *and* body dynamics.
3. Literally translated: *the meaning-laden structure of the social world*. See Schutz (1967).

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3

What Is a Destructive, Deforming Institution?

Henry David Thoreau and John Stuart Mill were almost exact contemporaries of Marx. And just like Marx, in the USA and in Britain respectively, even allowing for their other philosophical differences, Thoreau and Mill were serious critics of what we are calling *destructive, deforming institutions.* Thoreau writes:

> The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation… A stereotyped but unconscious despair is concealed even under what are called the games and amusements of mankind. There is no play in them, because this comes after work. But it is a characteristic of wisdom not to do desperate things… it appears as if men had deliberately chosen the common mode of living because they preferred it to any other…. [T]hey honestly think there is no choice left. (Thoreau 1995, pp. 4–5)

Similarly, Mill observes that everyone in his own society, regardless of socioeconomic class, lives their life as if they were constantly being censored. They continually ask themselves not what they would prefer, what would suit their character, or what would advance their well-being; rather, they remain focused on what sort of conduct is suitable to someone in their position and circumstances. According to Mill, it is not that they

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prefer to do what it customary rather than what suits them. Instead, he says, "it does not occur to them to have any inclination except for what is customary." Their range of perceived options consists only of things that are commonly done, and oddness and eccentricity are shunned as if they were crimes. The result is that "they become incapable of any strong wishes or native pleasures, and are generally without either opinions or feelings of home growth, or properly their own" (Mill 1977, p. 265). This inability to think for oneself seems highly undesirable, and that in turn raises a broader question: why do humans display such strong tendencies to conform?

In Chap. 2, we described how affordances belong to a wider sociocultural context, and how individuals develop habits against the backdrop of this context. Gaining an "optimal grip" on the surrounding social world requires that people adapt continuously to those around them and let social norms and contextual features constrain their behavior. If someone exhibited genuine surprise or disbelief each time she encountered a chair, she would act inappropriately in a strong sense: she would "fail to make sense because [she fails] to share with others a way of acting, of responding, to everyday things" (Van Dijk and Rietveld 2017, p. 5). Similarly, if someone exhibited genuine surprise or disbelief each time a person posted a selfie on social media or spoke of higher education as the pathway to a job, she would fail to share with others a way of responding appropriately. Successfully navigating a particular social setting requires that one engage effectively with affordances in an optimal way, that is, in accordance with standing practices and the way that this social situation demands. Actively maintained standing practices thereby give rise to relatively stable and regular ways of doing things, and we have suggested that these regularities in behavior and attention can be understood as the shared habits of a culture.

In some cases, in the event that these relatively stable patterns of action and attention constitute "bad habits" that prove to be detrimental to human flourishing, we can speak of standing practices and shared expectations that are *toxic*. Correspondingly, we can speak of the social institutions that operate according to these practices and norms as destructive. Simply put, destructive, deforming social institutions are *social institutions that make it difficult or even impossible for people who belong to them*

to satisfy their true human needs. However, in order to understand this claim properly, we need to spell out its conceptual background.

3.1 True Needs, False Needs, False Freedom of Choice, and Collective Sociopathy

In his online essay, "The Big Brotherhood," Philip Pettit asks us to imagine the position of women in relation to men in a society where husbands have legal power over their wives (Pettit 2017). This includes the power to determine where they may appear in public, with whom they may associate, and what church they may attend. Then, he asks us to imagine a woman whose husband dotes on her, as Torvald dotes on Nora in Ibsen's play, *A Doll's House*, giving her free reign to act as she wills. Does Nora enjoy freedom of choice? Pettit thinks not. After all, she can only act as she wishes because Torvald is willing to let her act as she wishes. Insofar as she depends on his will for being able to act as she wills, it is *his will* that ultimately has control. According to Pettit, these observations yield important insights about the new domain of digital communication:

> We all now recognize, as we receive advertising that reflects our past choices, that the companies on which we rely for various services have a means of targeting us individually, a means of keeping tabs on our movements, and a means, in principle, of interfering coercively in our lives. Thus they have the means of exposing us to shame for any embarrassing use of the internet; exposing us to financial restriction—in effect, penalties—for any evidence of carelessness in the use of our funds; and exposing us to governmental surveillance for possibly suspicious activities.
>
> This exposure to the possibility of interference means that in a realm of personal freedom, as we might have thought of it, we are not actually free. We may not suffer any of the penalties to which we are exposed. But, as in the case of Nora and Torvald, the exposure is sufficient in itself to compromise our freedom. (Pettit 2017)

Pettit's immediate target here is the way in which seeming "freedom of choice" in our everyday use of social media, and digital communication more generally, can actually hide an oppressive and repressive system of

Orwellian, *1984*-style "Big Brother"-esque social and political control of ordinary people's lives by a global network of fabulously rich and powerful corporations like Facebook and Google. But for our purposes here, we are interested in two more general points that build on Pettit's argument.

In order to arrive at those two points, however, we are going to need a distinction between what we will call: (i) *true human needs* and (ii) *false human needs*. In that connection, Herbert Marcuse says that "human needs are historical needs and, to the extent to which the society demands the repressive development of the individual, his needs themselves and their claim for satisfaction are subject to overriding critical standards" (Marcuse 1964, ch. 1). He then goes on to distinguish between false need and true needs. False needs are those which are superimposed upon the individual by particular social interests, and which lead to his repression. Although the satisfaction of needs that perpetuate aggressiveness, misery, and injustice may be gratifying to the individual, this happiness need not be maintained if it impedes the development of that individual and others. Examples of false needs, Marcuse says, include the need to relax, to have fun, to behave and consume in accordance with the advertisements, and to love and hate what others love and hate. These needs "have a societal content and function which are determined by external powers over which the individual has no control." No matter how much the individual reproduces and identifies himself with such needs, they remain products of a society that demands repression.

And here is how we want to appropriate and update Marcuse's highly insightful remarks within our theoretical framework. *True human needs* are universal across humanity, and essentially bound up with *human dignity* in the Kantian sense. By "*human dignity* in the Kantian sense" we mean the absolute, nondenumerably infinite, intrinsic, objective value of rational human free agents, or human *persons*, as "ends-in-themselves," and *neither* mere means (that is, mere instruments to other desired ends) *nor* mere things (that is, items with at most relative, economic, extrinsic, egoistic value). Metaphysically speaking, human persons are essentially embodied minded human animals possessing a unified set of innate basic capacities for consciousness (subjective experience), affect (feeling, desire, and emotion), cognition and rationality (including sense perception, memory, imagination, conceptualization, belief or judgment, logical rea-

soning, and practical reasoning), self-consciousness, and free agency. According to this metaphysical picture, dignity necessarily flows from personhood, which in turn necessarily flows from this unified set of capacities (see, for example, Hanna 2018b, c).

In turn, against the backdrop of this dignitarian, person-oriented, capacities-based metaphysics of the rational human animal, true human needs are of two different but closely-connected kinds.

First, some true human needs are such that their satisfaction is *a necessary condition of all human dignity*. Let us call those *the basic human needs.* For example, among the basic human needs are everyone's needs for—

i. adequate nourishment, adequate clothing, and adequate accommodation,
ii. adequate physical and mental health, as sustained by adequate healthcare,
iii. adequate access to a healthy natural environment, both local and global,
iv. adequate scope for human movement and travel across the earth,
v. adequate protection from coercion by others,
vi. adequate access to human companionship and human communication, and
vii. adequate primary and secondary education.

Since satisfying these basic human needs is a necessary condition for human dignity, then *respect* for human dignity demands that everyone, everywhere should always *have enough of whatever it takes to satisfy their basic human needs.*

Second, over and above the basic human needs, all other true human needs are *those whose satisfaction most fully conform to the absolute, nondenumerable, intrinsic, objective value of human dignity*. The satisfaction of such needs allows people to exercise their various capacities and realize their potentiality for being individually autonomous, relationally autonomous, individually flourishing, and collectively flourishing, in ways that also are fully compatible with and fully supportive of the agential autonomy, relational autonomy, individual flourishing, and collective

flourishing *of everyone else*. Let us call those *the humanity-realizing needs*. For example, among the humanity-realizing needs are everyone's needs for—

i. aesthetic enjoyment of all kinds,
ii. intimate personal relationships of all kinds, for example, families, life-partners, lovers, close friends, etc.,
iii. social and political solidarity of all kinds,
iv. free thought and free speech of all kinds,
v. creative self-expression of all kinds,
vi. meaningful work of all kinds,
vii. higher education of all kinds, and
viii. spirituality of all kinds.

Since it is arguable that the ultimate goal, purpose, or meaning of human life is no more and no less than *to pursue the satisfaction of humanity-realizing needs*, then *respect* for human dignity demands that everyone, everywhere, should always *have enough of whatever it takes for them to be able to pursue their humanity-realizing needs*. And then by direct oppositional contrast with true human needs, we can now also define *false human needs* as:

> anything that people desire, no matter how intensely or repeatedly, whose satisfaction represses, suppresses, or in any way impedes, undermines, counteracts, or outright destroys the satisfaction of their own or other people's true human needs.

Granting for the purposes of argument our general distinction between true and false human needs, and our sub-distinction between basic true human needs and humanity-realizing true human needs, we can see that Pettit and Marcuse are telling us two things.

First, in contemporary neoliberal societies like the USA, the very idea of so-called "freedom of choice," far from being a necessary ground of the satisfaction of our true human needs, in fact denotes an all-embracing, global, mass media-driven and social media-driven system through which our *true* human needs, both as individuals and as social beings, are systematically replaced by *false* human needs. Such replacement takes place

in order to serve the economic, social, and political interests of a global network of fabulously rich and powerful individuals and corporations (aka "the 1%" or "the billionaire boys club"), and their *power satellites*: that is, their exceptionally well-paid and privileged employees, servants, and toadies. This power network frequently is closely interlinked with national governments and their security and military establishments, which comprise what has been variously called "the military-industrial complex" (Eisenhower—see, for example, Wikipedia 2018a), "the power elite" (C. Wright Mills—see, for example, Mills 1956/2000 and Wikipedia 2018b), and "the deep state" (Mike Lofgren—see, for example, Lofgren 2014). But for our purposes here, let us call this, following Pettit (and, of course, also George Orwell's *1984*), *The Big Brotherhood*. Correspondingly, we will also call the so-called "freedom of choice" brought to us by The Big Brotherhood, *false freedom of choice*.

Second, much of the political activity in contemporary neoliberal democratic states like the USA is ultimately designed by The Big Brotherhood to get people to conform to, support, and vote for what satisfies their *false* human needs, not their *true* human needs, by seducing them into thinking that their supposedly all-important false freedom of choice will be increased, or at least preserved, by doing so. The reality, of course, is that freedom of choice in a neoliberal society will be confined largely to decisions about what sorts of products and services to consume. As Harvey (2005) aptly notes, neoliberalism offers "a world of pseudo-satisfactions that is superficially exciting but hollow at its core" (p. 170).

Three perfect examples of false human needs, accompanied by all sorts of false freedom of choice in the specific means of their satisfaction, are:

i. the more or less intense, driving desire to possess more money, property, and adult playthings than 99% of the rest of the world's population—in effect, to belong to the power elite and set of its power satellites, The Big Brotherhood, so that we can choose between (a) making many hundreds of thousands of dollars a year *or* (b) being a millionaire *or* (c) being a one-billionaire *or* …,
ii. the more or less intense, driving desire to be using social media constantly, day and night—so that we can choose between (a) Facebook *or* (b) Twitter *or* (c) Snapchat *or* …, and

iii. the more or less intense, driving desire to own and use guns—so that we can choose between (a) a revolver *or* (b) a rifle *or* (c) a semi-automatic *or* ….

We think that it is a self-evident fact that many or even most Americans have one or more of these three false human needs to a significant degree. We think that it is another self-evident fact that although the correlation is not perfectly one-to-one, there is a very high positive correlation between (a) all false human needs and (b) distinct advertisements projected at us via the mass media and social media. And we also think that it is yet another self-evident fact that false human needs and false freedom of choice are seriously deforming and destructive for us, both individually and collectively.

As we noted at the outset of this chapter, in the mid-nineteenth century Thoreau profoundly observed that "the mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation," manifesting itself as "a stereotyped but unconscious despair" that fully pervades and pre-reflectively guides "the common mode of living." Echoing his contemporary, Mill equally profoundly pointed out that "by dint of not following their own nature, [people] have no nature to follow: their human capacities are withered and starved." We think that Thoreau's and Mill's nineteenth century social insights hold even more widely and more truly for our own twenty-first century lives, in a world controlled by The Big Brotherhood. Since Thoreau and Mill, we have learned to formulate the almost-universal condition of our "lives of quiet desperation" and our withered, starved human capacities in early Marx's existential humanist terms, as *alienation* under the all-commodifying system of large-scale, advanced capitalism. Nevertheless, the classical Thoreauvian, Millian, and Marxist solutions for alienation—Thoreau's Emersonian self-reliance and nature romanticism, Mill's passionate appeal to individuality, eccentricity, and "experiments in living," and Marx's proletarian revolution and communism—have all patently failed to alleviate or prevent our current condition. What has gone wrong?

Let us suppose that the early Marx's existential humanist critique of nineteenth century large-scale capitalism and the Frankfurt School critique of rationality in fascist and other totalitarian states, including

big-capitalist (aka "advanced capitalist," "late capitalist," etc.) states, are both fundamentally cogent and correct, as we believe they are. Then, allowing for critical updates to accommodate real-world sociocultural and historical developments from the mid-nineteenth century through the twentieth century and into the first two decades of the twenty-first century, we think that the fundamental problem is *the collective sociopathy of many or even most social institutions in contemporary neoliberal nation-states*.

What, in general, explains this collective sociopathy? We want to claim that, in general, it is the result of the systematic interplay of three basic factors:

i. *neoliberal* ideology,
ii. a *scientistic* worldview, when it is specifically applied to *the administrative organization and control of society,* which we call *socio-scientism*, and
iii. the *coercive authoritarianism* of contemporary neoliberal nation-states.

As we mentioned in Chap. 1, by *neoliberalism*, we mean the sociopolitical doctrine that combines:

i. *classical Hobbesian liberalism*, according to which people are essentially self-interested and mutually antagonistic, hence require a coercive central government to ensure their mutual non-interference and individual pursuit of self-interested goals, with
ii. *the valorization of capitalism*, especially global corporate capitalism, and
iii. *technocracy*, the scientifically-guided control and mastery of human nature and physical nature alike, for the sake of pursuing individually and collectively self-interested ends and big-capitalist ends.

Now by *scientism* (see also Haack 2018), we mean the philosophical doctrine that combines:

i. *scientific naturalism*, according to which everything whatsoever in the human or natural world, especially including organismic life,

consciousness, intentionality, rationality, meaning, truth, and normativity is explanatorily and ontologically reducible to contingent facts knowable only by the natural sciences, especially physics, chemistry, and biology, with

ii. *natural mechanism*, according to which everything whatsoever in the human or natural world, no matter how it appears to us, is ultimately a natural machine made out of fundamentally physical parts, caused by basic physical forces according to deterministic or statistical laws of nature, whose basic physical properties and behaviors can all be computed on an ideal digital computer—a universal Turing machine—given a fixed set of initial conditions, for example, the Big Bang.

And by *coercion* we mean what happens when some people (the coercers) force other people (the coerced) to obey their commands and/or do things for them, either by means of violence or the threat of violence (primary coercion), or by means of some other appreciable, salient nonviolent harm or threatened nonviolent harm, say, reprimanding someone, fining them, or terminating their employment (secondary coercion), for purely instrumental reasons. Or in other words, coercers treat the coerced like *mere means* or *mere things* in order to serve their self-interested or publicly beneficial ends, either by means of violence or the threat of violence, or by means of some other appreciable, salient nonviolent harm or threatened nonviolent harm. Correspondingly by *authoritarianism*, we mean the doctrine that telling people to obey commands and do things is legitimated merely by virtue of the fact that some people (the purported authorities) have *told* them to obey those commands or do those things—"it's right just because we say it's right!"—and are also in a position to enforce this by means of coercion, not on any rationally justified or objectively morally defensible grounds.

What, then, is the specific connection between neoliberalism, scientism, and coercive authoritarianism in contemporary nation-states?

In *Seeing Like a State*, his brilliant study of the disastrous failures of many large-scale, state-driven schemes for social engineering, James C. Scott (1998) maintains that "the most tragic episodes [in the history of such schemes]…originate in a pernicious combination of four elements" (p. 4). The first element is the administrative ordering of nature

and society. Examples of these state simplifications include the economic plan, survey map, record of ownership, and forest management plan. By themselves, they are unremarkable tools of modern statecraft that can be used either to promote welfare or undergird tyrannical policies. The second element is what Scott calls a "high-modernist ideology" (p. 4). This ideology originated in the West as a by-product of unprecedented progress in science and industry and is "best conceived as a strong, one might even say muscle-bound, version of… self-confidence about scientific and technical progress" (p. 4). Only when these first two elements are joined to a third do they become potentially lethal. This third element is an authoritarian state and that is willing and able to use its coercive power to enact and impose these high-modernist designs. The fourth element is a "prostrate civil society that lacks the capacity to resist" (p. 5) these plans. The four elements taken together produce "full-fledged disaster" (p. 4).

What Scott calls "high-modernist ideology" is essentially the same as what we are calling "socio-scientism." So, in other words, adapting and extending Scott's highly insightful analysis, we are saying that the combination of

i. neoliberal ideology,
ii. socio-scientism, and
iii. coercive authoritarianism,

when applied to "a prostrate civil society that lacks the capacity to resist," produces *full-fledged disaster*. This full-fledged disaster is the almost-universal human condition of our "lives of quiet desperation," "stereotyped but unconscious despair," and more generally *alienation* in early Marx's sense: that is, the pre-reflectively conscious, essentially embodied, socially-shaped condition whereby our "human capacities are withered and starved." In this condition, it is difficult or even impossible to satisfy our true human needs, and especially our *humanity-realizing* needs.[1] This is because the customary attitudes and standing practices associated with neoliberal societies do not afford the sorts of thoughts, affects, and actions that allow for the realization of such needs.

True freedom of choice, by sharp contrast, is nothing more and nothing less than our being able to choose the most effective means of our own

and everyone's else emancipation from false "freedom of choice" and The Big Brotherhood, for the sake of pursuing the satisfaction of our own and everyone else's true human needs. In Chaps. 6 and 7 we will provide a more detailed picture of collectively wise, constructive, enabling social institutions, and then discuss a method for designing them. Now we turn to a more precise characterization of destructive, deforming institutions.

3.2 Eight Criteria, How to Make Them Vivid, and How to Explain Them

Here are eight criteria of social-institutional *collective sociopathy*—hence, eight criteria of destructive, deforming social institutions—in contemporary neoliberal nation-states, alongside brief elaborations of each criterion.

3.2.1 Commodification

Inside a destructive, deforming institution, the subject experiences the detachment of the products of her labor from the productive activity itself, and begins to feel like a mere instrument for producing that alienated product. In the advanced stages of this social process, the subject eventually comes to frame everything as material goods to be bought and sold, even if this perverts the true value of the object in question and distorts her understanding of its meaning. Affective framings come to be centered on money and commercial success, and individuals and groups increasingly define themselves and their aspirations in market terms.

3.2.2 Mechanization

Inside a destructive, deforming institution, organic processes of social production in Marx's sense are transformed into codified, computable, rote processes. In the larger context of neoliberalism, things begin to be framed in wholly quantifiable, economic terms and evaluated in terms of the maximization of profit. The conventional affordances and standing

practices which lend things their meaning all revolve around input-output "efficiency," so that everything appears to be a mere "cog" in the big-capitalist mega-machine.

3.2.3 Coercion

Inside a destructive, deforming institution, ideological and behavioral discipline are externally imposed by a graded system of punishments ranging from reprimands to public shaming to dismissal/exile to blacklisting, or (in more extreme cases) from threats of violence, to actual violence—assault, torture, or killing. Thus, there are great costs associated with framing things differently or acting contrary to what the social institution demands, while at the same time, there are significant rewards associated with compliance. This coercive situation, in turn, produces a strong, mutually reinforcing, individual and social temptation to *normalize*, that is, passively to accept the institutional status quo, no matter how bad it is.

Indeed, there are all-too-many historical cases that illustrate how only a few people need to be *publicly coerced* in order to produce widespread normalization. Examples include early modern punishment practices of drawing-and-quartering or hanging for relatively minor crimes, and then displaying the severed body-parts or full corpses of executed criminals in public squares or at crossroads; more recent mass-media-displayed cases of Stalinist show trials in the Soviet Union and the McCarthy era House Committee on Un-American Activities (aka HUAC)'s treatment of the Hollywood Ten in the USA; and now, at the end of the second decade of the twenty-first century, all-too-many contemporary cases of journalists being imprisoned without any legal justification or due process, or tortured and brutally murdered, solely for the purposes of ghastly political theater (see, for example, Reporters Without Borders 2018).

But coercion can be *covert* and *subtle* too, introduced, for example, via what Rainer Mühlhoff and Jan Slaby (2017) call "affective techniques." This is the way that social institutions organize our essentially embodied affective framings—in, for example, contemporary workplace environments, alongside "professional colleagues," who are also often framed as

"team-mates"—in order to control our behavior by means of covert, subtle threats, often without our self-consciousness awareness of what is happening to us. As Mühlhoff and Slaby point out:

> The deployment of affective techniques displaces the aspect of governance into the inexplicit—thus evading easy verbalization—and into the personal, where it is masked behind what is supposed to feel like inherent motivation or, in case of failure, comes across as personal insufficiency. Direct articulation of structural failures, let alone acts of disobedience, resistance, and empowerment in these arrangements, face the paradox of going against one's own professional self-image and threaten one's friendly attachments to colleagues. (p. 17)

Moreover, as we noted in Chap. 2, individuals embedded in social institutions also begin to monitor and police *their own attitudes, choices, and actions* so that they comply with the demands of the relevant institutions. Some of "the work that individuals perform upon themselves in order to become certain kinds of subjects" (Hamann 2009, p. 38) includes shifting their manner of speaking, disciplining themselves so that their behavior conforms to established rules, and modifying their modes of valuation in accordance with dominant or "hegemonic" ideology. In order to navigate a social setting successfully, individuals need to coordinate their behavior with others and adapt continuously to social expectations and demands. But when standing practices do not allow for the satisfaction of true human needs, acting "appropriately" can be seriously damaging.

3.2.4 Divided Mind

Inside a destructive, deforming institution, the subject feels as if her first-order consciousness is detaching itself from her self-consciousness, so that she begins to experience herself *from the outside*, as if she herself were nothing but an ordinary external object in her own field of vision. This is because as she begins to frame things in the way that the social institution and its standing practices demand, she is cut off from some or even all of her true human needs, especially the humanity-realizing needs.

3.2.5 Reversal of Affect

Inside a destructive, deforming institution, the subject comes to hate what she used to like or love. This corresponds to a significant shift in her affective framings: "affect is profoundly and irresistibly molded, often in ways contrary to how individuals would feel, act, and comport themselves" (Slaby 2016, p. 24) if they were not bound by the norms of that social institution.

3.2.6 Loss of Autonomy

Inside a destructive, deforming institution, the subject experiences what she used to do freely as merely going through the motions; instead of experiencing herself as the source of agency, she now feels like a puppet moved by irresistible forces beyond her control. She no longer experiences freedom and self-legislation *in and through her collaborative relationships with others*—relational autonomy—but instead feels as if she is being internally or externally forced to do what she does. In *The Fear of Freedom*, Erich Fromm describes this loss of autonomy in terms of "automaton conformity": the subject develops the kind of homogenized personality offered by cultural patterns and thereby becomes the same as what she imagines others to be (1941, p. 208). As a result, she no longer is capable of authentic agency or critical thinking.

3.2.7 Incentivization of Desires

Inside a destructive, deforming institution, the subject experiences a transformation of her normal or ordinary flexible, dynamic motivational desire-architecture—including both instrumental and non-instrumental desires—into a rigid, static set of wholly instrumental desires whose structure mirrors the externally-imposed, wholly instrumental goals and production-system of the institution. What was once a loosely assembled, dynamic framework of affective framings is replaced by a rigid set of values and norms imposed by the social institution.

3.2.8 False Consciousness

Inside a destructive, deforming institution, the subject gradually comes to believe, falsely, that the externally-imposed, rigid, static set of incentivized desires is actually her own, and also begins to have an illusory consciousness of agential sourcehood, when, in point of fact, she is in being externally manipulated by those desires. She begins to "buy into" this new set of affective framings and it becomes utterly normalized—*it's just the way she is*. Moreover, by spontaneously adjusting her expectations to her chances of success in a particular social context, and "calibrating [her] reactions" so that they "fit" with the social institution, the subject "reproduce[s] social hierarchies and structures" (Mihai 2016, p. 30) without being aware of her complicity.

* * *

To make these eight working criteria, as a complete set, intellectually and emotionally vivid, we need only imaginatively visualize the following—

i. the dystopian social institutions presented in Fritz Lang's 1927 science-fiction film *Metropolis*, Rene Claire's 1931 comedy film *À nous la liberté*, and Charlie Chaplin's 1936 comedy film *Modern Times*,
ii. Yevgeny Zamyatin's 1924 novel, *We*, Aldous Huxley's 1931 novel, *Brave New World*, George Orwell's 1949 novel *1984*, and Ray Bradbury's 1953 novel *Fahrenheit 451*,

conceptually updated to the context of contemporary neoliberal nation-states, and then kaleidoscopically imaginatively blended with

iii. Miloš Forman's 1975 black comedy film *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, Colin Higgins's 1980 comedy film *9-5*, Ridley Scott's 1982 science-fiction film *Blade Runner*, the 1987, 1990, 1993, and 2014 installments in the *Robocop* sci-fi/action movie franchise, the British and American comedy TV series of the early 2000s, *The Office*, and the edgy TV crime drama series from the same period, *The Sopranos* and *The Wire*.

Each of these famous films or TV series beautifully and emphatically elucidates one or more of the eight working criteria of destructive, deforming social institutions. For example, *Metropolis*, *À nous la liberté*, *Modern Times*, *Blade Runner*, and *Robocop* all provide illustrations of commodification, mechanization, coercion, and loss of autonomy; *We*, *Brave New World*, *1984*, *Fahrenheit 451*, and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* all provide illustrations of coercion, loss of autonomy, divided mind, and reversal of affect; and *9-5*, *The Office*, *The Sopranos* and *The Wire* all provide illustrations of coercion, loss of autonomy, incentivization of desires, and false consciousness. By such intuitive means, we are then primed to recognize theoretically that neoliberal ideology, socio-scientism, and coercive authoritarianism *jointly explain* the eight working criteria of destructive, deforming institutions, as follows.

In such institutions, everything and everyone is *commodified*, simply because the neoliberal global corporate system of production and exchange tells us that *everything and everyone is to be manufactured, bought, and sold.* The commodity-frame becomes the guiding norm for all social institutions, including those that appear to bear little resemblance whatsoever to the marketplace, for example, higher education and mental health care. Market norms and values infiltrate people's discussions, their habitual patterns of attention, and their very mode of subjectivity.

Then, previously organic social processes are *mechanized*, simply because the neoliberal global corporate system of production and exchange tells us, as per socio-scientism, that this is *the scientifically-validated way to increase efficiency and maximize profit.*

Coercion occurs because people who, by nature and as "unsocialized" individuals, have little or no interest in participating in the commodifying, mechanistic capitalist system of production and exchange, must be compelled to do so

either (i) by the gnawing fear of unemployment, destitution, and homelessness, leading to social banishment and early death, or

(ii) by the jangling Victor-Hugoesque, Hitchcockian fear of being "disciplined and punished" by the police and the legal system, especially including the prison system, if, in order to survive outside the

legally-validated economy of legal capitalism, they instead participate in the *alternative, illegitimate economy* of criminal capitalism.

Divided minds happen because our participation in, and enslavement to, the commodifying, mechanistic, coercive, capitalist system of production and exchange leads to the objectification of our essentially embodied selves and alienation from our true needs.

Reversal of affect occurs because, when our lives are saturated by the inverted values of the neoliberal global corporate capitalist system of production and exchange, we begin to regard what we formerly loved for its own sake as *nothing but a means* to realizing the externalized goals of the system. Our whole framework of affective framings is then transformed in self-destructive, self-deforming ways.

Loss of autonomy, or *the fall into heteronomy*, happens because, when we are caught up in the step-by-step binary processing of the commodifying, mechanistic, coercive, mind-dividing, affect-reversing, neoliberal global corporate capitalist system of production and exchange, our choices are no longer experienced as free and self-legislated, but instead are experienced as compelled and legislated from the outside. We *must* follow the externally-imposed rules, normalize, and do exactly as we are told *or else* we will lose all, and fall into the abyss of unemployment, destitution, homelessness, social banishment, or the legal punishment system. Thus, within neoliberal societies, a social institution typically functions not as a free, creative space that scaffolds exploration and experimentation, but rather as a sort of "corporate panopticon" (Watermeyer and Olssen 2016, p. 203).

The incentivization of desire happens because, once we take ourselves to be essentially, atomic cogs or units in neoliberal global corporate capitalist system of production and exchange, then pre-reflectively and gradually, precisely to the extent that we "fit in" to the system, we affectively and emotionally *buy into it.* We ourselves come to measure everything in terms of "efficiency," "productivity" and "profit." Once our affective framings have been distorted to this extent, it becomes increasingly difficult to challenge the guiding norms and values of the social institution; they become so habitual and normalized that people have difficulty even noticing their existence and deforming presence. Then, by the

psychological alchemy of destructive, deforming social institutions, we simply do not need to be *externally coerced* any longer, insofar as we begin *empathically mirroring* both the fully obedient behavior and passive demeanor of our "good little do-bee" colleagues and also the commanding behavior and aggressive demeanor of our constantly-monitoring administrators, managers, and bosses. We thereby turn ourselves into *internally self-coercing, passively obedient robots of the system*. These new values and interpretive frames become so fully incorporated that it may even appear to the people involved that they freely, autonomously adopted them.

Finally, *false consciousness* becomes endemic because, as a natural psychological result of becoming internally self-coercing, fully obedient robots of the commodifying, mechanistic, coercive capitalist system of production and exchange, we have thereby put up a set of 99% effective psychological screens, aka *cognitive walls.* Such walls prevent us from recognizing how neoliberal ideology, socio-scientism, and coercive authoritarianism actually shape our lives inside these destructive, deforming social institutions. These blind spots correspond to affective framings that have become so rigid, and so deeply shaped by institutional norms, that it becomes psychologically almost impossible for subjects living inside these social institutions even to take up *a point of view* from which to question or challenge them.

3.3 How to Prove These Claims

Q: How can all or any of these claims be proved?

A: According to the philosophical methodology we described in Chap. 2, they can be proved only by means of concrete, real-world case-studies of social institutions that employ—

first, a broad range of more-or-less ordinary but also especially insightful phenomenological observations about people's engagements with that social institution,

second, a broad range of historical, sociological, and empirical psychological evidence about people's engagements with that institution, and

third, philosophical thought-experiments in order to isolate and track the specific characters of the various collectively sociopathic mind-shaping impacts of that social institution on ourselves and other minded human animals like us.

This is precisely what we will do in the next two chapters.

Note

1. This is not to overlook the global moral and political disasters of homelessness, malnutrition, poverty, preventable disease, and refugees, such that at least three billion people, worldwide, cannot even satisfy *their basic true human needs*.

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4

Case-Study I: Higher Education in Neoliberal Nation-States

Two important twentieth century critics of higher education, the Brazilian philosopher Paulo Freire and the American and Canadian social-architectural theorist Jane Jacobs, have raised important concerns about the meaning and value of education in contemporary societies. Freire points to the erosion of critical faculties in a world where fewer and fewer individuals are involved in decision-making and people are susceptible to manipulation by what they hear on the radio, see on television, or read in the newspapers. As a result, the average person is "uprooted," and what is needed is a new sort of education that offers people "the means to resist [these] 'uprooting tendencies'" (Freire 1973, p. 34). Unfortunately, however, there often are few opportunities for the development of critical faculties, since "credentialing, not educating, has become the primary business of North American universities" (Jacobs 2004, p. 44).

More recently, but also in the same vein, Benjamin Schmidt has written this:

> In 1970, seven in 10 students thought it was very important or essential to "develop a meaningful philosophy of life" through education, while about four in 10 (and five in 10 men) put a priority on using it to "make more money." By the mid-'80s, these ratios had flipped. (Schmidt 2018)

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Indeed, it is clear, on critical reflection, to anyone who has moved all the way through the educational system in a contemporary neoliberal nation-state, from pre-k or kindergarten through elementary, secondary, and post-secondary levels, and then on to professor or university researcher, that the upper tier of this huge system, *higher education*, is now focused far more on credentialing and career-building than it is on educating. In our view, higher education is best understood as what we are calling a "standard, dystopian social institution": a neoliberal mega-machine that literally shapes subjects' habits of mind, assumptions, mindsets, and learning styles in collectively sociopathic ways.

It is self-evidently clear that educational institutions bring about mind-shaping. Learning is a dynamic, fully embodied process that allows subjects to become more adept at completing various sorts of tasks, solving problems, and thinking about issues in new ways; and educational institutions allow people to engage in cognitive activities that they are unable to partake in purely on their own, or apart from environmentally-structured activities. The nature of the institution in question, including the pedagogical practices and strategies employed, literally shapes subjects' frames of reference and forms of knowing. To see this, compare the sort of learning now enabled in a traditional classroom environment to the sort of learning enabled by a hands-on apprenticeship.

It is profoundly unfortunate that contemporary learning environments generally "demand an unthinking and repetitive style of action from social individuals that ossify habitus and stunt the development of capacities" (Burkitt 2002, p. 235). Consider, for example, classes that ask students to memorize a long list of facts and then answer a series of multiple choice exam questions, or classes that rely almost entirely on lecture and do not invite students to reflect on or discuss the material. Such settings afford (and demand) particular habits of engagement and response, ones that centrally involve mechanical repetition, rote memorization, or routine modes of thinking and problem-solving. If learning experiences are trivial and repetitive, habits of mind "can grow more rigid and overly determined by beliefs commonly shared by the school culture" (Kennedy 2012, p. 425). There is a danger that as learning experiences become "more encased in repetitive behavior and routine conduct" (Carden 2006, p. 33) individuals will become less capable of self-growth and less open to new forms of knowledge and experience.

In this chapter, we will focus specifically on how neoliberal ideology and practices have not only importantly influenced habits of mind, but also literally mind-shaped the thoughts, affects, and actions of university students, professors, and the general public. This discussion will show how higher education in neoliberal societies, particularly although by no means exclusively the United States, satisfies each of the eight criteria of destructive, deforming social institutions, and yields what we call *The Higher Commodification* of higher education.

Commodification, according to the Marxist-humanist and Neo-Marxist traditions, is the process whereby large-scale capitalism turns everything that has authentic human value—namely, that which exemplifies sufficient respect for the dignity of human persons and their autonomy, and satisfies true human needs—into mere things that can be produced, reproduced, bought, and sold: *commodities*. Commodification also applies directly to human agents, who, by virtue of being unintentionally absorbed into the large-scale capitalist system, begin to turn themselves into *mere decision-theoretic Hobbesian machines.* That is, they increasingly become self-interested, mutually antagonistic biochemical puppets who endlessly produce and consume, and are controlled by their bosses and political masters, via hegemonic ideology and coercive force, until they finally break down and die.

In the twenty-first century, commodification is a direct consequence of neoliberalism, its valorization of global corporate capitalism, its technocracy, and its socio-scientism. It is by no means an antiquarian or irrelevant historical fact, however, that the origins of the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first century concept of commodification lie in the Hegelian and Young Hegelian idea that organized religion is *the alienation and externalization of absolute Spirit,* and in Kant's earlier moral critique of organized religion in *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*. In effect, you simply substitute *large-scale capitalism* for *organized religion*, and then you have got Marx's theory of alienation. In Kantian terminology, commodification systematically exterminates all human *dignity* or *Würde*, all human *autonomy*, and all human moral *faith* or *Glaube*. Otherwise put, commodification is the systematic demolition of all our true human values, corresponding to our true human needs, in order to clear the ground for The Big Brotherhood's mega-mall and online site of false values and false needs.

Serious critics of commodification in higher education include Nietzsche (1910), William James (1903), Robert Paul Wolff (1969), Paulo Freire (1970, 1973), Jeff Schmidt (2000), Jane Jacobs (2004), and William Deresiewicz (2015). For example, according to the model of what Jacobs aptly calls "educating as credentialing" (2004, ch. 3), the primary, and indeed all-encompassing, function of contemporary higher education in neoliberal societies is to ensure that diploma-clutching graduates get relatively high-paying, high status jobs in a world ruled by the oligarchic and plutocratic interests of The Big Brotherhood, *even despite the fact* that most of these jobs are what David Graeber equally aptly calls "bullshit jobs" (2018a, 2013). Our critical analysis follows a similar trajectory, but also explicitly from the standpoint of political philosophy of mind.

4.1 Higher Education as the Higher Commodification

University mission statements typically emphasize how the institution trains students to be active citizens and engaged members of their community. For example, The Ohio State University's statement stresses the university's dedication to "preparing a diverse student body to be leaders and engaged citizens" (Ohio State University 2018). Similarly, Harvard's statement begins with: "The mission of Harvard College is to educate the citizens and citizen-leaders for our society" (Harvard University 2018). Harvard's statement then goes on to describe the transformative potential of higher education:

> Beginning in the classroom with exposure to new ideas, new ways of understanding, and new ways of knowing, students embark on a journey of intellectual transformation. Through a diverse living environment, where students live with people who are studying different topics, who come from different walks of life and have evolving identities, intellectual transformation is deepened and conditions for social transformation are created. From this we hope that students will begin to fashion their lives by

> gaining a sense of what they want to do with their gifts and talents, assessing their values and interests, and learning how they can best serve the world. (Harvard University 2018)

Some colleges' mission statements express an even stronger, more idealistic message about the nature of their mission. For example, consider the statement from the website of Reed College, a small, upscale liberal arts school in Oregon:

> Reed College is an institution of higher education in the liberal arts devoted to the intrinsic value of intellectual pursuit and governed by the highest standards of scholarly practice, critical thought, and creativity. Its undergraduate program of study, leading to the degree of Bachelor of Arts, is demanding and intense and balances breadth of knowledge across the curriculum with depth of knowledge in a particular field of study. The goal of the Reed education is that students learn and demonstrate rigor and independence in their habits of thought, inquiry, and expression. (Reed College 2018)

Transforming young people and preparing them to be actively engaged world-citizens, ethical decision-makers, and critical thinkers are noble goals that we endorse wholeheartedly. But does the contemporary system of higher education in neoliberal nation-states truly advance these aims? While many students, faculty members, and administrators may very well believe in their institution's professed mission, the reality they encounter may very well make these statements into false promises and *bullshit* in the philosophically rigorous sense of that term: a wanton disregard for the truth, together with the intentionally-crafted mere appearance of caring for it (Frankfurt 1988).

So why isn't higher education more positively transformative? Why do many of us have doubts about whether it truly prepares students to be active world-citizens and engaged members of their community? Why do so many students now experience higher education as a nuisance or an unwanted obligation, rather than as a privilege or an opportunity for personal growth or enlightened emancipation? In short, why do most contemporary institutions of higher education in neoliberal democratic

societies systematically distort, etiolate, and undermine the very goals expressed in their mission statements?

We will argue that neoliberal ideology has shaped contemporary institutions of higher education in big-capitalist states to such a great extent that our whole sense of higher education's value and purpose has been negatively transformed and distorted into *The Higher Commodification*. In other words, rather than scaffolding students' capacities for active, engaged citizenry and transforming them in positive ways, higher educational institutions have in reality taught them to frame their academic pursuits in a wholly market-oriented, instrumental, self-interested way (Maiese 2018). Students see themselves as consumers and their diplomas as purchasable items. Rather than enabling and supporting faculty members' capacities for meaningful research on topics of authentic human interest, the current framework "trains" them to regard their research as a mere means to an essentially self-interested end—keeping their job, getting promoted, earning merit-based pay, or gaining professional academic prestige. Therefore, the neoliberal framework does not afford collaboration, academic curiosity, or meaningful, transformative dialogue, but on the contrary reduces higher education's many dimensions of possible true human value to a sheer quantifiable value that is, at bottom, nothing but a dollar value. As we will see, neoliberal values and norms literally shape people's minds and actions in ways that systematically distort, etiolate, and undermine authentic learning, research, collaboration, and autonomy inside the social institution of higher education.

4.1.1 "Mind Invasion" and Collective Sociopathy

We have argued that affective framings are socially embedded and that autonomy should be understood as not only individual, but also relational. People develop, discover, and become who they are through their interactions with others, and all of society's institutions are part of this self-creation process. Particular institutions promote and cultivate certain kinds of framings and worldly engagement, while discouraging others. This always results in some sort of constraint, so that we are never completely free of the influence of others. However, according to a relational conception of

autonomy, self-determination does not require that an agent's feelings, thoughts, and choices be free from social influence. Instead, we need to recognize that "both the processes of reflection and agents' practical identities are shaped by complex, intersecting social determinants" and formed in the context of interpersonal relationships (Mackenzie and Poltera 2010, p. 48). Cognition and affectivity therefore are best seen as socially embedded, environmentally supported, and heavily modulated by relationships and norms.

However, it is absolutely crucial to distinguish between social structures that are "constructive and enabling" and those that are "destructive and deforming." For the purposes of distinguishing between these, the operative question is: to what extent does a particular social institution,

> on the one hand, (i) "work toward setting up mental patterns that are in the long run empowering [and] conducive to individual and collective flourishing,"
>
> or, on the other hand, instead (ii) create "unhealthy dependencies, tie us to oppressive routines, sustain inequality, destroy communal bonds, or lead to… mental habits that are detrimental to us or our kin"? (Slaby 2016a, p. 11)

In other words, does the social institution promote collective wisdom (as a constructive, enabling social structure), or instead collective sociopathy (as a destructive, deforming social structure)?

Now, obviously, one of the "expanded zones of contemporary life in which human affectivity is profoundly framed and modulated so that the affective and emotional dispositions of an individual squarely fall in line with the interaction routines prevalent in these domains" (Slaby 2016a, p. 11) is the social institution of higher education. So in the special context of higher education, then, the question becomes whether social structures and sociodynamics

either (i) scaffold and cultivate autonomy, critical thinking, and self-realization,

or (ii) systematically degrade or even demolish these higher human capacities.

As we understand it, individual or relational autonomy goes well beyond merely being able to guide and revise one's beliefs, desires, and values in the light of reasons, in order to choose and act freely, with self-determination and self-legislation; it *also* requires self-interpretive skills, emotional competences (for example, empathy) (Meyers 1989), interpersonal competences (for example, intimacy and social cooperation), and imaginative competences (Mackenzie 2000). And these are all competences that, other things being equal, higher education is well-suited to develop. Indeed, when higher education fulfills its highest aims, it offers students the opportunity not only to learn new skills, but also to develop the capacity "to think and act critically about each and every aspect of the social world" (Busch 2017, p. 22). And it does this by cultivating certain habits of mind and a particular kind of affective stance, one that centers on perspective-taking, empathy, cooperation, openness, curiosity, and imagination.

Nevertheless, inside social institutions dedicated to higher education in contemporary neoliberal societies, human affect more often functions as a "shrewd mechanism [for] keeping subjects attached to oppressive or otherwise pathological conditions" (Slaby 2016a, p. 8). Individuals are drawn into certain modes of interaction by way of attunement and habituation to interaction patterns and modes of valuation that are the norm for that domain. What Slaby calls "relational affect" is not primarily a matter of the affective experience of individual persons, but rather an "intra-active dynamic that inheres in social domains of practice" (2016a, p. 15). The norms that shape the participants' feelings and patterns of valuation are not the principles chosen by individuals; instead the "various operating logics or normative principles prevalent in—often even constitutive of—these practical domains … might be quite contrary to the concerns and values of the individuals implicated in them" (Slaby 2016a, p. 15).

Of course, affective habituation and the modulation of affective framings are the result of influence from a variety of social institutions and continue over the course of a lifetime. But some social institutions pointedly "seek out" individuals in order to "turn them into bona fide exponents of the domain's operative processes" (Slaby 2016b, p. 2) and

encourage them to conform to the routines and demands of that domain. Such institutions cultivate framing patterns and habits of mind that exert a strong pull on the subjects involved and implicate them in the workings of this institution "even if that runs counter to their avowed interests or is in other ways detrimental to their well-being or flourishing" (Slaby 2016a, p. 8). College and university settings in contemporary neoliberal democracies give us a powerful example of how "engaged, active collectives are capable of exerting a forceful affective pull on individuals" (Slaby 2016a, p. 10). The new habits of mind, behavior, and modes of valuation that develop within these contemporary institutions of higher education are

both (i) *in tension with* an individual's prior affective framings,
and also (ii) *detrimental to* personal flourishing and the satisfaction of the individual's true human needs.

The neoliberal college or university thereby serves as a striking example of what Slaby calls "mind invasion" (2016b, p. 2).

4.1.2 Neoliberal U

In order to explain how such "mind invasion" occurs, we first need to elaborate what we mean by "the neoliberal university." So what are the operating logics and normative principles that have come to govern the workings of colleges and universities in neoliberal societies? The concept of neoliberalism is in fact a many-membered *set* of concepts, and, when that set of concepts is applied in the real world, its effective policies and practices operate at local, state, national, and global levels. Wendy Larner (2000) identifies three interpretations of neoliberalism which, although no doubt closely related, are nevertheless helpful to distinguish. According to Larner, neoliberalism can be understood as

i. a policy framework,
ii. an ideology, and
iii. a form of "governmentality."

In terms of *policy*, neoliberalism favors deregulation of the market, the globalization of capital, and the "rolling back" of the government's welfare state activities. The manifestation of these shifts in policy varies depending on country and context, but general trends include an emphasis on market security, privatization, laissez-faire, and minimal government (Larner 2000, p. 6). The policy programs of supposedly "Left" or liberal-progressive and supposedly "Right" or conservative-regressive governments alike—for example, Democrats and Republicans in the United States—now all closely adhere to this essentially *centrist*, large-scale capitalist, market-based policy agenda. Thus, *neoliberalism* and *neoconservatism* are, for all operative intents and purposes, the same.

To understand how such a massive transformation in policy-making has been achieved, and how neoliberal ideas shape both social institutions as well as the individual subjectivity of people whose lives are entangled with those social institutions, we need to examine the second interpretation of neoliberalism and approach it as an *ideology*—that is, a system of beliefs, images or symbols, and associated normative values. Neoliberalism represents a significant shift in the basic framework and terms of political argument since the end of World War II, and also the emergence of what is aptly described as "the consolidation of a new ideological hegemony" (Larner 2000, p. 9). These ideas shape our entire social-institutional universe, although as Larner notes, such ideology is better understood as "a complex and hybrid political imaginary, rather than the straightforward implementation of a unified and coherent philosophy" (p. 9). In fact, we submit, if neoliberalism (or, mutatis mutandis, neoconservatism) *were* a unified and coherent philosophy that was explicitly articulated by policy-makers, politicians, corporate bosses, managers, and administrators, then it would no longer have the hegemonic power that it does. It is precisely because these loosely-formulated, logically slippery, vaguely-delimited ideas are all bundled, like so many sheets of wet cardboard, into a single glutinous, heavy, soggy mass of people's taken-for-granted assumptions, that neoliberal ideology generally escapes incisive critique.

The third interpretation of neoliberalism, as *governmentality*, approaches it as "a system of meaning that constitutes institutions, practices, and identities in contradictory and disjunctive ways" (Larner 2000, p. 12; Hamann 2009). Interestingly, although neoliberalism favors dereg-

ulation (and less government) when it comes to the market, it also inherently involves new forms of governance—"market governance"—which demand that both institutions and individuals conform to the norms of the market, whether regulated or deregulated. People come to view themselves as individualized and active subjects who are responsible for "working on themselves" and enhancing their well-being. As we will discuss later in this chapter and in Chap. 5, this sort of governmentality has essentially to do with *self*-management and *self*-regulation.

While these distinctions can make it difficult to pinpoint neoliberalism, there are two ideological *clusters* that unite these various interpretations.

First, neoliberalism is a return to, and also an extension of, classical nineteenth century liberal *laissez-faire* capitalist economic theory. Its three central tenets are

i. that the free market is benevolent,
ii. that state intervention and regulation of the economy should be minimal, and
iii. that the individual is nothing more and nothing less than an essentially self-interested, instrumentally rational, economic agent.

According to this all-too-familiar picture of social reality, the market is inherently efficient and competition naturally leads to economic growth and prosperity that will necessarily benefit all of society. Any inequality that arises will be due to differences in the "hard work" and natural abilities of individuals. And any intrusions into the market should be avoided given that they restrict proper market operations and prevent individuals from freely engaging with the market.

And second, the market comes to be viewed as the governing mechanism that should encompass every aspect of society. An emphasis on economic rationality applies not only in the marketplace, but also in the social sphere. As a result, "in a neoliberal world, there is no longer a distinction between the market and the state, between the public and private, and between the individual and the social" (Saunders 2010, pp. 45–46). Individuals in this world see everything they do in terms of maximizing their "human capital." This sort of "free market fundamen-

talism" emphasizes "winning at all costs, a ruthless competitiveness, hedonism, the cult of individualism, and a subject largely constructed within a market-driven rationality that abstracts economics and markets from ethical considerations" (Giroux 2010, p. 185).

With a critical awareness of these two ideological clusters in hand, it is self-evident that neoliberal ideology has "infiltrated our institutions, discourse, and common sense" (Saunders 2010, p. 53), especially in the context of higher education. Some of the trends that characterize the neoliberal college and university include: sharply-decreased enrollment in and support for programs of study that are not business oriented; sharply-reduced support for research that does not increase profits; the systematic replacement of shared forms of governance with business management models; the ongoing exploitation of faculty and staff labor; and the ever-increasing use of student purchasing power as the vital measure of a student's identity, worth, and access to higher education (Giroux 2014, p. 22). Meanwhile, the mission statements, everyday rhetoric, alumni magazines, and official communiques and publications of college and university administrations all traffic heavily in *bullshit* in the philosophically rigorous sense we mentioned above.

Everyone in the higher-education setting (including students, professors, administrators, and staff) is "worked upon by neoliberal discourses" (Warren 2017, p. 128), and thus their habits of mind and behavior cannot be understood apart from these forms of discourse. Some patterns of cognitive-affective engagement properly align with the particular range of activities, interactions, and expressions that are expected or permissible in the context of the neoliberal university, while others do not. Those that do align are effectively rewarded or encouraged, while those that do not are effectively discouraged. Neoliberalism thereby acts as a mode of *governance* or social control by means of coercion: it cultivates a particular sort of "bodily-affective style" (Colombetti and Krueger 2015) and fosters some affective framings while discouraging others. This occurs by way of "emotional contagion, various synchronic, mimetic responses on a basic affective-bodily level," and "explicit demands and sanctioning on the part of the established domain members" (Slaby 2016b, p. 9). People already immersed in the neoliberal college or university, in turn, will reinforce a pervasive large-scale capitalist, market-oriented cognitive-affective

orientation "by way of mimic[ry], gesture, [and] affective-bodily styles that signal approval or disapproval, encourage or discourage, reward with warm connection or punish with subtle hostility" (Slaby 2016b, p. 9).

The significance of these influences brings us back again to our starting point in this book: the thesis that the essentially embodied minds and lives of human animal agents are necessarily social. From the very beginning, individuals modulate, and are being modulated and affected by, the expressions, gestures, and actions of other people, and this mutual modulation impacts how they make sense of things. Mother and infant have a common interest in the world, and the dynamics of their interaction is shaped and influenced by their mutual needs and interests. From the very beginning of a child's life, other people use expressions, gestures, and other bodily movements to invite him into some sort of "conversation" or communicative activity with them. For example, a caregiver makes a pointing gesture, and draws the child's attention to something s/he wants him to see. In addition, very young children have some basic awareness of their own ability to modulate and impact the behavior of others. In response to a social partner who suddenly stops interacting, they first reduce their smiling and gazing, and then attempt to re-engage the social partner (Striano and Reid 2006, p. 471). As an agent involved in a social interaction, the infant is "at once prodder and prodded," and so is her caregiver (De Jaegher 2009, p. 540). By way of *reciprocal bodily attunement* (Stanghellini 2004, p. 91), subjects coordinate not only their actions, but also their patterns of attention and emotion.

In *Embodiment, Emotion, and Cognition*, Maiese (2011) argues that this occurs by way of the *modulation* of affective framings. Once two or more interactors become part of a coupled system, their bodily dynamics and affective framing patterns become entrained to some extent. The interpersonal interaction as a whole, which is situated in a particular sociocultural setting with specific norms of engagement, causally affects and constrains the behavior of each party involved in the interaction. Coordinated interaction is characterized by the entrainment of affective framing patterns. By way of motor resonance, perceptual-motor coupling, coordination of bodily comportment, and emotional contagion, people's desires and patterns of attention are adjusted (albeit sometimes only slightly) in accordance with what others desire. During second-person

interaction, the cares and concerns of each participant shift, the bodily dynamics of individual interactors become coupled and exhibit "phase attraction," and each one's affective framing patterns are modified as a result. For the infant, child, and even young adult, there is a constant reorienting and adjusting of affective framing patterns as caregivers and others around them attempt to get them to care about and attend to specific things (for example, looking over here, smiling, sharing one's toys, completing one's homework). This socialization process continues into adulthood as people enter into workplace settings, higher educational settings, and health care settings; as newcomers, they are habituated in accordance with the affective patterns present within the institution and thereby come to share many of the concerns of those around them.

Therefore, it is not merely that certain kinds of affect simply *accompany* or *color* our habituated human experience inside Neoliberal U. On the contrary, we can rightly speak of a far-reaching "mental infrastructure" that involves "complex patterns of affect and affective relations" (Slaby 2016b, p. 10) that literally shape people's affective tendencies and modes of relating to others. In particular, neoliberalism trains people to view themselves as essentially self-interested, atomic, isolated agents, motivated at all times by instrumental rationality, and to regard everything as a competition. What they originally cared about, in the pre-neoliberal "state of nature," as it were, shifts: people begin to focus their attention habitually on the *economic* dimension of human life while downplaying other social and relational values such as empathy, cooperation, and collaboration. This shift in perspective is obviously closely related to the psychology of *social class* more generally, and in particular, to the psychology of the *middle class* (Manstead 2018). Neoliberal habits of mind lead people to view all pursuits as a way to increase their "human capital" and advance their economic ends, which makes it difficult or even impossible for them to comprehend that knowledge and education have value in and of themselves.

4.1.3 The Affective Pull of Neoliberal Ideology

One can plausibly argue that since the mid-nineteenth century, at least, higher education has *always* intentionally or unintentionally served not

only "base"-level economic demands but also the "superstructure"-level ideology of large-scale capitalism. Nevertheless, as Daniel Saunders notes, "what is new to the neoliberal university is the scope and extent of these profit-driven, corporate ends, as well as how many students, faculty, administrators, and policy makers explicitly support and embrace these capitalist goals and priorities" (Saunders 2010, p. 55).

They do so, for example, *whenever* they talk about the education "market," "getting more bang for your buck," "return on your investment," "value for your money," and so-on, and so forth, as they almost universally and pervasively do. Rhetoric that gains dominance within a particular social setting then becomes the official "natural language"; it affords specific patterns of behavior and valuation, and there emerges a shared expectation that everyone will think and speak in this way. At the same time, this widespread embrace of neoliberal attitudes almost inevitably takes place without people ever *mentioning* the term "neoliberalism." Administrators, faculty, and students rarely explicitly state that *they themselves* are neoliberals or that *they themselves believe* the neoliberal ideology; on the contrary, they may even explicitly and vehemently *deny* this. How, then, can this ideology be so influential and effective? In fact, it is *just like* the old story about the duck and some fish in a pond, famously re-told in a slightly different version by the novelist David Foster Wallace at a Kenyon College commencement address bang-on aptly entitled, "This Is Water":

Duck: "How's the water down there, guys?"
Fish to each other: "What the hell is water?" (Wallace 2005)

In other words, neoliberal ideology is able to exert such a strong influence precisely because people inside the professional academy have systematically hidden from themselves, and therefore repressed and sublimated, this ideology's hegemonically pervasive and profound impact.

And it happened because, in the period from roughly 1990 into the second decade of the twenty-first century, most professional academics systematically, and, for the most part, self-deceivingly, traded their intellectual and practical autonomy *inside* the professional academy to neoliberals *outside* the professional academy. But *why* did they sell their

autonomy? Answer: for *more* money, *more* professional-class high social status, and *more* coercive authoritarian power over their colleagues, *within their own domain*.

More generally, it seems crystal clear that neoliberal ideology is able to exert such a strong formative influence only due to "individuals' emotional investment in the identities and commitments fashioned by neoliberal discourse" (Foster 2017, p. 2). Drawing on the work of Erich Fromm and his notion of "social character," Foster (2017) describes how social imperatives can be translated into individual motivation. The social character, as Fromm characterizes it, is common to most members of society, and is formed via social and cultural influences—for example, being a member of the middle class. Fromm compellingly argues that the material conditions of human life together with the economic relationships that they promote have a decisive, shaping influence on subjectivity. Importantly, the formation of social character is an inherently psychosocial process in which the "push" of material conditions and the "pull" of political ideas are mediated by particular fears, anxieties, and needs associated with these conditions and ideas (Foster 2017, p. 3). Social character aligns individual desires with social imperatives by ensuring that individuals need or "want" to do what they "have" to do, and thus that they derive gratification from acting according to societal expectations (Fromm 1955, p. 77). Fromm's ideas align very well with what we have termed "the incentivization of desire." It is in large part because ideas have an *affective pull* or *allure* that they become motivating forces in the thoughts and actions of individuals (Foster 2017, p. 7).

Foster (2017) suggests that in the post-Second World War period, the prevalent focus on "security" was experienced by many men as a threat to masculinity. The world of work, which focused on individualism and personal autonomy, was enervating; however, at the same time, the experience of working for a large corporation gave rise to fears of lockstep conformity. One influential fable of the neoliberal era has been the individual who "pulls himself up by his bootstraps" and is able to reclaim economic and social power from the self-serving dealings of managerial technocrats and experts, by starting his own business. Thus, in the neoliberal era, the new mythic image of *the-amazing-innovator-and-entrepreneur*,

Steve-Jobs-as-the-new-Napoleon-and-Wizard-of-Oz-rolled-into-one, has emerged as a preeminent role model for social subjectivity. Just think, for example, of the contemporary "billionaire boys club": Gates, Musk, Soros, Zuckerberg, etc., etc. Correspondingly, in the social institution of higher education, increased emphasis on market considerations has given rise to a new kind of scholar: "academics predisposed to performing in innovative and entrepreneurial ways are those most able to provide authoritative and compelling accounts of the ways in which they are excellent" (Watermeyer and Olssen 2016, p. 205). This new breed of professional academics is fully market-conscious and tech-savvy, and fully willing and able to adapt their research activity and teaching practices to a market logic. Thus, they represent a "cohort of academic entrepreneurs" (Watermeyer and Olssen 2016, p. 206).

Once people become emotionally attached to this vision of the-amazing-innovator-entrepreneur, and view their lives as projects of individual self-actualization, they become susceptible to developing habits of constant competitiveness, self-monitoring, and self-control. Foster proposes that people living in neoliberal societies seek to eliminate any traces of social dependency and collectivism, which they have come to view as a sign of weakness. However, these social demands lead to the suppression of human needs for human relations and connection, which contributes to social alienation and leads to feelings of fear and insecurity; and the elimination of social provisions and safety-nets heightens such feelings even further. In the realm of higher education, in particular, increased surveillance, increasing workloads, and limited numbers of tenured positions often generate strong feelings of insecurity and anxiety.[1] Foster (2017) maintains that neoliberal society makes productive use of such feelings of insecurity by channeling this psychic energy into a compulsion for work, a focus on self-reliance, and a hyper-individualized notion of responsibility. People come to deny their own vulnerability and seek to defend themselves against states of dependency and need, by way of "manic activity" (Layton 2008, p. 66). This includes ever-increasing work activity, ever-increasing consumption, and a general tendency to stay frenetically busy and avoid idleness. Thus, at Neoliberal U, people are profoundly overworked and stressed-out, and yet *also* continually take on

more professional responsibilities and tasks, each of which further contributes to overwork and stress.

Nevertheless, the daily experience of neoliberal life primes individuals to accept that this is simply "the way things are." Indeed, neoliberalism has so effectively and completely modulated our affective framings "that it defines our common sense beliefs and becomes indivisible from our basic ideas and fundamental assumptions" (Saunders 2010, p. 49). The pervasiveness and normalization of big-capitalist economic logic, and the corresponding infiltration and penetration of egoistic ethics and instrumental rationality into the deep social-institutional structures and sociodynamics of the professional academy and higher education, ultimately creates the appearance that this is the "natural" approach to the world. These affective framings become especially influential "*guiding* frames" that significantly form our worldview and impact how we understand everything our world, including education. Such habits of mind are long-lasting and deeply entrenched, and they influence most of our more momentary framings and temporary patterns of attention. Neoliberalism and its hegemonic ideology thereby permeate every aspect of professional academic and higher-educational life, so that it becomes almost impossibly cognitively and affectively difficult to recognize the influence of this ideology, criticize its conceptual structure, or emotionally resist its personal and interpersonal impact. This all culminates in "the saturat[ion] of our consciousness, so that the educational, economic, and social world we see and interact with, and the commonsense interpretations we put on it, becomes…. the only world" (Apple 2004, p. 4).

In these ways, the fundamental assumptions of neoliberalism come to be deeply entrenched in our essentially embodied pre-reflective consciousness and self-consciousness, by means of multiply repeated, ideologically-driven, everyday affective framings inside the social institution of higher education. This gives rise to fixed, rote, *habituated* patterns of feeling, desiring, valuing, perceiving, thinking, choosing, and acting. Part of what makes these habits "bad" is that they are static and inflexible, and thus prevent people from imagining things otherwise. This is especially problematic in the realm of higher education, which purportedly seeks to open minds and expand perspectives.

4.2 Neoliberal U and the Eight Criteria of Collective Sociopathy

Let us now recall the eight criteria of collective sociopathy, that is, of destructive, deforming social institutions, which we formulated in Chap. 3:

1. Commodification
2. Mechanization
3. Coercion
4. Divided Mind
5. Reversal of Affect
6. Loss of Autonomy
7. Incentivization of Desires
8. False Consciousness.

Correspondingly, we now turn to a discussion of how institutions of higher education in contemporary neoliberal nation-states, particularly although by no means exclusively the USA, fully satisfy each of these eight criteria, and thereby significantly contribute to widespread collective sociopathy.

4.2.1 Commodification

Neoliberalism trains us to view all social institutions as markets in which we make myriad choices, investments, and cost-benefit calculations. In a neoliberal world, everything is economically framed and organized, and there arises a shared expectation that people adopt a market-driven orientation toward all of their decisions. But one important problem with viewing higher education in terms of markets and competition is that it "degrades discourse while undermining research, education, public engagement, and, ultimately, democracy" (Busch 2017, p. 20). The subject enmeshed in neoliberalized higher education, more or less unknowingly, comes to frame and organize everything in her social life as a material good to be bought and sold, even if this perverts the true value

of the object in question and distorts her sense of its meaning (Maiese 2018).

At Neoliberal U, higher education is reduced to "the faculty production of credit points (input) and the student consumption thereof (output), usually in the form of standardized units called courses or modules" (Lorenz 2012, p. 612). As the habit of viewing education in terms of the input-output model becomes increasingly entrenched, students begin to regard themselves exclusively as consumers, and colleges and universities emphasize "value for the money." What is being sold are *credit hours, degrees, and diplomas*, and also, at the more upscale colleges and universities, *networks of potential professional contacts and opportunities*. After all, at Neoliberal U, the primary goal of education is to get a "good" job and then succeed at that job, and higher education is therefore fundamentally focused on "return on investment—in monetary terms—in the form of a higher future income stream" (Busch 2017, p. 26). This becomes education's "canonical affordance": just as chairs are for sitting, college or university is for gainful employment and professional advancement. Thus, nobody is the least bit surprised to see advertising billboards around town with the message, "Advance your Career with a Degree from University X," or "We'll Take your Salary and Raise It." Majors, courses of study, and faculty research come to be judged largely in terms of their ability to contribute to the market and private interests. Professors view themselves as *provider*s of a saleable commodity such as a diploma, a set of workplace skills, or some other credentials or benefits: so they are, correspondingly, viewed by outsiders as *sellers* of those goods and services. If faculty members do not sufficiently "market" their courses and students fail to show up in sufficient numbers, then the faculty members are held directly responsible for that failure and judged accordingly by their administrators. For example, the current "crisis in the humanities" is generally viewed by professional academics and non-academics alike as a failure in *effective marketing* (Schmidt 2018). "If only we could find the right way to *sell* the humanities!"

Market competition becomes the central guiding norm. A student deciding whether to go to a given college or university will weigh the rankings of that institution on one or more measures, for example, the success of graduates in obtaining suitable employment and desired social

mobility or relative standing. When parents, peers, and guidance counselors begin to cite such measures repeatedly during conversation, and university web sites and promotional materials highlight the employment success of recent graduates, they thereby convey the expectation that prospective students frame things in just these terms. Correspondingly, as education comes to be understood as a service-provider-customer relationship, university faculty, staff, and administrators focus more of their attention on rankings and product differentiation and begin to speak more and more of "innovation" and "entrepreneurship." Because the primary currency of the global higher education market is social *status* (Marginson 2004), there is an imperative for individual institutions to coordinate their resources and strategies in order to improve their position in the rankings. There emerges pervasive talk of "competitor" schools, the "market" in higher education, and the need to engage in advertising and marketing campaigns to promote "the brand." Such language helps to afford and solicit specific types of institutional decision-making. For example, schools remodel dorms, turn their gyms into fitness centers, and attempt to make their dining halls look like shopping mall food courts and their libraries look like artsy coffee shops, in an effort to attract more students and extract higher tuition fees from them.

The prevalence of consumerist frames of reference also can be seen in the use of student course-evaluations and satisfaction-surveys to assess academic offerings, despite the fact that such measures frequently have little or nothing to do with the actual quality of education. This creates the impression that the "customer" is always right and that it is essential for students-as-customers to feel satisfied with their purchase. At stake is not just the commodification and marketization of education and services, but also of culture and relationships. After all, higher education is not merely an economic transaction between buyer and seller, but also "an ongoing, reciprocal, and hierarchical process, in which student and teacher are both actively involved and in which the teacher represents professional authority" (Lorenz 2012, p. 621). As a result of this commodification of the relationship between students and teachers, and the inbuilt picture of learners as consumers who are always right, the often (if not inevitably) valuable hierarchical relationship between teachers (guides) and those who are taught (or are guided in their learning),

begins to transform itself into something altogether instrumental and mechanical. The intrinsic value of educational engagement is thereby utterly distorted. Administrators overtly purport to be deeply concerned about the quality and intrinsic value of instruction, but in fact this mostly is *bullshit*, again in the philosophically rigorous sense of that term. In reality, most administrators at Neoliberal U care first-and-foremost about how much money professors bring into the university, whether via externally-funded research grants plus "indirect cost recovery," aka *university claw-back*, or else via "increasing enrollments," aka *putting bums on seats*.

Also commodified are research results, discoveries, and creations: increasingly, Neoliberal U describes its students as "users" who "consume" information, and its researchers as "producers" or "innovative entrepreneurs" of this information, and thereby treats knowledge and insight as quantifiable forms of capital. Whereas professional academics in the past spoke of "contributions" to the literature that anybody could access and share, Neoliberal U treats information, knowledge, and insight as forms of private ownership. This, in turn, significantly channels and inhibits research creativity and progress. Fruits of research are no longer integral parts of a general quest for knowledge or insight, but rather fungible units of "intellectual property" to be sold for profit on the open market. As a result, there are fewer and fewer opportunities for collaborative research, and a vanishingly small value is placed on "communities of scholars," except in official administrative communiques—usually just more bullshit in the philosophically rigorous sense. And all this essentially undermines scholarly research as a public good and as part of "the intellectual commons." Indeed, the value of knowledge and insight as public goods for intellectual and social progress has become entirely "secondary to its primary rationale for economic enhancement" (Lawson et al. 2015, p. 15), both for the individual researcher as well as the institution of higher education. Instead of asking whether it furthers our understanding of the world, satisfies some true human need, or promotes some individual or public intrinsic good, research is increasingly evaluated solely in terms of its estimated market value or its potential to enhance institutional status.

Academic publishing becomes a means by which innovative, entrepreneurial, individual scholar-producers and their institutions can mutually market themselves, hence "the substantive content of research and writing becomes less important than the degree to which it can help improve institutional visibility" (Warren 2017, p. 37). Obviously, this solicits particular kinds of inquiry and research, namely those that are driven by corporate and commercial interests, and by the goals of the "military-industrial-digital complex" more generally. And in this way, the latter becomes the "military-industrial-digital-*university* complex." Ideas and research products are validated and valued "for their success in attracting outside funding while developing stronger ties to corporate powers" (Giroux 2010, p. 187). What is more, professional academics are well-aware that they will be rewarded for attracting funding by way of fellowships, grants, well-funded named professorial Chairs, and increased social status and prestige—and perhaps be denied promotion or tenure if they fail to do so. Correspondingly, faculty members increasingly adapt their research activity to the norms of adequacy they are subjected to, thereby generating the pervasive social-institutional phenomenon James C. Scott aptly calls "the process by which 'a measure colonizes behavior'" (Scott 2012, p. 114). In this way, faculty members and their graduate students cultivate specific neoliberal habits and affective framings *by and within themselves*, namely those that will be optimal in that social-institutional setting.

Defining information as a commodity also results in "privileged and stratified access to scholarly information" (Lawson et al. 2015, p. 2). Even with so-called "open access," providing access to knowledge and information costs money, although here the burden of cost typically falls on institutions or research-funders rather than on end users. But now "the journal article is construed as a commodified unit of exchange, and market competition will determine the economic value of that unit" (Lawson et al. 2015, p. 9). Researchers whose institutions cannot afford to pay publishing fees may very well be excluded from the conversation, which then perpetuates the professional academic class division between researchers based at the bigger, wealthier, so-called "Research 1" institutions, and those elsewhere.

4.2.2 Mechanization

As universities become increasingly dominated by market mechanisms, organic social processes of *social production* in the Marxian sense are transformed into codified, computable, rote processes. Inside Neoliberal U, things are framed ultimately in quantifiable, economic terms and evaluated in terms of input-output "efficiency" and the maximization of profit. Due to this increased focus on efficiency, systems of shared governance become overshadowed by more hierarchical, business-oriented models. Decision-making processes that allegedly focus on collaboration and the generation of knowledge are smoothly transformed into decision-making, labor-allocating structures that emphasize competitiveness and efficiency.

As a result, administrators have begun to govern universities as much as possible by numbers. Their routine ways of speaking, approaching problems, and allocating resources all become centered around "efficiency," "assessment," and "accountability." Correspondingly, curricula, teachers, and information are transformed into living cogs in an institutional machine, like Chaplin's Little Tramp in *Modern Times*, only now he or she is clutching a laptop computer or pad/tablet instead of a wrench. Purely instrumental, economic metrics are used to evaluate academic departments, universities, and faculty members, and to make decisions about academic program development, course scheduling, and the restructuring of academic departments.

For example, an academic department's "performance" often is measured by the number of graduate students, the number of undergraduate students enrolled and secured as majors, the number of professional academic outputs generated by the faculty—publications or citations, patents, fellowships, or grants awarded, etc.—and by professional discipline-wide rankings. Similarly, information about a university's "efficiency" in the use of state funds, the graduation rate of students, the time required to complete a degree, and the salaries of recent graduates, are all used to determine its net worth. These metrics of performance and efficiency are then translated into financial or status rewards, or punishments/sanctions, for those stationed at each hierarchically-ordered link of The Higher Educational Great Chain of Being:

undergraduate students,
graduate students,
individual professional academics,
departments,
administrators,
those who exert control over entire colleges, universities, and university systems—presidents, boards of regents, state lawmakers, and Secretaries of Education, etc., all the way up to
Mammon.

Meanwhile, publications such as *U.S. News and World Report* repeatedly weigh in on the "value for your money," aka *bang for your buck*, for every link in The Great Chain. Simplistic cost-benefit analyses to determine whether more people have been using a given resource over a period of time, relative to cost, become the essential means of assessing the relative value of research sources. Metrics are used to track library expenditures, track usage, analyze value for the money, and allocate institutional funds for purchasing access to information. Due to these constant evaluations, academics attempt to force knowledge into measurable units-of-assessment, and to streamline and adapt their research agendas to fit the strategic priorities of research councils and funding bodies (Watermeyer and Olssen 2016, p. 211). Niche research areas that are of less tangible importance to the "knowledge economy," as well as research that is not directly tied to commercial interests—for example, in the humanities—are all given fair warning before the hammer falls: *pay off or perish!* Indeed, a whole field may be deemed "unproductive" if it is not viewed as a means to advance market aims or produce citizens who can participate effectively in the global economy (van der Walt 2017, p. 3).

Narrow quantitative measurements of the "impact" of research also guide the constant assessment and monitoring of faculty performance, as well as tenure and promotion decisions. Such rewards and sanctions normalize increased concern about such measurements and clearly are powerful "educators of attention"; as a consequence, everyone is endlessly obsessed with measures and rankings, and professional academics at Neoliberal U come to evaluate success throughout the system in terms of how much any given unit or cog in the machine contributes to the

"knowledge economy." However, most of the purposes for which universities originally and aspirationally were designed are difficult or impossible to put into numerical terms. While it is easy to measure the percentage of students who graduate, it is much more difficult to measure what they have learned, especially in the long-term, and even more difficult to quantify the extent to which they have been positively transformed or developed capacities for empathy, imagination, and critical inquiry; and while it is easy to calculate the number of publications produced or determine how often an article has been cited, it is much more difficult to measure an article's quality or importance or gauge whether it makes a significant contribution to the field (Busch 2017, p. 46). As a result of mechanization, however, qualitative, non-instrumental evaluations to assess impact and excellence begin to diminish or disappear altogether. In addition, constant attempts at quantification tend to prime and solicit corrosive competition rather than dialogue and collaboration.

4.2.3 Coercion

As we noted in Chap. 3, by *coercion*, we mean

either (i) using violence (for example, injuring, torturing, or killing) or the threat of violence, in order to manipulate people according to certain purely instrumental purposes of the coercer (primary coercion),
or (ii) inflicting appreciable, salient harm (for example, imprisonment, termination of employment, large monetary penalties) or deploying the threat of appreciable, salient harm, in order to manipulate people according to certain purely instrumental purposes of the coercer (secondary coercion).

So all coercion, whether it is primary or secondary, is *manipulation*. As such, all coercion is rationally unjustifiable and morally impermissible, precisely because the coercer treats other people either as mere means to their own self-interested or publicly-beneficial ends, or even worse, as mere things that can be used up and thrown away or destroyed at will. The coercer thereby undermines or else outright violates respect for human dignity.

Neoliberal ideology presupposes that all human agents are self-interested and mutually antagonistic by nature, and that they will invest their human capital only in order to maximize their own personal goals and not those of their employer. The corresponding assumption is that within all organizations, including colleges and universities, many individuals either will do the bare minimum to receive a paycheck or engage in activities that are largely unrelated to the goals of the university. This creates an imagined "moral hazard" (Busch 2017, p. 19). Neoliberal U's "solution" to this "problem" is increased management and surveillance in the form of audits, departmental program reviews, performance metrics, and self-evaluation mechanisms. In an effort to enhance accountability, efficiency, and transparency, administrators are urged to collect massive amounts of data on the "productivity" of university faculty. Faculty members therefore are expected to devote a growing proportion of their time to administrative tasks and to fill out a seemingly endless barrage of forms of about virtually every aspect of their work. Such forms "encourage those who are audited to think about and enact their work in certain ways, to note how their activities conform (or not) to certain norms implicit in the forms" (Busch 2017, p. 36). That is, such paperwork solicits specific patterns of valuation and behavior and generates an expectation that faculty members focus their attention on the considerations highlighted on the forms.

This expectation is enforced, in part, via the fact that administrators will use the information supplied by faculty to grant or deny tenure and promotion, grant or reject merit pay, and "make what are usually called market adjustments in the salaries of individual faculty" (Busch 2017, pp. 38–39). As a result, faculty members become "their own auditors, forced to assess their own performance" on an ongoing basis (Fisher 2009, p. 51). There arises a kind of "indefinite postponement" such as that described by Kafka, in which one's "case" is never settled. Instead, there is continuous surveillance, including self-surveillance, inspection and auditing. This generates perpetual anxiety (Hamann 2009, pp. 51–52) about whether one has done enough. Those who conform to the standards and do what they are expected to do will be rewarded, while those who work against the grain or resist being audited will be sanctioned or sacked. Thus, once such forms become standard practice, individuals

adjust their behavior and affective framings so as to engage effectively with these technologies of audit.

The upshot is that colleges and universities increasingly are governed by free market rhetoric, together with intensive, coercive managerial control practices. It becomes increasingly evident that "the illusory solution to the fiscal crisis in higher education is to monitor, regulate, and reduce the costs of intellectual production, but to do so requires an ever larger, and more coercive, administrative apparatus" (Busch 2017, p. 36). Associated trends include higher numbers of administrators, structural reorganization, the constant threat of spending cuts, more emphasis on marketing and business generation, and the adoption of performance-related pay.

Matters of university governance are reduced to an extension of corporate logic and interests and there are limited opportunities for faculty self-governance. Shared governance between faculty and administrators diminishes and there are few attempts to affirm faculty as scholars and intellectuals who have autonomy and power. Often there are great costs associated with framing things differently or acting contrary to what the university demands. Any criticism of core practices is interpreted as lack of loyalty to the institution, and therefore viewed as fundamentally subversive (Lorenz 2012, p. 610). Critical intellectuals are therefore in very real danger of being denied tenure, or otherwise fired, blacklisted and/or publicly named-&-shamed, for being disobedient trouble-makers, or else relegated to part-time appointments that pay extremely low wages (Giroux 2014, p. 31).

Moreover, as economic efficiency becomes more of a priority, colleges and universities begin to rely more and more heavily on part-time and adjunct faculty. These so-called "contingent" faculty members often make forced choices to take these jobs, despite low wages, due to a lack of viable alternatives. Many of these adjunct and nontenured faculty members "occupy the status of indentured servants who are overworked, lack benefits, receive little or no administrative support, and are paid salaries that qualify them for food stamps" (Giroux 2014, p. 20). From the standpoint of neoliberalism, they are just another cheap army of wage-slaves who can be exploited in order to increase the bottom line.

4.2.4 Divided Mind

As people come to frame things in the way that Neoliberal U explicitly or implicitly demands, they are alienated from their true human needs. As the purpose and role of colleges and universities is redefined, students habitually view themselves as customers and economic agents and make decisions about their education and course work via a cost/benefit analysis. Neoliberalism's emphasis on economic rationality generates an expectation that they "consciously calculate the costs and benefits of all their choices, actions, and beliefs" (Saunders 2010, p. 47). This applies to everything in their lives, from personal relationships, to educational and professional decisions, to determining how their time outside of the classroom will be spent. As Aristotle pointed out, all rational human animals, that is, all human persons, *desire to know.* However, when students frame things in the way that the neoliberal university demands, they are cut off from their natural love of learning and their inborn desire to understand themselves and their world.

Similarly, faculty members very often "feel a fundamental disconnect" between the values emphasized by their colleges and universities, and the values and ideas that animate them as educators and researchers (Warren 2017, p. 136). For example, suppose that a professor is approached by a senior member of the departmental "management team" in order to discuss her teaching workload. The professor learns that she is giving too much time to students and therefore not devoting enough time to research and the production of high-quality publications. This is a moment of institutional socialization: the senior member verbally communicates the expectation for the professor to spend more time on research, and perhaps indicates that there will be some sort of sanction for failing to do so. Suppose, however, that an emphasis on teaching and advising is central to this professor's professional identity, and to her ethical orientation to academic work. By demanding that she spend less time on teaching, the senior member of the department sends a loud-and-clear message that teaching and advising are not institutionally valued as much as research. Such a demand serves not only to colonize her conduct, but also to "colonize [her] soul" and reconfigure her subjectivity, so that her

deep love of teaching is subordinated to concerns about her "research performance" (Warren 2017, p. 136).

The dominance of research assessment regimes, *plus* the status economy of higher education, *plus* the natural conservatism of academic publishing, collectively prime and solicit unadventurous research and scholarship aimed at increasing one's visibility in narrowly defined fields of study. This kind of activity is rewarded by advanced career progression, especially when it is seen to contribute to institutional ambition. Nevertheless, this sort of "game-playing" leads directly to a sense of inauthenticity, since it encourages faculty members to focus obsessively on *where* and *how much* is being published, and to forget about advancing original knowledge or making a unique contribution (Warren 2017, p. 138). This contributes to habits of mind that are fundamentally alienating.

Faculty also experience growing cynicism about what they perceive as ridiculous chores of audit, and this sense of "jumping through the hoops" has a corrosive effect on job satisfaction; as a result, dealing with the new surveillance mechanisms itself becomes a new kind of performance in a setting in which only appearances matter (Lorenz 2012, p. 620). Professors increasingly gear their work "towards the generation and massaging of representations rather than to the official goals of the work itself" (Fisher 2009, p. 42) so that "all that is solid melts into PR" (Fisher 2009, p. 44) and being a professional academic is in danger of becoming yet another "bullshit job" (Graeber 2018b). The introduction of permanent coercive control over faculty also introduces an "affective atmosphere" of permanent mutual antagonism, hostility, mistrust, and "zero-sum" competition. By way of emotional contagion and bodily reverberation, these negative feelings can spread throughout entire academic departments or schools. Many who survive in the system eventually not only experience anomie, but also are effectively alienated from their true human needs for cooperation and collaboration with their colleagues, whether fellow professors or administrators. Given the system of pervasive coercion that lubricates and fuels the neoliberal engines of intellectual production, *colleague* may become a mere bullshit term that means: i. *competitor*, ii. *collaborationist*, and iii. *enemy*. And yet, the culture still retains an affective allure, given the potential rewards of winning

the competition, gaining prestige, and becoming a professional academic superstar.

4.2.5 Reversal of Affect

At Neoliberal U, someone experiencing The Higher Commodification comes to be indifferent towards, or even hate, what she used to like or love—in short, her repertoire of true human values and needs is effectively turned upside down. This corresponds, in turn, to a topsy-turvy shift in her affective framings: "affect is profoundly and irresistibly molded, … in ways contrary to how individuals would feel, act, and comport themselves" (Slaby 2016a, p. 24) if they were not bound by the norms of that social institution. Individuals begin to disregard things that they truly care about and to focus their attention on considerations that don't answer to their true needs. Human persons are naturally curious and find some degree of intrinsic satisfaction in gaining knowledge and understanding about themselves and their world. However, students who see their education as a private and very expensive consumer good, and who view their course work merely as a means to get a decent-paying job, inevitably become deeply cynical about or dissatisfied with the learning process. After all, it only delays their false human need for self-interested, purely economic satisfaction. As egoistic and mutually antagonistic rational economic agents, students systematically alter their goals "from what were largely intrinsic, such as developing a meaningful philosophy of life, to larger extrinsic goals including being very well off financially" (Saunders 2010, p. 54; see also Schmidt 2018). This shift in affective framing constitutes a significant shift in how students focus their attention, resulting in a fundamental loss of intellectual curiosity and a correspondingly diminished enthusiasm for learning: "Will this be on the final exam?" For most students at Neoliberal U, then, education is manifestly *not* regarded as a special opportunity for liberation and enhanced creativity, but instead as an oppressive obligation, something they are explicitly or implicitly *told to do*, and that they dread.

Among professors, correspondingly, there is increasing cynicism, demoralization, loss of motivation, and sharply decreased job satisfac-

tion. As more and more tasks are viewed simply as a means to achieving some purely economic end, their erstwhile intrinsic motivations at the beginning of graduate school are likely, sooner or later, to be replaced by merely false needs for any or all of the extrinsic rewards and gilt-coated trappings of the trade: promotion, tenure, raises, merit pay, fellowships or grants, well-funded prizes, and named professorial chairs.

4.2.6 Loss of Autonomy

Genuine learning encounters require that the people involved are capable of significant autonomy, and that there is respect, reciprocity, and mutual engagement by learner and teacher (Connell 2013, p. 104). However, in the context of the neoliberal college or university, subjects come to experience what they used to do freely as merely going through the motions; instead of experiencing themselves as the source of agency, they now feel like puppets moved by irresistible forces beyond their control.

Professors uniformly lack any real control over institutional decision-making. There is ever-increasing surveillance, ever-increasing coercive control by administrators, and ever-increasing emphasis on marketing and the university "brand." All important decisions are made from the top down, and genuine "shared governance," to the extent that it ever really existed, diminishes or disappears. Keeping the institution in a permanent state of reorganization allows for the splitting up of professional jobs into processes that can be managed, measured, and controlled.

Rhetoric that emphasizes "accountability" requires faculty to provide verifiable documentation of their "productivity" via norms and metrics established by their "managers." Because they must provide all-too-frequent verification of their efforts, faculty members' capacity to set their own goals and make decisions about how best to utilize their time is diminished. Indeed, at many colleges and universities, "management definitions and controls of accountability and quality of faculty performance have replaced the extremely complex question of what quality of education consists in" (Lorenz 2012, p. 619). As regards the curriculum, the focus shifts from "what do we want students to learn?" to "what does the student-as-customer want to learn"? When it comes to course enroll-

ment, students "vote with their feet," and the focus must be on giving them what they think they want, regardless of whether this matches up with their educational true human needs.

As professors increasingly lose rights and power, they are demoralized and increasingly governed by dull resignation, fear, and resentment, rather than by enthusiasm or shared responsibilities. As a result, they are more and more susceptible to labor-bashing tactics such as increased workloads and the growing suppression of dissent. As they begin to lose control over their classrooms and school governance structures, "academics are increasingly reduced to the status of technicians and deskilled" (Giroux 2010, p. 191). Fearful of losing even more power and privilege, faculty find it increasingly difficult "to stand firm, take risks, imagine the otherwise, and push against the grain" (Giroux 2014, p. 19). Instead, they may become stuck in a rut, habitually matching their behavior to institutional expectations. Top-down management not only erodes academics' sense of self-efficacy, self-esteem, and morale, but also detracts from their capacity to engage in creative, critical, and even passionate knowledge-seeking. Along these lines, Watermeyer and Olssen (2016) describe how the ascent of managerialist cultures and increased reliance on performance metrics in every area of academic life leads to an erosion of creativity in the realm of research. While healthy competition can solicit creative thinking, in this context it is "not implemented for the purpose of challenging the limits of academic imaginations and adventures but in constraining these to a uniform expression of what counts" (Watermeyer and Olssen 2016, p. 213): namely, *what can be counted*.

Likewise, students may encounter few opportunities to exercise agential autonomy and develop the capacity to think for themselves and engage critically with the claims and perspectives of others. In the context of higher education, an "autonomously intelligent agent" is one who "selectively incorporates these social, relational, technological, environmental, and bodily resources into their sense of who they are, what they know, what they want, and what they can do" (Cash 2010, p. 661). Promoting the liberty and autonomy of students requires that professors encourage them "to become self-reflectively aware of the way that others—as individuals and collectives—influence their own self-formation" (Busch 2017, p. 23). Students need to develop skills of critical inquiry

and cultivate a habit of questioning how various social forces impact their thoughts, affects, and actions; and since neoliberalism is one of these social influences, students need opportunities to question and challenge this ideology.

Nevertheless,

> as an adjunct of the academic-military-industrial[-digital] complex… higher education has nothing to say about teaching students to think for themselves in a democracy, how to think critically and engage with others, and how to address through the prism of democratic *values* the relationship between themselves and the larger world. (Giroux 2014, 19)

Instead of producing genuinely enlightened cosmopolitan agents who are capable of autonomous thought and action, Neoliberal U produces "trained workers who will be able to perform competently in a given job, but who will be utterly unprepared to future disruptions, technical change, or political upheaval" (Busch 2017, p. 97). Students often do not gain the knowledge and skills needed to think critically and hold power and authority accountable; nor do they have sufficient opportunities to develop habits of imaginative and creative problem-solving or perspective-taking. This is because rather than empowering students to think creatively and challenge conventional beliefs, the institutions of higher education tend to inculcate habits of unthinking obedience and educate young people to be active consumers and compliant subjects, increasingly unable to think critically about themselves and their relationship to the larger world. Sadly, an emphasis on conformity and naked, unapologetic instrumentalism at Neoliberal U has turned much of higher education "into a repressive site of containment, devoid of poetry, critical learning, or soaring acts of curiosity and imagination" (Giroux 2014, p. 35).

In addition, neoliberalism cultivates a stance of narrow individualism. As a hegemonic ideology, it emphasizes that through minimal state intervention, individuals are able freely to pursue their self-interests. According to this political libertarian conception of pseudo-autonomy, individuals "no longer need to rely on a larger society or to work together to attend to their common issues, problems, and needs" (Saunders 2010, p. 48).

Nevertheless, by focusing exclusively on this essentially egoistic, narrow, reductive kind of autonomy, neoliberal ideology is inherently disruptive to genuine *agential autonomy* and *relational autonomy* alike. Neoliberalism obscures essentially social problems and asks people to focus on "individual challenges" and "individual responsibility" against the backdrop of the classical Hobbesian and neo-Hobbesian liberal assumptions of natural self-interest and mutual antagonism. By focusing people's attention only on individual attitudes and behaviors, neoliberal ideology "keeps the focus away from the background of social and normative practices that support and perpetuate the kinds of values, judgments, prejudices, privileges, biases, stereotypes, and relationships of dominance and subjugation" that lead to widespread oppression (Cash 2010, p. 662).

As a result, the classroom often becomes depoliticized and affords few opportunities for identifying social inequities, criticizing ideologies, or investigating the causes of and possible remedies for oppression. Rather than seeing the classroom as an active community with the potential to bring about transformative learning and advance genuinely enlightened, genuinely progressive political aims, most students see it simply as one more step on their individual path to complete a degree (Preston and Aslett 2014). Economic pressures together with a focus on "efficiency" further heighten this tendency toward depoliticization. After all, larger classes that rely heavily on standardized testing, while highly sustainable in an economic sense, typically afford extremely limited opportunities for complex critical engagement with course content, collaborative student engagement, dialogue about controversial issues, and the formation of relationships among students and faculty.

Relational autonomy in the context of research also diminishes. Stuart Lawson, Kevin Sanders, and Lauren Smith (2015) emphasize that the foundation of information is social, that it is something that emerges between people, and that it is a process rather than a finished product. This is *participatory sense-making* on a grade scale, requiring that knowledge and information be shared, and also that they also be regarded as public goods belonging to an intellectual commons rather than as commodities. But in the neoliberal information marketplace, sharing information is generally risky and therefore instrumentally undesirable. Narrowly defining information in terms of economic value, associated

rights of intellectual property ownership, and usefulness in the contemporary knowledge economy solicits winner-take-all competition rather than social production or solidarity, and not only systematically alienates individuals but also effectively undermines relational autonomy. Opportunities for collaboration, joint cognition, and other modes of "collective wisdom" gradually wither away or even disappear altogether.

4.2.7 Incentivization of Desires

At Neoliberal U, subjects experience a transformation of their naturally flexible and dynamic motivational desire-architecture—including both instrumental and non-instrumental desires—into a rigid, static set of wholly instrumental desires whose structure mirrors the externally-imposed, wholly instrumental goals characteristic of the production-system of neoliberalized higher education. This, in turn, is an especially effective, small-scale application of The Big Brotherhood's global project of substituting false human needs for true human needs in neoliberal societies. What was once a loosely assembled, dynamic framework of affective framings under the guidance of true human needs is replaced by a rigid set of values and norms imposed by the social institution. Identities, desires, and modes of subjectivity are shaped essentially in accordance with, and obedience to, market values, needs, and relations (Giroux 2014, p. 15).

Neoliberal U trains students to view their fate as a matter of individual responsibility and to embrace self-promotion and hyper-competitiveness; the importance of social bonds and collective reasoning correspondingly disappear, and there is little room for compassion, empathy, or non-egoistic, non-consequentialist ethical considerations. In fact, such considerations may be denigrated as "unrealistic," "useless," or (worst of all) "utopian." Whereas virtually all children before they start school, and some of them even long after they have been in school, are naturally curious and want to learn new things, by the time they have entered college or university, neoliberal values have systematically perverted this natural curiosity and love of learning. Students develop a habit of viewing their university education as a mere means to a capitalist-driven end: getting a

job in the larger capitalist economic system that will also bring them a so-called "good living." This focus on getting a high-paying job produces enormous pressure on students to plagiarize (Busch 2017, p. 61), and also primes or solicits many professors to "dumb down" the curriculum and inflate grades in order to make their courses more appealing to their consumer-students. Most students are passively receptive to the "rational calculator" view of higher education precisely because anxiety about the consequences of failure in the post-secondary system is extremely unpleasant, and because grade inflation is seemingly advantageous to them in the short term.

Professors who once valued research for its own sake, as intrinsically valuable, now view it largely as a mere means to job security, promotion, professional high status, and the surplus-value world of academic "Awards and Honors"—as a separate section on their CVs, waiting to be populated with long lists. Operating within this system of performance-related emoluments, their true human needs for free thought, creative self-expression, and ongoing intellectual development are replaced with a false human need for extrinsic rewards and an ever-intensifying desire to compete with and defeat their so-called "colleagues." As we noted above, the increased monitoring of faculty performance serves to "colonize behavior" and helps to transform activities that once were pursued for their own sake into measurable academic productivity: "for many metrics that involve human activity, those measured will restructure their behavior so as to maximize their scores" (Busch 2017, p. 46).

For example, as administrators become increasingly concerned about enhancing the relative rankings of the departments, colleges, and universities they manage, professional academics devote less and less attention and effort to teaching and learning for its own sake, talking with students outside class, and interacting with those outside the academy. Because merit increases, promotion, and tenure decisions typically focus heavily on research, professors often come to view other aspects of their work as vanishingly important. In addition, because promotion and tenure decisions often are made on the basis of one's quantity of publications, there is a strong incentive "to divide one's research into numerous small pieces and publish each as a separate article" (Busch 2017, p. 66). Types of research that require years of intensive thought and preliminary investi-

gation before any publishable result can emerge are either explicitly or implicitly devalued and discouraged, and thus begin to disappear from professional academic life. Similarly, counting citations or journal ranking encourages publications in disciplinary journals rather than those that are interdisciplinary or overlap several different fields; and "insisting that researchers publish in the most prestigious journals focuses research on the tried and true, on conventional methods and established theories, on puzzle solving rather than asking new questions" (Busch 2017, p. 73).

It also directly contributes to the culture of ever-increasing competition among faculty, and an excessive, obsessive concern with rankings and prestige. Perfect examples of this in professional academic philosophy are Brian Leiter's *Philosophical Gourmet Report* (Philosophical Gourmet Report 2018), the *Leiter Reports: A Philosophy Blog*,[2] and Justin Weinberg's *Daily Nous* (Daily Nous 2018). It is of course both ironic and tragic that philosophers, traditionally or at least aspirationally motivated by the rational-existential imperative of enlightenment, *Sapere aude!* (dare to think for yourself!, dare to know!), should have devolved to this.

In all these ways, Neoliberal U fosters affective framings, desires, and attitudes that are not only *not conducive* to intellectual cooperation or the creative cultivation of knowledge, but also directly *inimical* to them.

4.2.8 False Consciousness

At Neoliberal U, subjects gradually come to believe, falsely, that the externally-imposed, rigid, static set of incentivized desires actually are their own, and also begin to have an illusory consciousness of agential sourcehood, even despite their being externally manipulated by those desires. In other words, they begin to "buy into" the new set of affective framings that is expected by their university, and eventually it becomes utterly normalized—"it's just the way that things are." The subject's own habits of mind and attention become part of the problem.

At Neoliberal U, "mind hacking" is especially problematic, in view of the fact that the very subjects whose critical thinking skills are needed to question, critique, and challenge what is happening "are themselves the 'targets'—and ultimately, the 'products'—of these formative influences"

(Slaby 2016b, p. 11). The space for insiders' self-critical assessment of higher education shrinks drastically. This is because rather than defending the importance of educating an engaged citizenry, the college or university itself "has become an ideological bulwark for corporate values, interests, and practices" (Giroux 2010, p. 189). It functions as an essential tool for reproducing the "commonsensical" notions—the basic values, norms, ideas, and social relations—that are necessary to sustain the capitalist market system. Thus, as we have noted already, it would be a mistake to suppose that it is only administrators who embrace this ideology. Many college or university professors in neoliberal democratic societies now accept and embrace the view that metrics and quantifiable modes of evaluation truly reflect the quality of research, that the main purpose of higher education is gainful employment, and that fields that do not explicitly prepare students for specific jobs—for example, academic programs in the humanities—are inherently less valuable. To the extent that professors in the humanities argue for the value of the humanities, it often is only to insist that the humanities *really, really do* prepare students for gainful employment, *after all*.[3] The highly dangerous ideas that the humanities might be valuable for their *own* sake, or that they might be valuable for purposes that challenge the very idea of the goodness or rightness of a human life constituted by "gainful employment" in a large-scale capitalist world, rarely enter their minds. They unblinkingly speak of the "market" and their "competitor" schools, and unashamedly view students as consumers whose satisfaction must be promoted at all times. Because they are "beholden to corporate interests, career building, and the insular discourses that accompany specialized scholarship," many professors in neoliberal democratic societies have become entirely comfortable with the corporatization of the university and the new regimes of neoliberal governance (Giroux 2014, p. 17). They thereby contribute to and reinforce Neoliberal U's conventional habits of mind.

This point is hammered home by considering *the professional academic power elite*. This is the professional academy's version of the-amazing-innovator-entrepreneur, the individual who has won the competition and landed a prestigious professorship at a highly ranked "Research 1" institution. "Top-ranking professors," intellectual mandarins made wealthy by the system whose "rules of the game" they have so brilliantly mastered,

are seamlessly integrated into the system at Neoliberal U. Typically, they self-consciously play the role "of the disinterested academic or the clever faculty star on the make, endlessly chasing theory for its own sake" (Giroux 2014, p. 17). As they become increasingly specialized and isolated as superstar scholars, according to what we will call *the direct proportionality of professional academic trendiness to impressive emolument*, they obtain increasingly large rewards in the form of merit pay, promotion, prestige, and prizes such as the MacArthur "genius grants" the Nobel Prizes, the Berggruen Prize, the Kluge Prize, and the Templeton Prize—the latter four of them each carrying a hefty cash-payoff in the $1,000,000+ range nowadays. This vision of "success" and its associated rewards has a tremendous affective pull, which helps to ensure that most professional academics fully "buy into" the new regimes of governance at Neoliberal U.

Correspondingly, among students, there is a serious danger that the hegemony of neoliberal ideology creates a kind of social amnesia that erases critical thought, historical analysis, and any understanding of broader systemic relations (Giroux 2014, p. 2). Focused on "maximizing their human capital" and on a purely cost/benefit approach to their own education, students begin to lose the very capacity "to imagine a different and more critical mode of subjectivity" or envision the world otherwise (Giroux 2014, p. 14). Arguably, however, these capacities for critical thinking and imagination are essential to agential and relational autonomy alike. Insofar as neoliberalism's "best trick" is "to convince people to remain attached to a set of ideologies, values, modes of governance, and policies that generate massive suffering and hardships" (Giroux 2014, p. 2), it erodes both kinds of autonomy and makes it difficult for subjects to challenge frozen, static, uncreative affective framings that are detrimental to their overall well-being.

4.3 Shared Expectations in Online Education

So far, we have been talking about the social institution of higher education, broadly speaking. In this section, we focus more specifically on online learning as an educational institution that has emerged relatively

recently and whose development has been heavily influenced by neoliberal ideology. The online learning environment centers around web-based technology, course management software, online communication, and distance learning. Like other "mental institutions," it involves a particular set of "rules, procedures, practices and participants" (Slaby and Gallagher 2014, p. 15) that offer specific interactive possibilities and afford particular kinds of communication, thinking, and engagement.

For example, many course management systems involve "course modules" that allow students to move progressively through a course, day-by-day and week-by-week. While some communication takes place in real-time, via chat rooms, the most prevalent use of educational technology in higher education involves asynchronous online courses; such classes are not automated, but they lack a face-to-face dimension, and all interactions are mediated, largely via text-based discussions (Rose 2017, p. 375). In fact, the opportunity for asynchronous learning may be viewed as a key advantage of such learning environments: students can engage with the course materials whenever it works best for them. This offers flexibility to students with work and family obligations. Such technology and web-based media offer various possibilities (affordances), which at the same time carry our cognitive and affective processes in particular directions. That is, these environments solicit certain kinds of communication, problem-solving, and thinking, and can have profound effects on the cognitive-affective processes associated with learning.

There are significant reasons to think that online learning both reflects and perpetuates neoliberal aims and values, and that this impacts not only how and what students learn, but also how they (as well as their professors and those in broader society) understand the value and aims of education. We worry that online learning distorts people's understanding, impedes their communicative practices, and narrows their possibilities for action in important ways. And this is because the institution of online education is "pervaded by broader cultural practices and tendencies" (Slaby and Gallagher 2014, pp. 5–6), namely those associated with the contemporary big-capitalist economy.

It seems clear that the push toward increased online course offerings has been motivated largely by people's busy work schedules and a desire to expand the education "market." Increased online offerings are a means

of "increasing enrollments," by *putting bums on (virtual) seats* (Washburn 2006, p. 227), and allowing people to pursue higher education while still working full-time. Under neoliberalism, values such as "efficiency" and "sustainability" come to govern academic program development and course scheduling, and also have helped to motivate an increased reliance on online offerings. Since students "vote with their feet," and face-to-face courses may be under-enrolled while online courses are always full, there is increased pressure to cater to "what the customer wants," regardless of whether "best practices" are employed or online courses bring about significant learning. In the realm of online learning, there is a danger that the educator will become "nothing more than just a worker on the 'assembly line' of online course work that needs to be designed and created" (Chau 2010, p. 185). Indeed, the institution of online learning feeds into the view of faculty as a cheap army of wage-slaves all too well, via the creation of university-owned course modules that any faculty member (including contingent, underpaid adjuncts) can teach.

The claim that the move to online learning has been driven more by economic demands than by pedagogical considerations is relatively uncontroversial. However, what we are claiming is that the social institution of online education literally mind-shapes students, professors, and the broader public and solicits their participation in the "danse macabre" of neoliberal aims, values, and practices. Therefore, it is a mistake to think that the specific technologies associated with online learning are "innocent" or "neutral." Ellen Rose rightly notes that at the heart of the debate surrounding online learning is a question about the ends that education should serve, "and even deeper, about the kind of people we want to be and the kind of world we want to live in" (Rose 2017, p. 375). How does online education affect people's communicative practices, their modes of engagement, and their overall outlook on the meaning and value of education?

First, the online learning environment tends to solicit certain kinds of communication rather than others. Darabi et al. (2011) note that online learning often lacks the rich interaction of students, instructor, content, and culture that occurs in face-to-face classes. They point to non-verbal expressions and rapid interchanges as being key components of such interactions. The online substitutes for face-to-face instruction typically

are various sorts of online discussion forums, which "often lack the insight-producing spontaneity and continuous feedback of in-depth face-to-face interaction" (p. 217). This is because asynchronous online discussion typically involves substantial delays between posts and replies, and often there is little in the way of anything that resembles a conversation among students. In fact, it is not uncommon for someone to post something thoughtful and receive no reply or questions from other students. Now, it is true that some ways of conducting online discussion are better others, and that online learning need not feature a lone student scrolling through pages of online text (Curtis and Lawson 2001, p. 21). But even when "best practices" are used, there is a danger that engaging with the online learning environment cultivates an excessively narrow set of communicative skills and practices.

In particular, online education offers very limited opportunities for "cognitive presence" and embodied engagement. Garrison et al. (2001) characterize cognitive presence as "the extent to which learners are able to construct and confirm meaning through sustained reflection and discourse in a critical community of inquiry" (p. 9). In the more advanced stages of learning, students integrate their own ideas with the ideas of others and attempt to deal with differences and move toward solutions. That is, they begin to exhibit the sort of "collective intelligence" we discussed earlier in this book. While face-to-face interaction that engages students at an affective, bodily level affords this sort of collaboration and critical inquiry, the online learning environment makes this kind of engagement far more difficult if not impossible. Note that our claim is not that written exchanges that occur in online interactions are *completely* disembodied; after all, we remain living, feeling, breathing beings, and engage our bodily senses when we interact online. Indeed, as Blake (2002) rightly notes, "even if this interaction is to a degree emotionally attenuated in comparison to face-to-face interaction, nonetheless there is still the potential for emotional (and moral) involvement of a serious kind" (p. 383).

Nevertheless, while Blake is quite correct that *some* degree of emotional or moral involvement occurs in online settings, we also believe that there are meanings shared during immediate, face-to-face interactions that are unlikely to be shared (either at all, or to the same extent) in asyn-

chronous, disembodied discussions (Maiese 2013). Although individual participants do not simply leave their bodies behind when they interact online, the *relation* that exists between them via the mediating technology is itself *disembodied*, and this dramatically changes the dynamics of the interaction. Opportunities to see and hear and feel another student give voice to an alternative perspective are more limited, and it is far easier for a student to disengage by closing a browser window or turning off her computer. The "paths of least resistance" in online education cultivate a more distant, less fully embodied mode of communication and interpersonal engagement. Online settings therefore afford students with few opportunities to develop the aptitudes needed for cross-cultural dialogue, an appreciation of diverse perspectives, and mutual understanding (Ess 2003, p. 119). And in cases where online discussions are not skillfully orchestrated, there is a serious danger that the relationships among the participants will be transformed from an ongoing, reciprocal, embodied exchange, to something more detached, disembodied, and mechanical.

Second, online learning platforms tend to embed and foster attitudes and values associated with consumer culture. To see what we mean, consider the fact that our rational, conceptual, belief-based experience of the world and of one another always is preceded by and embedded in cultural systems of meanings and practices, which influence subjects' modes of attention and patterns of interpretation (Kirmayer and Ramstead 2017). Within cultural settings and social institutions, participants share expectations. What Kirmayer and Ramstead (2017) call "a cultural ontology" is a shared style of expecting the world to be a certain way, and to afford specific possibilities for action while foreclosing others. Such expectations are ingrained by way of participation in cultural practices; engaging with institutions grounds and scaffolds individual enactments of meaning by prescribing and normalizing certain modes of action and experience, namely those that allow someone to adapt and function effectively within that social institution.

Built into online learning environments is the expectation that students will enroll in these courses in order to get the skills they need for a particular job, to obtain a specific degree, and to maximize their earning potential. Such expectations are normalized via rhetoric emphasizing efficiency, flexibility, and workplace advancement, and also via the creation

of accelerated online classes with modules that students complete each week. Students come to expect that they will be able to work toward a degree alongside a full-time job, that they will be able to work through the material at their own pace and on their own time, and that they need not directly engage with embodied others in order to complete the course requirements. Moreover, because online learning allows courses to be crafted and packaged into one central location whereby students can pick and choose which course to take (Chau 2010, p. 185), many students develop the habit of viewing their education in wholly individualistic and consumerist terms. Universities strongly reinforce this narrow, instrumental outlook on education by emphasizing how online learning offers a flexible, efficient training ground to obtain a ticket to a higher paying job. Students focus their attention on completing degree requirements as quickly and easily as possible, rather than learning how to think critically, engage in "the sorts of dialogues that help shape our self-understanding and awareness of the larger world," and develop skills of interpersonal engagement for the sake of larger goals like ending oppression, freedom, and peace (Ess 2003, p. 126). No doubt these are lofty goals, but the plain fact is that the online communication that occurs at Neoliberal U typically not only does not advance them, but also *undermines* them. Insofar as consumerism is even more clearly the prevailing "culture of use" in online learning settings, the institution of online education solicits students to view their education in accordance with a neoliberal stance, rather than valuing it for its potential to develop the sorts of moral skills and capacities mentioned just above.

In this way, an "online learning habitus" has emerged—that is, an emergent set of dispositions acquired over the course of learning how to navigate and successfully utilize online education platforms. These dispositions go on to inform subsequent learning practices, the expectations for those practices, and the values that students ascribe to such learning. This habitus is comprised, in part, of a "a practical sense of what is appropriate, necessary, possible, and valued" (Kennedy 2012, p. 429) within online education settings. Of course, a particular student's interests and concerns are relevant as well. However, the habitus orients her toward particular goals and strategies, so that certain sorts of behaviors and values appear "natural" to her. In particular, online learning environments

encourage students to view their education in purely instrumental terms or as an annoying or oppressive obligation. Online courses come to be viewed as a means of getting what they dread out of the way as quickly as possible, and without having to give up paid employment while doing so. Rose (2017) notes that even students who live nearby, and who express their preference for learning in face-to-face courses, often opt "for the easy and timely access offered by online courses" (pp. 374–375); thus, it is worth asking why more and more students "choose tenuous but convenient technological linkages over opportunities to come together with embodied others" (Rose 2017, p. 375). Surely it is not because they think they will learn more, but rather because it offers more "ease" and "efficiency," and greater "flexibility," where these terms are understood wholly in relation to the demands of the market and workplace. Students "jump on the idea that online learning allows them to maximize their profits" (Chau 2010, p. 186), and they will be rewarded in the form of fast-and-easy course credits, thereby reinforcing the notion that the central purpose of education is job training. As a result, they may very well lose sight of higher education as a place where they can learn to think critically, question their society, and become active citizens (Chau 2010, p. 181).

This results in a special mode of collective sociopathy: students become alienated from their natural love of learning, more distant from one another, and less capable of collaborative, embodied engagement. In addition, they develop the now-familiar inflexible habit of viewing their education in extremely narrow terms, coming to believe that this is "just the way things are." These coerced habits of attention and valuation shape their outlook to such a great extent that it becomes nearly impossible for them to imagine things otherwise.

* * *

We have been arguing that consciousness, cognition, affectivity, and practical action are necessarily collective and social, precisely insofar as they are agential, and also that they are partially determined and literally shaped by the structures and dynamics of social institutions. If so, then to understand people's essentially embodied conscious and self-conscious

lives as rational human minded animals, we need to examine social-institutional factors that cultivate and scaffold particular habits of mind rather than focusing exclusively on individuals. Interestingly, however, an essential component of neoliberal thinking involves precisely the tendency to focus exclusively on the individual and not on our collective agential life inside social institutions. This ideological cognitive bias makes it even more difficult for people to gain a critical, deeper understanding of the influence of the norms, values, structures, and dynamics associated with neoliberalism.

As a result of the dominance of neoliberal ideology in contemporary neoliberal societies, especially in democratic states like the USA, higher education at colleges and universities is now pervasively framed in quantifiable terms; and, despite higher education's mission-statement rhetoric, its deep connections to profit and economic interests are its primary and central focus.[4] We have seen that norms of adequacy and optimality associated with the market have been imported and adapted to govern the workings of colleges and universities and those who belong to them. Consequently, the college's or university's place as a public institution, committed to the creation and recreation of knowledge for the public good, has given way a cost-saving, standardized, and entrepreneurial approach to education (Preston and Aslett 2014, p. 502). However, the kinds of considerations that Neoliberal U promulgates as unfailingly relevant, essentially important, and ultimately mandatory, are inherently incompatible with *democratic* institutions of higher education, under the only rationally justifiable and morally defensible concept of *democracy*. But what do we mean by that?

In fact, there are at least *three* different concepts of democracy:

i. democracy as the rule of the majority of all the people qualified to vote, who then hand over the control of coercive power to an elected or appointed minority, aka *majoritarian-representative democracy*,
ii. democracy as the open process of critical discussion and critical examination of opinions and social institutions, and, simultaneously, the unfettered expression of different opinions and lifestyles, aka *libertarian-procedural democracy*, and

iii. democracy as the unwavering commitments to universal respect for human dignity and autonomy, and universal resistance to human oppression, aka *ethical-emancipatory democracy*.

Notoriously, however, the three concepts of democracy are *mutually logically independent*, in that they do not necessarily lead to or follow from one another.

First, it is really possible that what is decreed by the majority of all the people qualified to vote is in fact morally evil and wrong, aka *the problem of the tyranny of the majority*—and that is exactly what happened when the Nazis were elected by a majority of German voters in 1932–1933 (see, for example, Wikipedia 2018).

Second, it is also really possible that what is decreed by the majority of the people qualified to vote is a system in which an elected or appointed powerful minority of those people can actually override the majority, aka *the problem of the tyranny of the minority*—and that is exactly what happens whenever the US Electoral College votes to elect someone, like Trump in 2016, who did not actually win the popular vote.

Third and finally, it is also really possible that there could be an open process of critical discussion and critical examination of opinions and social institutions, and simultaneously the unfettered expression of different lifestyles and opinions, which nevertheless leads to a situation in which universal respect for human dignity and autonomy, and universal resistance against human oppression, are in fact undermined and weakened, aka *the problem of an unconstrained, value-neutral process*—and that is exactly what happened in the case of Trump's election, via the de-facto-two-Party system, the Primaries, and psychologically-manipulative uses of social media and the internet.[5]

Therefore, the only morally and politically acceptable concept of democracy is the *third* concept, *ethical-emancipatory* democracy: democracy as the unwavering commitments to universal respect for human dignity and autonomy, and universal resistance to human oppression.

Nevertheless, as we can easily see, Neoliberal U is *inherently inconsistent with the third concept of democracy*, taken as an evaluative standard. This is simply because, at Neoliberal U, higher education is The Higher Commodification. Neoliberalism has deprived education of

> its distinctive status as an interpersonal relationship that forms, guides, equips, and unfolds less mature people for their life-task by morphing it into an enterprise intended to prepare people for the labour market, and, in doing so, serving the interests of business, trade, and the economy. (van der Walt 2017, p. 4)

The true meaning of education, as equipping and guiding students and leading them toward a higher emancipatory-ethical purpose "is sacrificed for the purpose of making education serve the economy" (van der Walt 2017, p. 4). Generally overlooked is the fact that the rationally defensible "goods" of higher education are not analogous to consumer goods and services and that their value is incommensurable with the value of consumer goods. Human dignity has absolute, non-denumerably infinite, intrinsic, objective, non-instrumental value; but economic value is wholly relative, denumerable and usually finite, extrinsic, context-bound, and instrumental. Rather than respecting human dignity, promoting autonomy, and soliciting critical thinking, Neoliberal U systematically deforms thinking, feeling, and acting, so that professional academics and their students begin to view knowledge and education in exclusively economic terms. That is, it systematically cultivates and sustains habits of human mindedness that effectively—and tragically—undermine true human needs and human flourishing alike.

Notes

1. See, for example, the online site, *Philosophers' Cocoon* (2018). The name says it all: the site is all and only about expressing and soothing professional academic anxieties, and sharing strategies for professional advancement and success—or at least survival. No actual philosophy is ever done on the site.
2. See, for example, "2016–2017 Ranking of the Best Philosophy PhD Programs Taking Account of Faculty Changes Since the Fall 2014 PGR," Leiter Reports (2018).
3. Witness, for example, the enthusiastic flurry of professional academic retweeting that celebrated an article entitled "Billionaire LinkedIn Founder Reid Hoffman Says His Masters in Philosophy Has Helped Him

More Than an MBA" (Feloni 2017). Ironically, a close reading of the article shows that Hoffman was actually saying that nowadays an MBA *is even more useless than* his MA in philosophy.

4. Here is a good example, drawn almost at random from the daily news feed: "Americans Losing Faith in College Degrees, Poll Finds," (Mitchell and Belkin 2017). The sub-heading reads: "Men, young adults and rural residents increasingly say college isn't worth the cost." Nowhere in the article is there the slightest hint that higher education might have anything other than an instrumental value, whether positive or negative. There is a passing reference by a university spokesperson to "lifelong education," but it is clear in context that this is merely a means for colleges and universities to have a large constituency of *lifelong consumers*.
5. See, for example, Schreckinger (2016) and Benkler et al. (2017).

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5

Case-Study II: Mental Health Treatment in Neoliberal Nation-States

Just as higher education in contemporary neoliberal nation-states is best understood as a "standard, dystopian social institution"—a neoliberal mega-machine—so too, is the system of mental healthcare. Prophetically, from the mid-twentieth century, R.D. Laing writes:

> What we call "normal" is a product of repression, denial, splitting, projection, introjection and other forms of destructive action on experience… The more one sees this, the more senseless it is to continue with generalized descriptions of supposedly specifically schizoid, schizophrenic, hysterical "mechanisms." There are forms of alienation that are relatively strange to statistically "normal" forms of alienation. The "normally" alienated person, by reason of the fact that he acts more or less like everyone else, is taken to be sane. Other forms of alienation that are out of step with the prevailing state of alienation are those that are labeled by the "normal" majority as bad or mad.
>
> The condition of alienation, of being asleep, of being unconscious, of being out of one's mind, is the condition of the normal man. Society highly values its normal man. It educates children to lose themselves and to become absurd, and thus to be normal. Normal men have killed perhaps 100,000,000 of their fellow normal men in the last fifty years. (Laing 1967)

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We have argued that neoliberalism advances a particular image of social reality in which market norms and values dominate and shape our sense of what is "normal" and optimal. Although the neoliberal/Big Brotherhood project can be discussed in terms of economics, "an ethos of 'small government' and liberalized opportunities for entrepreneurs and investors" (Brown and Baker 2012, p. 20), we have not depicted it primarily as a series of policies. Instead, we have construed neoliberalism and The Big Brotherhood

> as an ensemble of ideological and institutional forces whose primary aim is to construct a specific social reality in which virtually all aspects of human life—including human relations, forms of subjectivity, modes of conduct, and/or personal objectives—are managed and evaluated on the basis of market demands. (Esposito and Perez 2014, p. 420)

As we noted in Chap. 4, neoliberalism encompasses not just a set of ideas, norms, and values, but also modes of governance comprised of what Foucault (1993) calls "technologies of the self." Such technologies afford and solicit particular mindsets and modes of conduct, and thereby bring about literal mind-shaping. Neoliberalism's ideological currents can be seen throughout civil society, including the media, corporations, churches, universities, and health organizations. In all of these realms, market values such as individualism, self-reliance, consumerism, and personal profit come to shape what people regard as rational, responsible, and productive forms of agency. In Chap. 4, we examined how, within the sphere of higher education, "neoliberal rationalities are modulated through the everyday practices of university managers and in the ways individual academics work on their academic subjectivities" (Warren 2017, p. 136). "Market fundamentalism" in the context of colleges and universities, we argued, leads students, professors, and administrators alike to view higher learning as *The Higher Commodity* that can be mechanically produced, bought, and sold, and to value it essentially in relation to the search for personal profit.

In this chapter, we investigate how neoliberalism also has pervaded our mental health practices and our sense of what is psychologically "normal"; as a result, these practices are fully informed by profit-driven

objectives and serve to promote "self-reliant entrepreneurial dispositions on the part of individuals" (Brown and Baker 2012, p. 26). Since, as we argued in Chap. 3, our needs for adequate physical and mental health and adequate healthcare are both true, basic human needs, it follows that these needs express absolute, non-denumerably infinite, intrinsic, objective, and above all, *non-market* values. Nevertheless, the social institutions of healthcare in general and mental healthcare in particular have been pervasively invaded by the practices, norms, and values of the market.

Correspondingly, then, an examination of contemporary mental health practice in neoliberal democratic states reveals, once again, how notions of individualism, markets, and marketability comprise a "cultural rubric" (Brown and Baker 2012, p. 18) that molds us and governs how we feel, think, and act. We have argued that this can be understood in terms of the formation of particular "habits of mind" or affective framing patterns. We also have argued that the formation of such patterns necessarily occurs via our engagement with the social institutions to which we belong. Specific social contexts and sociocultural settings afford certain possibilities of action and experience, calling forth certain essentially embodied responses in accordance with enculturated expectations. Children "directly incorporate into their habitual repertoire the antecedently existing and taken-for-granted practices and customs undertaken by the agents with whom the child interacts" (Levine 2012, p. 267). As a result of being exposed to other people in their immediate environment, they incorporate various habits and gain a "feel for the game." Once they are carried out repeatedly, these habitual sequences of thought and action loop back and reinforce a subject's conviction in their appropriateness, even if initially she was simply just responding to the context or other people's expectations (Kirmayer and Ramstead 2017). The complex dynamic interaction between an embodied subject and her environment thereby is "patterned and primed by previous exchanges" that change the saliency of future interactive possibilities (Brancazio 2018). This means that our actions in each moment influence the way in which new possibilities for interaction unfold over temporal durations.

Although habits and bodily skills are not governed by explicit rules, they still are subject to a type of normative accountability (Levine 2012,

p. 268). The pre-reflective sense of appropriateness or correctness that informs our habits is centered on a "norm of optimality." For someone's activity to be sufficiently optimal to cope with the situation at hand, it must be sensitive not only to the structure and organization of our bodies, but also to the projects or practices in which our bodies are engaged. Projects and practices have a certain practical logic, whether that logic is instrumental (as in the case of walking), social-institutional yet strategic (for example, playing chess), social-institutional and collaborative (for example, dancing), or social-institutional and overtly legal or political (for example, getting one's driver's license, or voting). The logic of each practice "downwardly organizes" habits (Levine 2012, p. 268), so that behavioral patterns are established in accordance with the norms and conventions associated with that practice. Thus, the most primitive way that social practices and customs are anchored in the individual subject is via the internalization of habits and bodily skills. The optimality or adaptability of habits, and whether they allow us to cope with the situation at hand, depends in large part on social conventions and norms.

In the next section, we will describe how the "medical model" or "disease model," which arguably is the guiding framework for mental health practice in the USA, and extremely influential elsewhere as well, both reflects and advances an essentially neoliberal/Big Brotherhood agenda. We also will examine how the logic of mental health practice, and its associated rhetoric of "responsibilization" and "resilience," helps to form a neoliberal mode of subjectivity.

5.1 Dr Bigbrother: The Medical Model and Neoliberalism

According to the "medical model," aka the "disease model," in psychiatry, mental disorders can be validated "through the discovery of a discrete, identifiable biological 'essence'" (Broome and Bortolotti 2009, p. 26), and one organ above all is regarded as the cause of mental disorder: the brain. On this dominant and prevailing view, psychopathology results from cerebral abnormalities, faulty neural wiring, or imbalances in brain

chemistry, and can be treated via "value-free," naturalistic methods of science and medicine (Esposito and Perez 2014, p. 415).

One problem with the medical model, according to Eric Matthews (2007), is that it asks us to view mental disorder in exclusively third-personal terms, as essentially analogous to bodily disease, with its own special pineal-gland-like localization in the brain, hence as *a brain disease*. In the case of bodily illness, leaving aside psychosomatic cases, what is disordered is primarily something analyzable in third-person, scientific terms, namely altered bodily functioning. Nevertheless, it is highly doubtful whether disorders such as schizophrenia and depression are caused by anything brain-located and neurological in the straightforward way that heart attacks are caused by arterial blockage. In fact, most if not all mental, affective, and behavioral problems do not have clear-cut genetic or physiochemical causes at all, but instead are "difficult human experiences brought on my faulty learning, inadequate coping skills, stressful events, or other problems in the personal and interpersonal arenas of life" (Elkins 2009, p. 71). As Erich Fromm, R.D. Laing, Thomas Szasz, and other radical psychiatrists insisted fifty years ago, because mental disorders are clearly *existential*—that is, subjectively experiential, situated, irreducibly normative, and agent-centered—in a way that bodily disorders are not, they are best understood *not* as "brain diseases" but instead as *problems in living* (Matthews 2007, p. 17). When essentially embodied minds encounter problems in living and their lives "go wrong" in this way, pointing to some sort of mechanical breakdown in the brain will be terribly insufficient for explaining how and why someone suffers from a "mental disorder."

Moreover, it is clear that the very idea of a "mental disorder" is heavily influenced by practical considerations as well as social-institutional norms and values. Such considerations, norms, and values are crucial, for example, when it comes to defining the threshold at which a particular set of signs and symptoms should be deemed clinically relevant (Patil and Giordano 2010, p. 3). This means that there are no value-neutral, completely "objective," extra-social-institutional criteria that can be used to distinguish between normality and abnormality/disorder. What counts as highly adaptive behavior in one social-institutional milieu, say, wartime military service, may be highly maladaptive in another, say, everyday

peacetime society. This is because our understanding of what counts as "normal" and adaptive behavior is strongly inflected and influenced by social-institutional assumptions, ideologies, and values. Insofar as a subject will be deemed "mentally ill" if she exhibits a way of behaving, thinking, or feeling that diverges from certain standards of her society, what counts as disordered is determined in relation to those standards. This led many mid-twentieth century theorists to conclude that "mental illness" is merely the pejorative label for numerous behaviors and subjective experiences that are found to be socially problematic because they do not fit the dominant social-institutional norms. Foucault (1961) and Laing (1960), for example, both hold that "mental illness" is simply what society calls any person-centered set of behaviors it deems *deviant*, and that so-called "insanity" is the only rational, sane response to an anti-rational, insane world; and Szasz (1961) has gone so far as to assert that mental illness is nothing but a "myth."

While we absolutely agree that social-institutional norms and values significantly influence and pre-format psychiatric practice, we also worry that an all-out social-constructionist approach downplays and obscures the very real difficulties and suffering endured by subjects with mental illness. The epistemology of social construction fallaciously and fatally confuses *ideology* with *manifest reality*. In short, while fully agreeing with Foucault, Laing, and Szasz that the *ideology* of mental illness is a socially-constructed myth, it simply does not follow that *the existential dilemmas, disorders, and suffering* of the people we are talking about are in any way socially-constructed or mythical. On the contrary, they are all too awfully real. Schizophrenia and depression, for example, do truly pose huge obstacles to adapting and living well, by way of their distortions in perception, self-awareness, and social interaction. Although these conditions do not signify simply a "broken brain" or impaired neural functioning, they do involve genuine disruptions to neurobiological and bodily dynamics that make it extremely difficult for subjects to adapt and live well. Like bodily illnesses, they seriously impact the *existential specific characters* of subjects' essentially embodied neurobiological and situated lives: hence, these conditions are extremely "likely to reduce the chances of survival and/or of a reasonable quality of life, and/or to increase the

level of pain or discomfort of the human being in question" (Matthews 2007, p. 103).

Now it is self-evidently true, we believe, that the ways in which people pursue the satisfaction of their desires, express emotions, and navigate conflict are significantly structured, partially determined, and indeed literally shaped by the larger social-institutional context in which they pursue, express, and navigate them. A deeply fragmented, warped society—driven and/or controlled by ideological individualism, neoliberal norms, and The Big Brotherhood—makes it extremely difficult, or even practically impossible, for many rational human subjects to satisfy their true human needs. This, in turn, directly implies that the collective sociopathy of destructive, deforming institutions is *outright toxic*, and very apt to prime, trigger, and reinforce mental illness. Moreover, there is a very real danger that instead of acknowledging, critically facing up to, and actively resisting the destructive, deforming effects of these social institutions, we will instead mechanically diagnose people as "bipolar," "depressed," or "schizophrenic"—in four words, "sick in the head" (Moncrieff 2008, p. 249). And then we will either shunt them off into the nether world of so-called "funny farms," "loony bins," or "nut houses," from which they only rarely or never return, or else, in times of Libertarian neoliberal, anti-big-government cutbacks, simply release them so that they wander the streets as permanently "crazy," "chronically homeless" people.

Nevertheless, our claiming that social-institutional dynamics and structures significantly impact and literally mind-shape people's psychopathological subjective experiences and neurobiological dynamics is sharply different from saying that mental illness is *nothing but* a deviation from social-institutional norms and values. The latter claim is fallacious and reductive. The symptoms associated with conditions such as schizophrenia and depression involve salient alterations in subjective experience, neurobiological dynamics, and everyday living that powerfully impact people's capacity to satisfy their true human needs, whatever the social-institutional environment. This means that there is *some manifestly real basis* for correctly using the terms "mental disorder" and "mental illness," although, to be sure, our beliefs about what counts as "mentally disordered" or "mentally ill" are *by no means free of ideology.* Indeed, the

socio-institutional environment most certainly does heavily influence the way in which people form beliefs about, recognize, respond to, and conceptually struggle with their unfortunate existential condition.

If one adopts the essential-embodiment-oriented, enactivist, emancipatory approach to political philosophy of mind that we are recommending in this book, then it follows that those who think about, treat, or suffer from mental illness need to take seriously the lived bodily experience of mental illness inside social institutions; and they also need to strongly resist conceptualizing mental disorders in *mechanistic* terms, and treating human persons as nothing but causally-coordinated bits of living machinery or *neurobiological puppets.* From our essential-embodiment-oriented, enactivist perspective, living animals are what Kant called *natural purposes*; hence, they have a *natural teleology*, and function not as machines, but rather as complex dynamic systems that are self-organizing, self-regulating, and adaptive. This approach further holds that human subjects enact a meaningful world *in-and-through* their living bodies, and that mental illness involves both distortions to someone's mode of being-in-the-world—changes in lived bodily experience—and also disruptions in the complex dynamics of the living body. Thus, "disorders" do warrant some sort of non-reductive causal explanation, in terms of neurobiological dynamics, *as well as* some sort of phenomenologically robust explanation, in terms of lived bodily experience, thoughts, feelings, and desires.

Indeed, our holistic approach to psychopathology follows directly from our more general commitment to *methodological triangulation* in the philosophy of mind—systematically combining and coordinating phenomenology, cognitive or affective neuroscience, and classical philosophical reasoning—that we described in Sect. 1.1. And our holistic approach to psychopathology, in turn, implies a further commitment to holistic approaches to therapy and mental health, namely, approaches that simultaneously involve both *transforming* subjective meanings and lived experience as well as *altering* bodily dynamics, in relation to social institutions.

In this connection, one very harmful aspect of modern psychiatry has been its widespread failure to engage with the personal suffering, stories

of tragedy, loss, abuse, and oppression of those who are mentally ill (Thomas and Bracken 2008, p. 49)—the existential side of mental illness. Moreover, since human mindedness is not only *essentially embodied* and *existential*, but also *necessarily socially embedded* and literally molded by socio-cultural dynamics, norms, and structures—as the mind-shaping thesis entails—we must seek to understand how social dynamics and structures can contribute to psychological distress. We need to approach subjectivity in a way that acknowledges, at once, *both* that we are necessarily and completely embodied rational animals, existing in the manifestly real natural world, and *also* that our animal lives are thoroughly embedded and enmeshed in a social-institutional environment. A focus on the neurobiology and subjective experiences of *individual* rational human animals, on the one hand, therefore, is perfectly compatible with a corresponding focus on the relationships between these rational human animals and *the larger social institutions they are literally mind-shaped by*, on the other. It should be obvious how such a triangulating, holistic approach is superior to *either* a reductive, monocular focus on individual neurobiology and individual subjective experience *or* an equally but oppositely reductive, monocular focus on social institutions. Neither neurobiology, phenomenology, nor sociality can be written out of the rational human condition, since all of them are central to human reality; and our diagnostic, treatment, and healing efforts must always acknowledge this triple complexity.

Our essential embodiment-oriented, enactivist, emancipatory social-institutional approach to the philosophy of mind is therefore uniquely well-positioned to make sense of the fundamental ideas that

i. an individual's subjectively experienced and chosen, performed responses are necessarily (even if not wholly) a function of complex dynamic formative interactions between inherently minded, neurobiological systems and the larger social environment in which they are embedded and enmeshed, and also
ii. that what counts as "normal" and adaptive behavior can be understood only when these existentially and explanatorily irreducible contextual features are taken into account.

To attribute mental disorders solely to a "broken brain" almost completely obscures this poignant, rich domain of existentially and explanatorily complex facts.

Although it would be overly simplistic to claim that neoliberalism alone gave rise to the medical model in psychiatry, nevertheless, in the larger ideological framework of what, in Sect. 3.1, we called *socio-scientism*, neoliberalism and the medical model are mutually reinforcing. In neoliberal democratic societies that lack *universal free healthcare*, such as the USA, an alternative system of *managed, capitalist healthcare* has meant that mental healthcare has come to be built around diagnoses based on the *Diagnostic Statistical Manual* (aka, the DSM): this is a way for individuals to obtain service that will be covered by health insurance. Indeed, the DSM operates as a legal, financial, and ideologically hegemonic document that significantly determines, or at least significantly *pre-formats*, how we think about mental health practice, and, as a consequence, promulgates ever more medicalized, individualistic notions of mental illness (Timimi 2008, p. 173).

The rise of "medicalization" in mental health treatment also can be traced to the psychopharmacological revolution of the mid-twentieth century. During that time, drugs became the primary treatment for pathological behaviors and conditions, the cause of which was thought to be "fixed biological properties within the individual" (Esposito and Perez 2014, p. 417). Conditions such as anxiety and depression, for example, began to be viewed as self-contained ailments that could be resolved individually, through the use of pharmaceutical drugs. It is worth noting, however, that the chemical imbalance model of mental illness lacks adequate empirical support, even despite widespread popular belief to the contrary. There is little or no evidence of any causal link, for example, between serotonin and depression, or between the over-activity of dopamine and schizophrenia (Moncrieff 2008, p. 243). The brains of people with schizophrenia investigated post-mortem do not actually exhibit any abnormality of overall dopamine concentration.

However, the chemical imbalance view not only persists despite this lack of evidence, but also is promoted widely by the psychiatric profession and pharmaceutical advertising. Even when mental-health professionals concede that there is no conclusive evidence of any causal link

between mental disorder and abnormalities in brain chemistry, many still operate with the unchallenged assumption that there is some sort of brain-based chemical imbalance. Why? Joanna Moncrieff (2008) plausibly argues that this false assumption persists *not* because there is solid evidence for "discrete and specific anatomical or functional defects" associated with mental illness, but rather *solely for specifically political, and more generally socio-scientistic, reasons* (p. 243). In other words, this view of psychiatric problems facilitates the neoliberal project of managed, capitalist healthcare; and then, in turn, basic features of the neoliberal project of managed, capitalist healthcare, together with the huge, highly profitable pharmaceutical industry, together with the background philosophical doctrine of scientism, collectively make the chemical imbalance theory all but inevitable.

By situating mental illness within the brain of the individual, the medical model downplays or even altogether overlooks the social-institutional, mind-shaping framework of mental illness and dismisses socio-cultural, socio-economic, and socio-political influences, in favor of identifying the "objective" cause of mental distress—principally, faulty brain chemistry. In fact, invoking social, political, or economic factors in order to help explain one's personal distress is typically regarded as a mere excuse. It is essentially up to brain-bound individuals to overcome their pathology by taking the proper medical steps: seeking and paying for "proper" treatment, namely drugs and behavioral therapy (Esposito and Perez 2014, p. 422). But the emphasis on medication and behavioral therapy is overly-individualizing and de-socializing, insofar as such interventions fail to address the negative impacts of a broad range of social-institutional factors—cultural, economic, and political—that significantly contribute to mental illness. Thus, widespread acceptance of the idea that depression is caused by an imbalance in brain chemistry "has helped to displace responsibility for suffering and distress away from the social economic arena onto the individual and his or her brain" (Moncrieff 2014, p. 14). Once mental illness has been attributed to brain disease, its complex origins and meanings no longer have to be examined or explained. Thus, *blaming the brain* undercuts any serious critical consideration of the way in which cultural, economic, or political imperatives associated with neoliberalism—such as the demand to tolerate poor living or working

conditions without pushing back, or to submit passively to school or workplace discipline—play a salient, partially-determining, and mind-shaping role not only in how we define certain behaviors as pathological (Moncrieff 2006, p. 302), but also in how we respond to and treat them.

Correspondingly, the "no such thing as society, only collections of atomic self-interested and mutually antagonistic individuals" mantra of neoliberalism has helped to subsume virtually all areas of human activity under a *neuroscience* paradigm: hence, "neuroaesthetics," "neuroethics," "neuropolitics," "neurotheology," and so-on (Moncrieff 2014, p. 15).[1] If "the project of the self" is a *neuro*-project, then all *failures* of the "self-project" are *neuro*-failures (Brown and Baker 2012, p. 112). One leading example of this de-socialization of mental healthcare is the treatment of homelessness as strictly a matter of brain-based, individual pathology — as if the facts that homeless people are social outcasts with little or no money, no permanent place to live, extremely unhealthy diets and life-styles, and, very frequently, drug or alcohol addictions, who typically come from dysfunctional or estranged families, and have adversarial and conflicted relationships with the police, the legal system, and the state, *were somehow irrelevant epiphenomena of their condition*.

5.2 Doing It By the DSM: Mental Healthcare and the Eight Criteria of Collective Sociopathy

In previous chapters, we've distinguished between *constructive, enabling* social institutions and *destructive, deformi*ng social institutions. Whereas constructive, enabling institutions are empowering in all senses of that term, and systematically promote and sustain *individual and collective human flourishing*, destructive, deforming institutions promote and sustain habits of mind and behavioral dynamics that systematically *undermine* and *vitiate* individual and collective human flourishing. In the remainder of this section, we will describe how a medicalized, over-individualized, neoliberalized approach to mental health, encoded in social institutions supposedly designed to help distressed and unhappy

people, in fact has a systematically corrupting influence on patients as well as practitioners.

The total set of mental healthcare practices that dominate in contemporary neoliberal nation-states like the USA therefore can be understood as comprising a single, overarching destructive, deforming social institution that fully satisfies the eight criteria of collective sociopathy we spelled out in Chap. 3 and then applied to contemporary higher education in Chap. 4:

1. Commodification
2. Mechanization
3. Coercion
4. Divided Mind
5. Reversal of Affect
6. Loss of Autonomy
7. Incentivization of Desires
8. False Consciousness.

Correspondingly, we will now spell out the application of these criteria to contemporary mental healthcare.

5.2.1 The Commodification of Mental "Health" and "Normalcy"

In a neoliberal society, as we've seen, what counts as normal/healthy and abnormal/ill are determined by market considerations. Happiness and fulfillment are equated with *success in the marketplace*, whereas failing to become fully integrated into this market reality is regarded as irrational, unproductive, deviant, or pathological. Human persons thereby are evaluated in terms of a cost-benefit calculus of financial burden, productivity, and efficiency (Hamann 2009, p. 41). Whether one is deemed normal and sane, or dysfunctional and ill, depends largely on whether one can participate in society as a wage-earner and consumer. A sure sign of illness, then, is the inability to hold a job or compete with others for things that one needs or desires. Insofar as such an individual is unable to assume

"personal responsibility" for her problems, she fails not only as an economic agent, but also as a rational and responsible human person. Furthermore, when people speak of the "costs" of mental illness to society, their focus often is on the tax burden associated with funding social programs, unemployment, and someone's inability to be economically productive (Rizq 2014, p. 212). Much of the concern about the significant increase in the number of people diagnosed with depression in recent years, for example, has to do with its impact on workplace performance (Teghtsoonian 2009, p. 29). These ways of thinking and speaking become normalized frames of reference that guide how people within neoliberal societies approach and understand mental health and illness.

For those who are unable to participate as full-functioning, mentally healthy members of market society, the culturally favored "solution" is the consumption of chemicals (aka, "meds"). The neoliberal vision of reality "legitimizes notions of normalcy and/or sanity as commodities to be bought, sold, and profited from" (Esposito and Perez 2014, p. 417) and advances the idea that the solution to any problem, including emotional distress, is a market solution. The chemical imbalance theory further implies that there is a normal and ideal neurochemical state against which all people can be measured. Individual consumption, via the "rectification" of brain chemistry, becomes a way to improve oneself, both emotionally and materially. People may feel that they need more drugs each time they experience further difficulties or anxieties, so that continuing discontent "is transformed into a commercial opportunity—it is commodified" (Moncrieff 2008, p. 248).

Those who use mental health services are widely referred to as "consumers," and their experiences and responses to services often are couched within the language of consumerism. Central to freedom and personal fulfillment is "consumer choice": if one suffers from a mental illness, and if one has the money, then one has the "option" to purchase a drug to free oneself of the distressing condition. The service-user thus is understood as an independent consumer of mental health services, a "citizen-customer able to select and determine his or her psychological care" (Rizq 2014, p. 213). Correspondingly, the activities and the profitability of the pharmaceutical industry have grown to gargantuan size in recent years, and there are now "disease-awareness" campaigns for a wide array of disorders.

Categorizations of mental health and behavioral deficiencies have become the equivalent of "brands"—commodities that can be bought, sold, and marketed. Each brand develops its own logo and slogan, and "choice" becomes a matter of exercising one's purchasing preferences. Pharmaceutical ads thereby sell not only drugs, but also an image of health and normalcy that is extremely powerful in defining the perceived parameters of mental illness. Generally overlooked, or at least generally downplayed, is the fact that such consumption often involves serious health risks: many drugs have negative side effects, and some may actually induce pathology or increase the likelihood that someone will become chronically ill.

Perhaps few would deny the claim that drug development and promotion are driven by the logic of consumerism; but arguably, even diagnostic practices are driven significantly by profit motives. What Ray Moynihan, Iona Heath, and David Henry (2002) aptly call "disease mongering" involves "widening the boundaries of treatable illness in order to expand markets for those who sell and deliver treatments" (p. 886). They describe how informal alliances have emerged between drug company staff, doctors, and consumer groups in order to raise public awareness about underdiagnosed and undertreated problems. But, precisely by means of promoting "disease-awareness," these campaigns operate to expand markets for new pharmaceutical products. Ordinary life processes or ailments are classified as medical conditions, mild symptoms are portrayed as potential signs of more serious diseases, and disease prevalence estimates are framed so as to maximize the size of a medical problem.

For example, disease-awareness campaigns have been launched to present "Social Anxiety Disorder" as a real medical condition that requires treatment via antidepressants. Other "disorders" that have been popularized include "Compulsive Buying Disorder" and—shades of Dickens's spontaneously-combusting Mr Crook in *Bleak House*, or Monty Python's Flying Circus— "Intermittent Explosive Disorder" (Moncrieff 2008, p. 245). But it is not only efforts of drug companies that have shaped medical and public opinion so as to widen markets for new drugs. In addition, the DSM has helped to solidify the impression that a great many everyday experiences qualify as disorders. For example,

> shyness or a desire for solitude might be "avoidant personality disorder," an overinflated sense of one's own worth or conceit might represent "narcissistic personality disorder," and anxiety and misery at the loss of a job might represent "adjustment disorder with anxious mood". (Brown and Baker 2012, p. 104)

The DSM contained 102 disorders in 1952; but by 1987 the figure had grown by 150% to 272 (U'Ren 1992, p. 614). The result is that an ever-increasing number of people *define themselves* as "mentally ill" and *also* believe that their illness has a biochemical basis (Moncrieff 2006, p. 301). This understanding of their condition solicits specific patterns of behavior, in particular the pursuit of pharmaceutical treatment.

Such "disease mongering" serves as a powerful example of how all enterprises within neoliberal society must conform to capitalist rules of action. Richard U'Ren (1992) aptly describes the basic situation. First, capital exists in a constant state of vulnerability: capitalists must compete with each other to sell commodities or services in order to regain the funds they have dispersed in the form of wages and other costs. Second, one basic way to gain competitive advantage over other capitalists is to develop new ways of generating capital, whether through refining technology or products, or creating new ones. Third, therefore, there is a constant search for new investment opportunities and an effort to bring new aspects of daily life "within the circuit of accumulation" (U'Ren 1992, p. 613). Although psychiatry is not an organized corporation, within a neoliberal society such as the United States, it is *effectively* so, and also increasingly structured so as to operate *explicitly* as a profit-making business. So in order to expand the market, psychiatry continually searches for experiences that can be included as diagnostic conditions, "just as capitalism scans daily life for activities that can be brought within its circuit of accumulation" (U'Ren 1992, p. 614). Examples of adverse experiences that have been brought under the diagnostic net in recent years include traumatic experiences (now officially known as "PTSD"), trouble falling asleep (now officially known as "clinical insomnia"), jet leg (now known as "rapid time zone syndrome"), and feeling bummed out after a vacation when you have to go back to everyday life (now known as "post-vacation dysphoria").

One shining example of commodification comes from efforts to market and sell the "success stories" of "survivors." In recent years, as capitalist societies have lamented the loss of productivity associated with mental illness and the potential profit associated with pharmacology, the personal stories of "survivors" have entered the marketplace. Mental health organizations look to personal stories from users of mental health services as an effective way to advance the organizational "brand" and raise operating funds (Costa et al. 2012, p. 86). In turn, these organizations systematically use these stories to promote their own agendas and "solidify hegemonic accounts of mental illness." For example, favored stories typically convey the uplifting message that with a little hard work and perseverance, one can be cured of one's specific mental illness. And the ubiquitous, underlying two-part message, of course, is that

i. mental illness is a *medical problem*, and
ii. the consumption of pharmaceuticals is its *medical solution*.

This is especially ironic and even tragic, in view of the fact that subjects very often shared their stories with the hope of critiquing psychiatric practice and instituting change. In the face of that, instead of giving survivors a genuine voice and allowing them to express their lived experiences, many organizations have been "scrambling to squeeze every salacious and gory detail out of their journey to recovery," an essentially sleazy practice that is aptly called "patient porn" (Costa et al. 2012, pp. 90–91).

5.2.2 Mechanization

Even though there is no "underlying unified account of what's 'wrong' across different brains of people exhibiting similar symptoms" (Banner 2013, p. 511), there is nevertheless a persistent tendency in contemporary mental healthcare practice to point triumphantly to a particular region of the brain, or to neurotransmitters, in order to explain why someone suffers from a mental disorder, and then to focus treatment efforts on "fixing" this central sub-chunk of living machinery. This brain-based approach—in effect, *a new phrenology inside the skull*—not only

significantly fails to acknowledge the complexity of mental disorders; from a conceptual-metaphysical point of view, it also commits the basic "category mistake" of confusing

i. *people's essentially embodied conscious and self-conscious lives*, which are nothing more and nothing less than irreducible, intrinsic relational complex dynamic forms of human organisms ineluctably embedded in their natural and social environments (Hanna and Maiese 2009), with
ii. easily-measurable and easily-manipulable fundamentally physical parts of people's bodies.

In short, the brain-based approach to mental healthcare is a sub-species of *Cartesian physicalism* in the philosophy of mind (see Sect. 1.1 above). Hence it expresses the classic mistake of all versions of Cartesianism. This is the metaphysical confusion that construes mind and body as fundamentally different substances and falsely assumes that it is conceptually impossible for something to be essentially both mental *and* physical, and also the moral refusal to face up to what and who we really are*: neither* brains *nor* ghosts, but instead *people*—essentially embodied, conscious and self-conscious, rational human animals, inherently capable of practical agency, agential autonomy, and relational autonomy (Hanna 2011). The medical model, as a special version of Cartesian materialism, regards and treats people as if they were "really" nothing but moist robots governed by brain chemistry.

Furthermore, the naturally mechanistic, socio-scientistic world view expressed by the medical model centers on the mistaken assumption that mental health professionals can diagnose "disorders" by applying a set of objective, third-personal criteria. Patients attending psychotherapy services often are asked to complete various questionnaires aimed at assessing their anxiety, depression, or level of stress. If a certain number of boxes can be ticked by the clinician, then a subject receives a DSM diagnosis that enables her health care to be covered by health insurance. Of course, the reality is that psychiatric diagnosis, just like the people whose lives it applies to, is inherently "human, all too human," and *messy*.

To see this, consider that in order to be DSM-diagnosed with schizophrenia a person must have two or more of the following symptoms that occur persistently and are associated with reduced functioning:

1. delusions,
2. hallucinations,
3. disorganized speech,
4. disorganized or catatonic behavior, and
5. negative symptoms, for example, loss of affect.

But even apart from serious conceptual and epistemic issues about precisely specifying criteria for telling when someone's experience or behavior counts as "delusional" (or as "hallucinatory"; or as speech or behavior that is "disorganized" or "catatonic"; or as involving "loss of affect"), and when it does not, the requirement that there be *at least two* of these symptoms seems fundamentally arbitrary. Moreover, such diagnostic practices obviously leave open the possibility that any two subjects who have been diagnosed with schizophrenia *will not experience any of the same symptoms*.

The idea that psychiatric diagnosis can and should be standardized is further complicated by the brute fact that mental disorders simply do *not* arise from some clearly identifiable causal mechanism, or in a law-like fashion. On the contrary, their proximate causes or sources typically are multiple. Moreover, there are simply no hard edges or sharp boundaries between *normal human variation* and *disorder*. Symptoms of major depressive disorder, for example, form a cluster or family, and also exist on a continuum with normal behavior and experiences; hence there are "diverse and contextually various and culturally scaffolded ways in which depression's symptoms are expressed" (Graham 2009, p. 55). And while "recovery from __" is now standardly treated as a quantifiable and measurable concept (Howell and Voronka 2012, p. 4), the reality is that what recovery from depression "looks like" actually differs significantly from person to person.

The standardization of diagnostic practice and the operationalization of "recovery" are inherently linked to "an audit culture that privileges a logic of transparency and accountability and that enforces adherence to 'evidence-based practice,' service protocols, policies, guidelines, manuals,

and regulations" (Rizq 2014, p. 211). Yet again, we recognize "the process by which 'a measure colonizes behavior'" (Scott 2012, p. 114). Increasing marketization of services under neoliberalism has led to competition between service providers for limited support, which in turn leads to the further bureacratization of these services (Henderson 2005) and a perceived need to implement cost-cutting and efficiency measures. Thus, technologies of audit, accountability, and budget discipline convey the expectation that psychiatric professionals should reduce and translate the *in fact* irreducible and untranslatable "human, all-too-human" life-complexities of mental health practice into a standardized format *solely in order that* efficient assessments of economic costs and benefits can be made (Teghtsoonian 2009, p. 30).

Mechanization cultivates a specific set of work habits among health care professionals, so that they become "cogs" in the wheel of mental health practice: in effect, clinicians are quietly forced to document, comprehensively and minutely, in standardized lingo, *what* they are doing, *to whom* they are doing it, *how often* they are doing it, and *how well* they are doing it according to standardized measures. These "rituals of verification" are deemed to be what really matters, and, all-too-frequently, they become confused with the actual relationships of care that they are meant to index (Rizq 2014, p. 213). Increased bureaucracy, arbitrarily imposed, inevitably makes patients feel like they are being treated as a number, and, in turn, leads practitioners to construct an idealized version of their work dominated by "a discourse of excellence, ready-made rules, regulations, and 'short cuts'" (Rizq 2014, p. 215). Such mechanization and blindly obedient rule-following also creates the impression in practitioners that as long as they follow protocol, they are morally or (perhaps even more importantly, from a purely prudential, self-interested point of view) legally not responsible for any adverse results. Clinical work is thereby governed by practice guidelines, outcome measures, and activity targets; and statistics, benchmarks, and action plans increasingly are viewed as ends in themselves, rather than as tools to assist with clinical work. Far from improving patient care, this DSM-driven culture often serves to undermine therapeutic relationships and professional motivation and erode the public's trust in mental health professionals.

Mechanization and rule-mongering due to managerialism also have infiltrated the social work profession. Modes of organizational control sometimes referred to as "new public management" involve techniques of scrutiny such as audit and performance evaluation, as well as evidence-based policy and practice. This focus on performance facilitates the exercise of management from a distance, and is linked to concerns about fiscal austerity, transparency, and public legitimacy (Harlow et al., 2013, p. 9). As in the realm of psychiatry, managerialism acts as a mechanism whereby services can become more efficient and cost-effective. One result of such practices is fragmentation. Work with particular populations has been removed to different specialist areas, and specialist teams are responsible for initial contact, assessment, and intervention: "[r]eminiscent of Ford's production line, this approach can be understood as "conveyor belt care" in that, once tasks have been completed, individuals and families are passed from one specialist team to another until their cases are closed" (Harlow 2003, p. 35). "Fordism" in mental healthcare, in turn, smoothly converts into the social-institutional *control* of mental illness.

5.2.3 Coercion: "Governmentality" in the Realm of Mental Health

The notion of "governmentality" can be traced to post-structuralist literature and the work of Foucault. Foucault conceives of "government" as "the conduct of conduct," which includes

both (i) being governed by others (*subjectification*),

and also (ii) the government of one's self (*subjectivation*).

While subjectification involves overt coercion imposed from without, subjectivation encompasses "the work that individuals perform upon themselves in order to become certain kinds of subjects" (Hamann 2009, p. 38).

There are various social mechanisms of subjectification. Each of them involves guiding and leading the possibilities for people's action, as well as specifying possible outcomes for different kinds of conduct, for example, rewards or sanctions (Thomas and Bracken 2008, p. 44). In a neoliberal democratic state, part of the role of the government is to foster

competition and install market-based mechanisms that constrain and condition the actions of individuals and institutions. Active governmental and legal support helps to institute and maintain market values across all aspects of society.

Society has become obsessed with law-and-order, as evidenced by ubiquitous CCTV monitoring, public surveillance efforts, community policing and neighborhood watch, child curfews, and coercive authoritarian laws banning "antisocial behavior" (Moncrieff 2008, p. 242). Those who do not amass a sufficient amount of "human capital" and fail to take "personal responsibility" for their lives are "written up" and punished. Trent Hamann (2009) points to exploding prison populations, the use of prison labor, and the replacement of welfare with workfare. The present mass incarceration of unprecedented numbers of people in the USA can be understood as a means to "produce certain kinds of subjects in accord with a biopolitical apparatus implemented by the police [understood in a broad governmental sense]… with the aim of producing a certain kind of social order" (Hamann 2009, p. 50). Obscenely high rates of imprisonment also can be understood, at least in part, as an attempt to police the consequences of the economic policies that have been instituted (Moncrieff 2006, p. 302). Those who have been excluded or victimized by the dismantling of the welfare state and the low-wage economy, often the basis of their race, ethnicity, or gender, can now very conveniently be viewed and treated as criminals. Poverty, unemployment, and homelessness then can be framed as individual moral failings rather than as societal problems for which we must take collective responsibility.

Similar kinds of punitive judgments are reflected in the stigma surrounding mental illness. Alongside the portrait of welfare recipients as a deviant underclass, the *lumpen*, there is the image of the *deviant* with a mental illness. And just as "there has been a resurgence of discourse on welfare benefits and their claimants, emphasizing the notion that they are 'workshy,' 'cheats' and 'scroungers,'" so too there are mentally ill clients who are "said to 'not really want to get better,' or who are believed not to be complying with medication regimes on purpose so as to prolong their illness" (Brown and Baker 2012, p. 72). This way of speaking has become pervasive and is especially characterized by an over-emphasis on individualism and material success and an under-emphasis on collective

responsibility; as a result, mental health service users come to be seen "as social and personal failures in the twenty-first century" (Ramon 2008, p. 121). Sociocultural norms of adequacy and inadequacy dictate that that there is no place in the system for unsuccessful people, aka "losers," and that dependency on social services should be met with "zero tolerance."

Another important mechanism for subjectification lies within the field of psychiatry itself. The knowledge and practices of psychiatry, including its diagnostic categories, theories, and modes of therapy, play a particular role in the affairs of the state. Psychiatric practice is directed at "the conduct of conduct" and sets out normative guidelines related to how people dress, how they present themselves to the world, and how they conduct themselves when they are ill or experiencing emotional distress (Thomas and Bracken 2008, p. 45). Whether someone responds appropriately in a particular situation becomes a matter of agreement with social-cultural practices, that is, agreement with what others in their community would say and do (Rietveld and Kiverstein, 2014, p. 343). Thus, an action must be in agreement with communal norms and practices in order for a response to available affordances to be "normal" or "rational."

What counts as "normal" and "rational" in a neoliberal social institution revolves around cost-benefit calculation, the pursuit of self-interest, mutual antagonism, and the ability to function as a wage-earner and consumer. Our shared expectation is that people will, *and should*, behave in these ways. These norms of adequacy provide people with a sort of culturally sanctioned script: they begin to adjust their behavior and attitudes so that they match up with what others expect of them. Psychiatrists and other mental health professionals often play a powerful role in conveying such expectations. For example, they help to police non-engagement with the workforce and encourage the cultivation of the sort of self-discipline needed for productivity and a strong work ethic (Moncrieff 2008, p. 236). The magical curative power of *gainful employment* frequently is urged upon distressed and confused subjects as if it were a mode of therapy. In addition, whenever practitioners look to medication as a primary mode of treatment, they contribute to the shared sociocultural belief that people who do not conform to some theoretical ideal

state of "mental health" need to be chemically corrected, so that they can then be sent back into the therapeutic trenches of "gainful employment."

Psychiatry also can be seen as a means of medicalizing difficult social problems and managing disturbing behavior that is difficult to address within the criminal justice system (Moncrieff 2008, p. 236). The promotion of a narrowly biological model of disorder allows for the introduction of increasing controls over psychiatric patients in the name of increasing access to medical treatment. Two important examples of an increased role for psychiatrists in coercive social control include

i. the demand for psychiatric reports in courts proceedings, and
ii. the practice of involuntary commitment (Timimi 2008, p. 172).

Indeed, the concept of "mental illness" itself provides a justification for control and confinement in order to complement the criminal justice system and to police the lawlessness and social fragmentation that neoliberal economic policies have helped to produce (Moncrieff 2014, p. 12). Once someone is labeled as "mentally ill" and in need of treatment, almost anything can be legally justified, including measures that rob people of the ability to make decisions about their own lives. In addition to being forcibly detained and treated against their will, subjects also may be forcibly subjected to social control via behavior therapy or drugs. In this connection, it is worth noting that the world's first antipsychotic drug, chlorpromazine, proved to be a revolutionary biotechnology precisely due to its ability to maintain "law and order." Use of the drug allowed mental health practitioners to "produce more manageable patients in a relatively quick, safe, and easy manner," without the invasiveness of shock therapy or lobotomy (Esposito and Perez 2014, p. 424).

Other major sites of action for the management of those officially diagnosed with a "mental illness" are the courtroom and the prison. According to some estimates, 70% of the people in prisons in the UK have "mental health issues," while other estimates say that it is closer to 90% (Brown and Baker 2012, p. 74). Revealingly, even though mental illness is typically attributed to brain chemistry or genetics, there is a correspondingly strong tendency on the part of the justice system to ensure that those who stand accused bear the full weight of responsibility for any

bad behavior, even despite their being officially classified as "mentally ill." Thus, while neoliberalism may entail less *government*, it does not follow that it entails less *governance* (Larner 2000). On the contrary, there are heavy penalties associated with a failure to comply with societal norms. So "they get you coming" (they won't treat *you the person* for your mental disorder, they'll treat *your brain*), and "they get you going" (if you break the law due to your mental disorder, they'll blame *you the person*, not your *brain*). This is classic socio-scientism at work.

However, perhaps even more striking than the coercive control exerted by external sources is the way in which subjects engage in *self-governance*. Foucault's notion of governmentality denotes "a form of political power comprising a range of technologies, mentalities and rationalities," whereby subjects are socially primed to monitor and govern themselves (Brown and Baker 2012, p. 18). To understand better what Foucault terms "subjectivation," it is instructive to consider his discussion of "The Panopticon." Drawing on Bentham's work on prisons, whereby the ideal is a circular structure in which every prison cell opens onto a central watchtower with 360 degree scope, Foucault uses the idea of The Panopticon in order to symbolize a new form of power, one achieved primarily through *mental* means and which aims at regulating the conduct of individuals. Because those under surveillance have no idea when they are being observed, they must conduct themselves under the assumption that they could be observed at any moment. As a result, disciplinary power is internalized: the individual regulates and manages her own behavior, which results in new forms of governmentality (Foucault 1982). Foucault says that "governing people is a not a way to force people to do what the governor wants; it is always a versatile equilibrium, with complementarity and conflicts between techniques which assure coercion and processes through which the self is constructed or modified by himself" (Foucault 1993, pp. 203-204). For those seen as capable of self-managing, the state foregoes coercion or direct control in favor of promoting self-governance.

Thus, it is not simply that people are coerced or compelled by others to comply with market norms in order to avoid sanction. Instead, people come to internalize these norms to such an extent that *they monitor and manage themselves*. Such self-monitoring frequently occurs in an effort to

engage successfully in social coordination and "match" one's behavior to that of other people. That is, people adjust their responses in certain ways in order to behave, think, and feel optimally, and as expected, within that sociocultural setting. In some cases, this involves a restructuring of experience and a reconfiguration of affective framings: subjects try to bring about a shift in what they care about, what they value, and how they are motivated. We believe that Harry Frankfurt's (1988) notion of "second-order volitions" can help to make sense of how this active reconfiguration of the will occurs.

In his characterization of the nature and structure of the will, Frankfurt distinguishes, among ordinary "first-order" desires for this or that, between *mere* desires and *effective* desires. Some desires, such as idle wishes or preferences, may not be at all likely to play role in what an agent actually does or tries to do. Effective desires, in contrast, are ones that will or would move an agent all the way to action; Frankfurt characterizes these desires as a person's *will*. For example, suppose that Lauren has an effective first-order desire to run a ten kilometer road race that gets her to the start line and eventually to the finish line. Frankfurt would say, and we agree, that this is what Lauren has willed, or is her will, on that occasion.

Clearly, however, this is not the only sort of desire that influences the course of human life. By virtue of their capacity for self-consciousness, human persons are able to form *second-order desires* with respect to their first-order desires. That is, they are capable not only of wanting (not) to *x*, but also of wanting to (not) want to *x*. A second-order desire becomes a *second-order volition* when an individual not only wants to want (not) to *x*, but also wants the desire (not) to *x* to move her all the way to action (or refraining from action), and to "provide the motive in what [she] actually does" (Frankfurt 1988, p. 15). Suppose, for example, that Sam not only wants to get good grades in school, but also embraces this first-order desire and approves of it as a motivating factor. According to Frankfurt, when Sam embraces his desire to get good grades, he wills that this desire guide his conduct and thereby makes it "more truly his own" (Frankfurt 1988, p. 18). His first-order desire to be a good student has become part of his larger self-conception, so that it is something that he values. Similarly, suppose that Steve has a desire to find a job that makes him lots of money and allows him to support the expensive lifestyle he

wants. Suppose he also wants for this desire to be effective in action and endorses it a higher level, so that this desire for a well-paying job guides and sustains his behavior. One might say that he is determined to find such a job, that he has settled on it as a goal, and that it is something that he *cares about*.

In this way, according to the hierarchical-desire model, the will is a dynamic hierarchy of desires that is structured by first-order desires, second-order desires, and second-order volitions. The will is specifically a fact about *desires* because it bottoms out in conscious effective first-order desires. The will is specifically a fact about a *hierarchy* of desires because it is a structured complex of higher-order, reflexive desires, especially including second-order volitions, along with first-order or pre-reflective desires, some of which are effective in action. And the will is specifically a fact about a *dynamic* hierarchy of desires because it is actively configured by a conscious subject over time and inherently open to gradual or even radical re-configuration, as she continually "makes up her mind" and "changes her mind," and sometimes even transforms her will and thereby "changes her life."

Note that both Sam's desire to get good grades and Steve's desire to land a high-paying job are culturally influenced and emerge partly as a result of the literal mind-shaping influence of social-institutional forces and structures. More generally, in a social-institutional context, precisely which desires are granted preference, and precisely which are rejected as unworthy of satisfaction, will be partially determined by what *other* people in that social-institutional context find desirable. As we've spelled it out above, this is because the cares and desires of other people, when collected under normative rules, take on a causal and normative life of their own. By way of emotional contagion, mimicry, bodily resonance, and behavioral coordination, we find ourselves overtly or subtly impacted by the concerns of others. Sometimes, reconfiguration of the will occurs for the sake of social conformity, approval, acceptance, and a sense of belonging. Individuals "supercharge" some of their concerns and desires, while suppressing or downplaying others. They want specific desires to be effective in action, and thereby become their will, because they will "fit in," be viewed as "healthy," and be deemed "successful" members of society. Their enduring patterns of behavior, attention, and valuation begin to

shift as they adjust their will and bring their hierarchy of desires more in line with sociocultural scripts. Unsurprisingly, self-regulation can bring about dramatic changes to the relatively stable and well-anchored portions of a subject's affective framing patterns. And this includes the subject's felt wants or urges, dispositions to act or to choose, dispositions of evaluation, patterns of emotional reactions, and commitments.

What this means, in the context of mental health practice, is that patients come to understand, regulate, and experience their lives within medically-specified parameters of what is "normal," "appropriate," and "healthy." Habits of self-management that become sedimented in the minded body include dampening or suppressing feelings of distress, cultivating "positive thinking," and supercharging one's desires to produce and consume. One central task for the individual is to reconfigure the self "[in] such [a way] that emotions – particularly those that might disrupt productivity or consumption, for example grief, anger or misery – are construed as something to be self-managed, privatized and constrained" (Brown and Baker 2012, p. 17). In addition, many individuals self-monitor by way of making a preemptive "choice" to begin behavior therapy or chemically modify themselves in order to adjust better to the demands of their society. However, these sorts of "free choices," within the context of neoliberal social institutions, are "shaped, conditioned, and constrained" by market norms and values, and framed from the standpoint of a narrow and inherently egoistic, mutually antagonistic, instrumental notion of self-interest (Hamann 2009, p. 51). In neoliberal democratic society, people "are obliged to be free but only in terms that are set out for [them]" (Thomas and Bracken 2008, p. 45). The upshot is that "social control is simultaneously ubiquitous and unobtrusive," as well as *self-induced* (Esposito and Perez 2014, p. 429). Insofar as people willingly engage in self-correction and self-restraint, they need not be overtly coerced by some second or third party into behaving "appropriately."

5.2.4 Excursus: The Rhetoric of "Responsibilization," "Resilience," and "Recovery"

There are various "governmental technologies" that permit "governing at a distance" insofar as they rely not on direct control, but on forging "an

alignment between the self-interested choices of individuals and the goals of those who govern" (Teghtsoonian 2009, p. 29). One way that social institutions directly impact subjects' affective framings is by providing them with discursive tools, such as narratives, guiding concepts, and metaphors, which guide their habits of mind. From a very young age, and as they are developing social and sense-making competencies, individuals are repeatedly exposed to narrative archetypes that help them to formulate a coherent story about why a particular type of person performs a certain sort of action (Brancazio 2018). For example, in a society with pronounced gender differences, particular narrative archetypes (for example, the temptress, the virgin, and the mother) tend to reinforce the traits associated with gender norms. And in a society guided by neoliberal ideology, there are other narrative archetypes (for example, the customer, the hard-working employee, and the innovative entrepreneur) that tend to reinforce the traits associated with being an active consumer and wage-earner. Dominant cultural narratives begin to emerge and repeated exposure to these narrative archetypes sculpts our interpretive schemas. Through these shared socio-cultural narrative practices, we come to understand who people are, what they are capable of doing, and why they behave as they do.

Such considerations suggest that our concepts and language are not only rooted in our shared embodiment, as George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1999) propose, but also *socially embedded*. Lakoff and Johnson describe how conventional mental imagery from sensorimotor domains of experience gives rise to conceptual metaphors that are pervasive in human thought and language. For example, the "foreseeable events are up ahead" metaphor is rooted in the fact that normally our eyes are pointed in the direction in which we typically move (ahead or forward). It seems that if our eyes faced toward the side, or if we moved in a direction different from that toward which our eyes pointed, we would not conceptualize foreseeable future events as "up ahead." But of course, the concepts and metaphors that guide how we speak depend not just on the details of our embodiment, but also by pervasive societal practices. Phrases such as "I don't buy it" (when someone is unconvinced by a statement or argument) and the issuing of "promissory notes" in academic

writing are just two illustrations of how our economic system shapes our language and metaphors.

Such metaphors, in turn, shape how we understand and think about ourselves and our world. More generally, language, whether written or verbal, functions as a particularly powerful "governmental technology," given that the language people use implicitly or explicitly conveys societal expectations and provides a set of instructions regarding how to think and behave. Social norms are materialized in the form of linguistic conventions that shape not only how people write and speak, but also how they habitually understand themselves and interpret their situation. Within neoliberal societies, the vocabulary of choice, markets, and self-interest molds our habits of mind and our characteristic ways of engaging with the world.

In the realm of mental health practice, one especially powerful linguistic technology is the concept of individual responsibility and associated rhetoric of "responsibilization." Through such rhetoric, the disciplined subject is "made to internalize particular forms of responsibility for him- or herself" (Hamann 2009, p. 53) and, more specifically, responsibility for his or her own mental health and well-being. As per Foucault's description of Panopticism, "taking responsibility" becomes a mode of self-policing:

> He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection. (Foucault 1979, pp. 202–203)

Neoliberalism posits "Economic Man" as an externally free, atomically-individual biological machine driven by self-interest and mutual antagonism, and who is fully responsible for navigating the social world using rational choice and cost-benefit analysis. The rhetoric of "responsibilization" conveys the expectation that individuals will become "enterprising selves" who work on or invest in themselves in an attempt to enhance their capacities and well-being (Teghtsoonian 2009, p. 29). Such rhetoric constitutes a "technology of self" that trains individuals to supercharge a

specific set of desires and affective framings, to emphasize "choice" and "self-determination," and thereby to adopt a particular image of themselves that is cashed out in neoliberal terms. *Being a person*, on this view, is framed in terms of self-reliance, discipline, and flexibility, and centers upon equipping oneself with the skills and abilities one needs to cope with the instabilities of the market (Brown and Baker 2012, p. 3).

One central function of such rhetoric is to solicit certain kinds of affective framings, evaluative judgments, and assumptions, in particular the notion that if people are unhappy or unsuccessful, *the problem must lie within themselves*, and not with societal conditions such as growing inequality, polarization between rich and poor, stagnating wages, and workforce exploitation. This strategy of rendering individuals and families responsible for their own well-being transforms social risks and problems into problems of "self-care" (Lemke 2001, p. 201). People internalize the message that prudent and rational citizens have a duty to avoid being a burden on others, and that if they fail, they have nobody and nothing to blame it on but themselves. There is a shared expectation that it is up to the individual, and the individual alone, to "amass sufficient quantities of 'human capital' and thereby become [an innovative entrepreneur of herself]" (Hamann 2009, p. 38). Examples of neoliberal self-fashioning habits that commonly develop include participation in fitness training, lifestyle management, diet programs, and self-help programs. But here we will focus on the way in which individuals self-regulate, take responsibility, and become "innovative self-entrepreneurs" via the consumption of mental health products and services.

In the world of Dr Bigbrother and the DSM, receiving care is typically dependent on a patient first agreeing to accept certain duties or patterns of behavior, thereby accepting responsibility for herself (Brown and Baker 2012, p. 91). Indeed, many practitioners operate under the assumption that clients should be able to make progress and pull themselves up by their bootstraps, no matter what symptoms or negative side effects flow from the treatment that they receive. This requires that they develop a habit of "working on themselves," tending to their own emotional needs, and developing coping skills. People come to frame mental illness as something that individuals can "overcome," or something over which they have managerial control, and they come to frame people as "good"

if they endeavor to heal themselves. Those who are mentally ill internalize these messages and develop corresponding habits of thinking and speaking; thus, "the dominant discourses of service users themselves often revolve around individual 'healing', being 'strong' or being a 'survivor'" (Brown and Baker 2012, p. 80).

Even as they urge clients to "take responsibility," these very therapists are also "at pains to stress that [they have] no responsibility" for them (Brown and Baker 2012, p. 97). Instead, the client herself needs to assimilate, and also take responsibility for all the undesirable things that might be going on her life; to be innovative, adaptive, and resilient; and to manage risks and take control. Prevailing rhetoric communicates the powerful idea that there is a *duty to be well*, to avoid "dependence" on professionals, and to be self-reliant. "Taking responsibility" and "taking control of one's life" thereby come to be seen *as therapeutic outcomes in their own right* and *signs of mental health*, whereas a patient's failure to take responsibility and take control signify a "disease of the will."

But at the same time, these demands for independence and self-control "are counterpoised by demands that the individual seek professional assistance and advice where matters of health, wellbeing and happiness are concerned" (Brown and Baker 2012, p. 112). Someone who has been diagnosed with a mental illness has a further responsibility to seek help from appropriately qualified people and to trust their expertise. Once informed, the patient can be rendered trustworthy and predictable and their capacity for self-governance can be increased; this is a matter of "advising them, shaping them and applying a variety of civil and penal sanctions," if they do not comply with the advice given (Brown and Baker 2012, p. 26). Mental health professionals and other service providers thereby become *tutors in self-care*, tasked with developing the self-monitoring, self-regulating patient and helping her to develop the skills needed to cope with adversity, all against the larger backdrop of coercive authoritarianism. Their primary role is to "inculcate in patients a kind of bureaucratic self-management that includes making and keeping appointments, abiding by drug regimens, and self-managing in daily life" (Brijnath and Antoniades 2016, p. 5).

At the same time, paradoxically, there is also an important sense in which subjects are incentivized *not* to use mental health services. A

"responsible citizen" is represented as one who not only takes personal responsibility for her own mental health, but also makes choices that do not burden the health care system with "inappropriate" requests for costly and unnecessary services (Teghtsoonian 2009, p. 31). "Consumers" of mental health care are thereby expected to turn a critical eye not just on their own condition, but also on their use of services, and to use these services "appropriately"—that is, in a way that is cost-effective. Those who make "inappropriate choices" will be labeled "time-wasters" or criticized for being "manipulative" or "attention seeking" when they "pull out all the stops" to access care. Thus, even though the predominant rhetoric strongly emphasizes *choice*, at the very same time it also strongly emphasizes that people need to make *specific kinds of choices*, namely ones that are cost-effective for mental healthcare providers and insurance companies. Again, they get you coming and they get you going.

There is little doubt that this rhetoric of responsibility and self-control significantly contributes to the social stigma surrounding mental illness. Above all, "the corollary of self-responsibility is that the causes of failure are seen as being located within the individual" (Brown and Baker 2012, p. 13), which transforms mental illness into a personal failing. Many mental health practitioners expect clients to attempt to control their affects and behavior even despite their mental illness and assume that they *could* take moral responsibility and achieve self-control if they wished. The recognition that psychiatry involves supporting people who may be *unable* to take responsibility and control is vanishing, sometimes resulting in covertly or overtly brutal and inhumane interactions with patients. Some practitioners even assume that egregious behavior emerges on purpose, and thus that it merits a punitive response (Brown and Baker 2012, p. 77).

In extreme cases, this can mean criminal sanctions and incarceration. Rather than recognizing that a distressed or angry client is living in tragic circumstances, struggling with symptoms of mental illness, and committing trivial infringements, the justice system may treat this individual as a potentially serious offender in-the-making. Minor infractions and heated exchanges with mental health practitioners may be transformed into a "risk" of more serious objectionable behavior in the future. As a result, even a patient who has been detained in a hospital or medi-

cated against her will may be held responsible or even prosecuted for her infractions. So it is clear that many service providers and policymakers believe that "[those who are mentally ill] could choose not to break the law, upset others, live in chaos, fail to support themselves and in some cases even to choose to stay alive, if only they would 'take responsibility'" (Brown and Baker 2012, p. 78).

Similarly, appeals to "resilience" and "recovery" can be understood as "discourses of responsibilization" and "discursive mechanisms through which citizens and clinicians are incited to align their self-understandings and practices" with neoliberal goals (Teghtsoonian 2009, p. 29). The literature on resilience functions as a "do-it-yourself" healthcare promotional initiative that solicits people to alter their behavior and to adopt lifelong habits that will improve their mental health. The concept thereby operates as a powerful tool in the governance of people, including both those deemed mentally ill as well as those who are "normal." Such rhetoric gives voice to basic neoliberal individualist concepts and principles such as *empowerment*, *hope*, *responsibility*, and *self-determination*. Instead of directly confronting social problems of coercion and other forms of oppression and becoming politically engaged, "citizens are enjoined to look inward, gather their strengths, and be resilient" (Howell and Voronka 2012, pp. 4-5).

This emphasis on self-care reflects neoliberal forms of governmentality described earlier, which "characteristically develop indirect techniques for leading and controlling individuals without at the same time being responsible for them" (Lemke 2001, p. 201). Once people locate the source of their problems within themselves, society as a whole becomes increasingly deaf to social and political critique. Seemingly, there is no need to address social-institutional problems, but only to jumpstart some neurotransmitters. Moreover, getting citizens to be resilient is economically cheap, insofar as it diverts patients out of public health care systems, enlists them in self-help or positive thinking, and teaches them how to "bounce back" in the face of uncertainty, challenges, or turmoil. In a literal sense, *the bottom line* is that the costs associated with the provision of mental health services can be minimized if and only if people learn to mitigate their own emotional distress.

Similarly, the concept of "recovery" is essentially individualistic and grounded in medicalized and neoliberal notions of personal responsibility and self-control (Harper and Speed 2012, p. 9). Rather than changing institutions or addressing coercive or otherwise oppressive social structures, the onus for recovery is on the individual, who is expected to change her attitudes, feelings, and skills in order to effect change in her own life and transition into a set of more satisfying, hopeful, and productive cognitions and behaviors. Yet even as "survivors" take responsibility for governing their interior lives, medical authority remains intact. The guiding assumption is that with the help of psychiatrists, those who have been deemed "disordered" can lead meaningful lives, despite the permanence of their illness, and some can even resume "normalcy." What is explicitly or implicitly denied is the possibility of a kind of recovery that would place "patients" outside the remit of medical authority (Howell and Voronka 2012, p. 2).

5.2.5 Excursus Continued: The Resilient Student

One example that powerfully illustrates the phenomena of governmentality and responsibilization is the way in which many colleges and universities rely on the discourse of "resilience" to govern the conduct of college or university students. Such rhetoric conveys sociocultural norms of adequacy and has helped a culture of self-management to become sedimented into common sense among college and university students: to be "normal" and successful, one must engage in positive thinking and adopt the proper mindset.

Katie Aubrecht (2012) describes how current literature on "resilience" emphasizes positive adaptation despite adversity and also a capacity to recover from extremes of trauma and stress. The idea is that people can learn to be resilient, and to grow and build their skills to adapt to challenges, if provided with the proper guidance and training. College and university wellness services and student life publications are an effective ideological means for managers of the higher education system to shape the behaviors of distressed students without direct and explicitly coercive threats of intervention. Pamphlets and newsletters communicate the idea

that to succeed in a university setting, students will need to supercharge their dispositions toward self-care and positive psychology. They portray the individual student as an innovative self-entrepreneur, and social location as something that can be enhanced through hard work and ingenuity. Such publications also represent coping as a skill that students can learn and then use to overcome the difficulties of college and university life. This kind of self-care does not mean doing everything on your own—a great many mental health experts and professionals are still needed—but rather being responsible for your own well-being, including seeking help and support from others when necessary. Not altogether coincidentally, the resilient self that is both prized and expected within the domain of college and university life is also the very same self that is needed for a skilled, flexible, and productive labor force (Aubrecht 2012, p. 69). Correspondingly, getting students to take responsibility for their personal health and emotional well-being reduces the cost and burden of providing college and university services.

All of this occurs, Aubrecht notes, in a context of shrinking resources, growing class sizes, and an increased reliance on part-time "contingent faculty." But if students experience distress, it is *they* who must change, not institutions of higher education, far less the broader society. Macro-level contributors to student stress and anxiety—for example, the need to work long hours while one is in school, or high student loan debt—often are viewed as immutable givens and not critically questioned. Above all, what is frequently overlooked—in fact, cognitively screened out—is the possibility that some portion of this emotional distress is the direct consequence of the exploitative conditions that organize higher learning within the context of a competitive labor market in a society driven by big-capitalist demands. Instead, vulnerabilities are assumed to arise strictly as a result of poor personal decisions or bad habits (Brown and Baker 2012, p. 4). The emphasis on resilience thereby constitutes an implicit acceptance of the changing nature of college and university life wrought by neoliberal policies and conveys the expectation that individual students take responsibility for ensuring and managing their own psychological and emotional well-being.

Students come to believe that through classical Dale Carnegie-like positive thinking and investment in officially designated "healthy" com-

munities, they can survive the challenges of university life. All that they need to do is

> build social capital, diversify their portfolios, and learn how to organize their activities, experiences, and attachments in ways that will help them cope with adversity in more socially productive ways. (Aubrecht 2012, p. 80)

Those who succumb to distress "are [represented] as inflexible and maladjusted and as such, naturally prone to experience life as a strain" (Aubrecht 2012, p. 80). Any grievances they may have are to be viewed as a symptom of their condition, and students who fail academically simply are not working hard enough to maintain the level of health and wellness required for success.

Thus, the publications that emphasize "resilience" do indeed involve coercion, although it is indirect and subtle, and often goes undetected. To understand the psychological dynamics involved, it is instructive to consider the subtle form of coercion that Rainer Mühlhoff and Jan Slaby (2017) argue is at play in many contemporary work environments. They present the example of Clair, whose part-time work with a marketing department is organized in a project team. Part of what motivates Clair to put in extra hours and stay connected to work even from home is a sense of responsibility to others on the team. Although she is not formally expected or directly ordered to be online during her free time, she has a sense that others who work full-time may be waiting for her responses and actions and wants to be sensitive to their needs. Clair longs to be appreciated by those on her team, and also has a subjective impression that only she can do it. Thus, the teamwork formation helps to produce and exploit a certain kind of subjectivity, and thereby serves as a means of governing employees. Mühlhoff and Slaby correctly point out that "teamwork strategically stimulates and harnesses the specific affective dispositions of co-workers and their social bonds" so as to increase employees' commitment and sense of responsibility and motivate them to work extra hours (2017, p. 13). Because Clair feels emotionally devoted to her colleagues, she experiences an affective pull that motivates her to coordinate her behavior so that it better aligns with the needs and schedules of those on her project team.

Essentially similar dynamics of coercion are at work in contemporary depictions of college or university students as "resilient" subjects. Along these lines, Aubrecht (2012) notes that wellness publications and student life programs should be viewed

i. as attempts to foster a certain kind of student subjectivity, and
ii. "as techniques for governing the meaning and experience of difficulty and distress" (p. 81).

These publications and programs systematically scaffold and cultivate specific habits of mind, including a focus on self-management and a disposition to frame distress as an individual challenge and an opportunity for personal growth. These habits of mind are cultivated in large part via students' desire to fit in with their peer group, be deemed "strong" by those around them, and be regarded as "successful" in the eyes of educators, parents, and fellow students. Because they are highly susceptible to messages about what it means to be a high-functioning, high-achieving, and "normal" university student, they do their best to coordinate their own behavior with that of other "normal" students. For those who obediently comply with established norms and expectations, there are rewards, and for those who do not, there are sanctions. This, in turn, serves to solicit a certain kind of subjectivity, one which is conducive to neoliberal economic aims: "students are encouraged to become time-managing and disciplined selves, governing their mind and body in productive ways" (Ball 2010, p. 3). They are expected to set aside feelings of distress or melancholy, engage in positive thinking, view challenges or difficulties as growth opportunities, and "bounce back" from adversity. No doubt, adopting this inward, individualistic focus and habitually thinking "it's all up to me" substantially magnifies and triggers new cycles and epicycles in students' stress and anxiety, thereby further shaping their minds and fundamentally affecting their lives in detrimental ways.

5.2.6 Divided Mind

In Sect. 5.2.1, we noted that the increased number of disorders featured in the DSM and their increased rates of diagnosis and prevalence are at

least partly the result of market forces and the influence of consumerism. But it is also important to acknowledge that mental illness, as such, is becoming *more widespread*, and that this is precisely because neoliberal ideology effectively promotes a way of life that divorces people from their true basic and humanity-realizing needs.

First, it is clear that the economic policies associated with neoliberalism exacerbate or contribute to mental illness. After all, since poverty, stress, fatigue, and lack of control over one's environment are all factors which contribute to depression, policies that involve dramatic reductions in government funding and the dismantling of social programs and services—that is, policies associated with neoliberal trends—can be understood as major contributors to psychological distress. Likewise, job insecurity, the intensification of work demands, and the stagnation of wages lead to increased stress and anxiety and make it more difficult for many people to satisfy their true human needs. For many, the workplace has become increasingly pressurized and unrewarding as the demands for increased productivity and efficiency have increased (Moncrieff 2014, p. 15). As a result, people's natural love of creative or otherwise meaningful work is eroded and those who must work longer hours or multiple jobs in order to make ends meet have little time or energy for social interaction with family and friends. Thus, even despite the widespread use of psychotropic drugs, the U.S. population appears to be significantly *less* sane, *less* happy, *more* anxious, and *more* depressed than they were in the middle of the twentieth century. This leads Luigi Esposito and Fernando Perez (2014) to conclude, rightly, that neoliberalism in contemporary nation-states constitutes a form of *structural violence* that systematically vitiates people's mental health.

Second, the affective orientations and habits of mind associated with neoliberalism lead directly to psychological distress and suffering. Among the leading sociopathic dynamic patterns solicited by "market fundamentalism" and increasingly competitive working environments are

i. possessive individualism,
ii. distrust in human relationships, and
iii. excessive reliance on the self. (Rustin 2014, p. 151)

In neoliberal societies, it is customary to view most things as commodities, to treat other people primarily as means to one's own ends, to prioritize personal profit, and to view compassion and empathy as optional and superfluous. Frequently overlooked is the fact that humans are necessarily social beings for whom interpersonal engagement and group membership are essential to personal identity and well-being (Rustin 2014, p. 145). Neoliberal ideology conveys the idea not only that everyone *is* an island, but also that *everyone is an island at war with every other island.* Its emphasis on mutually antagonistic individualism and competition leads to a weakening of social bonds, a loss of a sense of community, and a normalization of a "survival of the fittest," social Darwinist conception of all social problems. For most people, families have become smaller, religious belief and membership have declined, and social bonds have weakened. As social networks collapse, the collective integration and emotional connection that previously helped people to withstand life's stresses and pressures are now mostly unavailable. This generates widespread anxiety and psychic pain, as well as ever-present feelings of insecurity.

Adopting a classical Hobbesian or neo-Hobbesian approach to social life alienates people from their true human needs for meaningful social interaction and production. And directly corresponding to these true human needs are innate human capacities whose actualization constitutes the satisfaction of these needs. So as Rustin rightly notes, echoing Thoreau, early Marx, and Mill, "where relational needs are unmet, and respect and recognition to people are denied, human capacities will be undermined" (2014, p. 157). As a matter of convention, and in response to the demands of economic and social life, certain feelings and thoughts (for example, feelings of dependency or insecurity) may be stigmatized as "improper, forbidden, dangerous," making it difficult for individuals to acknowledge their affective experiences (Fromm 1962, pp. 90, 92). In fact, individuals may come to repress any awareness of many of their feelings of dissatisfaction; and social norms may be such that the effort to live in accordance with them makes the individual "sick."

Correspondingly, Fromm holds that all-too-often, the way in which a society harnesses psychic energy for its own purposes results in a "socially patterned defect" (Fromm 1955, p. 23). That is, the attitudes and behaviors that have been reinforced and normalized by society are in tension

with the requirements for genuine human flourishing and mental health. The defect that results will be shared by most members of society, though most will not be aware of any such deficiency. This is because this defect will be elevated into a virtue, "providing compensatory feelings of achievement that disguise the underlying corruption of the normal demands of human flourishing" (Foster 2017, p. 5). In a neoliberal society, such compensation may come in the form of prestige, wealth, a nice home, a fancy car, and "likes" and "followers" on social media. In this way, due to the psychic suffering associated with neoliberal life, many people become even more emotionally attached to associated consumerist ideals and values. Other common responses to psychic pain include feelings of loneliness and habits of narcissism, competitiveness, self-absorption, and greed. Therefore, while those deemed "mentally ill," along with all the other "failures" and "losers" in contemporary neoliberal societies, will inevitably suffer the most, even those who appear eminently "successful" and emerge as "winners" will be negatively impacted.

In part, this is because consumerism inherently *depends on* people feeling constantly discontented and dissatisfied, so that they will consume more goods. The lifestyles of the *celebrity elite*, which are loudly and widely displayed by the mass media, seduce people into aspiring to ever greater levels of consumption, so that this becomes not only a widely popular leisure pursuit, but for many, an end-in-itself (Moncrieff 2014, p. 12): *I shop, therefore I am*. In turn, this sociopathology naturally extends to the sphere of mental health. One obvious reason why so many people are currently identified as anxious and depressed is simply that we all are constantly exposed to ideological seductions telling us to desire what we almost certainly *cannot* obtain. This constant state of disappointed and frustrated desire alienates us from our true human needs, and, when this has become habitual, ultimately makes it extremely difficult, or even impossible, for us to find satisfaction through meaningful work and our relationships with others.

5.2.7 Reversal of Affect: Alienation

Coordinated action in the context of a social institution requires common acceptance of various rules and regulations. Incoming practitioners

may hold positive and even idealistic views about mental health practice. However, operating successfully within mental health institutions often requires that practitioners adopt "professional values" and place increased focus on technical skills, bureaucratization, and status. Genuine feelings of empathy or desires to collaborate may be undermined and socialized out of them, so that they become cynical and skeptical about the notion of mental health care. Once they begin to operate according to the structural constraints we have described and the corresponding habits of mind become more ingrained, they become increasingly alienated from their efforts to help and provide care.

There is also a serious danger that patients will become alienated from the health care professionals whose job it is to help them. We have claimed that patients internalize neoliberal ideology and come to believe that they are completely responsible for themselves. When they are unable to self-regulate, they face censure and strain, and health providers typically reinforce the impression that they themselves are responsible for help-seeking and self-managing. During times of crisis, patients are often referred to under-resourced helplines or given pamphlets. Even those who find a way to receive continuous care are often disappointed with the care they receive and the limited time they get to spend with health care professionals. Cost-cutting measures and paper trails very often make them feel as if they are not receiving adequate care from providers. Moreover, they soon learn that *they themselves* bear primary responsibility for finding or changing providers, making and keeping appointments, and experimenting with different medications. Because many subjects find all this to be a huge hassle, they commensurately reduce their interactions with the health care system and undertake practices of *self-medication*, such as a heavy reliance on alcohol or alternative medicines (Brijnath and Antoniades 2016, pp. 4-5). And due to the social stigma surrounding mental illness, many people may opt out of mental health services altogether. In this way, the ideology and the rhetoric of responsibility not only systematically alienate people from *proper* mental healthcare, but also, all too often, from *any* mental healthcare.

Across the broader public, economic instability and insecurity, a loss of autonomy, and a diminishing sense of community have generated widespread anxiety and depression. But in a neoliberal democratic society like

the USA, the common solution to these problems is *neither* to dare to think and act for themselves *nor* to create and sustain social institutions designed for mutual aid and general emancipation from oppression and repression. On the contrary, most people look to market-based solutions. In addition to consuming daily, increasing amounts of medication, many people who are miserable or even just moderately unhappy seek to overcome these feelings of distress by turning to more or less systematic "escapism": they obsessively watch TV, play video games, or immerse themselves in celebrity gossip and scandal. And in the most hypertrophied, supercharged version of all this "amusing ourselves to death," millions or even billions of people connect to social media for several hours a day in order to cultivate an image of themselves as successful, popular, and happy, or to be offended by others, and shout unrestrainedly about or at them. Yet, this systematic substitution of false human needs for true human needs only further alienates them from authentic and creative self-development, social connection, community engagement, and meaningful work. Relentlessly satisfying their false needs, by a direct proportionality, represses, suppresses, and undermines their capacities to satisfy their true needs. It therefore becomes immensely difficult for people to maintain genuine mental health.

5.2.8 Loss of Autonomy

Because the work of contemporary health care professionals is largely governed by market demands, practitioners encounter a range of constraints that shape the way they provide services. These efforts to "conduct the conduct" of mental health workers result in a significant loss of professional autonomy and a sharp reduction in the quality of mental health care.

First, since the DSM favors internal, neurobiological models of causation and treatment, mental health professionals are trained to regard more context-rich, systemic frameworks as largely irrelevant, and to focus instead on diagnosing and fixing what is going on inside the individual. The ideological influence of neoliberalism normalizes and promotes the consumption of drugs as the most efficient way to correct or deal with

adverse psychological conditions. Correspondingly, in the world of neoliberalized mental healthcare, quoting chapter-and-verse from the DSM bible, *Dr Bigbrother says* that it not psychiatrists' role to question how societal conditions contribute to or exacerbate distress or problematic behavior (Timimi 2008, p. 173), but only to fix "broken brains."

In addition, New Public Management (NPM) strategies have infiltrated clinical practice. NPM emphasizes the use of corporate management practices in public service, governing them via market mechanisms and coercive bureaucracy. This yields a sharp increase in both direct and indirect methods of control in order to enhance productivity, increase profit, and reduce costs (Spolander et al. 2014, p. 305). While there were once "enclosures of expertise" within which professionals were able to draw on their disciplinary training and knowledge and operate autonomously, nowadays "technologies of performance" allow for these enclosures to be "breached" (Teghtsoonian 2009, p. 30). Such technologies include practices of audit, accountability, and budget discipline, and an emphasis on evidence-based practice. Like other standard social institutions in neoliberal societies, mental health organizations are thoroughly subject to "intrusive processes of monitoring, target-setting, and regulation" which constrain them to behave in market-oriented terms and "provide many opportunities for individuals to become immersed in obsessional routines and measures, while losing sight of the central purpose of the work in question" (Rustin 2014, p. 156). Mental health professionals are constrained to accept these market redefinitions of clinical work, adhere to practice guidelines, and comply with regulations and audits in order to avoid sanction.

In this way, while mental health professionals may *appear* to have decision-making power with respect to delivering services at a particular site, the reality is that "technologies of performance" effectively govern their activities from a distance and shape the ways they carry out their work. For example, some critically-minded clinicians believe that the scores on various patient questionnaires are essentially *irrelevant*, and that whether a patient fills out the requisite forms makes little or no difference to the task of providing adequate care. Indeed, many complain about "the effect of this continuous surveillance on their clinical work and how it [affects] their practice and sense of professionalism" (Rizq 2014,

p. 210). Nevertheless, since the funding of services is directly dependent on compiling such data and presenting them to funders, clinical supervisors strongly emphasize the importance of such assessments. For example, Rosemary Rizq (2014) describes how one supervisor suggested that if the patient was unwilling to fill out the forms, the clinician should complete the forms *herself* on the basis of how she thought the patient was progressing (p. 210). Clinicians routinely are expected to subscribe to a set of procedures and accounting mechanisms that they themselves frequently do not find beneficial, and to "translate their activities into financial terms"— for example, billing hours—in order to cut out waste and maximize productivity. They also are expected to demonstrate so-called "evidence of care" and "to restructure activities that [are] not cost-effective, to choose between priorities in terms of their relative costs and benefits, to become more like a financial manager of their own professional activities" (Rose 1999, pp. 152-3). Such translation and restructuring shift the way that they attend to and feel about their work, overburden them with paperwork, and thereby make it more difficult for them to provide adequate care to patients. Once this focus on audit becomes habitual, good clinical work frequently becomes confused with its auditable service; and since services are rewarded for meeting certain targets, such as moving a certain percentage of patients into the "recovery box," then this is precisely what services are seen to accomplish.

The field of social work, likewise, has widely adopted neoliberalism's focus on risk management, cost-cutting, and budgeting. Social services are asked to prove their effectiveness through efficiency models, and community agencies are required to meet targets and collect evidence-based data on their effectiveness. The use of standardized instruments results in social workers having to justify the provision of services alongside engaging in risk assessment. Widespread supervision is intended to ensure that risks are effectively managed, that interventions are based on evidence-based practice, and that practitioners are carrying out their work effectively. In fact, risk assessment, documentation, and audit have become such core parts of social work that practitioners are strongly encouraged to focus more on "defensible decisions" rather than on the "right" ones (Spolander et al., 2014, p. 306). These new entrenchments of instrumental rationality, and their techniques of mental health care

provision, "are [all] about mitigating professional and service risk in case of an untoward event and …focus less on a healing therapeutic relationship and more on administration, documentation, and communication" (Brijnath and Antoniades 2016, p. 3). The result is a paper-trail mainly describing why patients, given their risk status, either do or do not receive timely and appropriate mental health care. In the face of micromanaging and potential liabilities, many practitioners become less confident in their own judgment and more likely to fall into line with standard practices, regardless of whether they think such practices are likely to be effective for a specific patient.

For example, there are measures to standardize treatment protocols and audit treatment choices to ensure that they conform to "evidence-based" practice, and mental health professionals are expected to view approaches that are not evidence-based as ineffective. Now, it is difficult to dispute the claim that we should adopt clinical practices which are supported by the evidence. However, the claim that evidence always clearly indicates the superiority of one treatment intervention over another is highly questionable. The specific claim that group cognitive-behavioral therapy is superior to other treatments for depression, for example, has been critically questioned by many researchers. Moreover, some critics have cogently argued that there is a significant bias toward empirical research that focuses on individual-level variables and treatments, and thereby does not adequately consider the range of social, economic, and political influences on mental health (Teghtsoonian 2009, p. 33). In other words, there is a very real danger that existing research on "evidence-based" practice has been influenced by the larger society's individualist conception of mental health. As a result, less individualizing approaches that are not regarded as "evidence-based" are consistently viewed as less credible and excluded from consideration.

In order to be *authentically* patient-centered, a mental health professional must interpret the relevance of evidence-based treatment strategies in the context of the particular circumstances and needs of each individual patient. Above all, it is important that patients be educated in a rationally *enlightened* spirit, and thus empowered to play a *critical* role in decision-making regarding their treatment. Under the Dr. Bigbrother system, the etiolation of autonomy among clinicians and patients alike

represents a fundamental obstacle to providing high-quality treatment that effectively answers to patients' true human needs.

5.2.9 Incentivization of Desires

We've argued that our habits of mind are systematically formed and modulated via our interaction with social institutions and the people who jointly constitute those institutions—the mind-shaping thesis. Not dissimilarly, Sami Timimi (2008) observes that "in any culture, people come to acquire their subjective selves through incorporation of values, beliefs, and practices that sustain the desired social relationships of that culture" (pp. 170-171). Neoliberal societies incentivize their members to value and make sense of all things in relation to market demands, to desire more economic wealth, to view the self in entrepreneurial terms, and to focus on self-advancement. Such values penetrate and permeate all aspects of social life, and pre-format and guide people's desires, goals, and overall affective orientation.

In particular, market norms incentivize us *always to want more*. Mental health, the self, and even personal relationships become objects of consumption. This encourages people to view these aspects of human life in competitive terms, and to constantly compare their own attainments and inadequacies to those of others. Advertisements send a message that people are "deficient" without this or that prized commodity, and they continually seek to make themselves a better, improved product. Such messages are absolutely central to the market economy: those who feel that they lack something important have a strong incentive to consume more products, especially including psychopharmacological ones.

People desperately want to be "normal," well-functioning members of society, and this requires that they systematically adjust their attitudes, think "rationally" (read: egoistically and instrumentally), and fall in line with market demands. Being "functional" means competing egoistically with others, pursuing individualistic goals, and taking "personal responsibility" for and "control of" one's problems. Prescriptive drugs "are often designed to modify behaviors to fit normative patterns of neoliberal agency," that is, to suppress feelings of anxiety, enhance personal focus

and productivity, and promote better results at work, school, and home (Esposito and Perez 2014, p. 416). In a neoliberal society, it is deemed eminently "rational" to prioritize personal gain over issues related to social and economic coercion and other forms of oppression, and to enhance one's capacities and personality through medication. Increasingly in the United States, many people take drugs not to treat some diagnosed "condition," but instead merely in order to make themselves more competitive, attractive, or marketable. ADHD medications, for example, are prescribed widely, and increasing numbers of people have begun to take anti-depressants for a daily "boost," even though they are already "healthy" by standard measures.

5.2.10 False Consciousness

Mühlhoff and Slaby (2017) aptly describe how immersive governance "relies on the subtle modulation of individual behavior by the selective stimulation and intensification of affective potentials and character traits each individual brings along" (p. 17). In so doing, they shine a bright light on how people's thoughts, actions, and feelings are subtly preformatted, "nudged," and governed at parties, clubs, sports events, and classroom environments, and all in ways of which they are not normally self-reflectively aware. But perhaps even more all-encompassing and powerful are the affective arrangements that pervade all social institutions throughout a particular society and accentuate certain kinds of tendencies and affective potentials without people being aware of it.

There is little doubt that all people are motivated at least *some* of the time by self-interest, that they *often* reason instrumentally, that they at least *sometimes* have competitive impulses, and that at least *sometimes* they are motivated by fear or greed. But *some* is categorically not the same as *all*, and *often* or *sometimes* are categorically not the same as *always*, *necessarily*, or *universally*. Moreover, it is crucially important to keep in mind that an individual's specific affective tendencies and capacities are largely the product of the history of this individual's past affective relations. Because we are immersed in a neoliberal society, some of our affective tendencies grow stronger and others may appear to be less pronounced;

this creates the widespread, false classical Hobbesian or neo-Hobbesian impression that egoistic self-interest is "essential" or "natural," whereas empathy and self-sacrifice are either accidental and superficial—a mere epiphenomenon of "real" egoistic self-interest—or simply non-existent. Cognitive neuroscience that is driven by neo-Darwinism, and popular psychology in the social Darwinist tradition, in turn, strongly reinforce this impression and make it seem like common sense. This is because, by virtue of our immersion in neoliberal society, we have developed a particular affective orientation and a particular way of understanding and valuing our relationship to the world. As a result, we have become alienated from our true human needs and find it increasingly difficult to attain genuine mental health; and yet we remain unable to see what is causing this widespread unhappiness.

* * *

Neoliberalism has become a *hegemonic* form of ideology and an *all-encompassing* form of governance that effectively rules out all challenge or opposition; the message sent is that there is no other way. Because neoliberal ideas have become so sedimented in people's habits of mind and imagination, they lack any alternative and organized way of viewing the world that is *not* beholden to market norms and values. Many people conform unthinkingly to the "market reality" that dictates all acceptable solutions, including solutions to mental health problems. They do not seriously question the legitimacy of many mental disorders or "[reflect] on the larger societal conditions that might be promoting whatever adverse conditions they might be experiencing" (Hamann 2009, p. 54). This makes it exceptionally difficult for people even to address, far less to ameliorate in a gradual way, and even further less *to revolutionize* and *transformatively solve*, the fundamental problems with the mental health care system described and analyzed in this chapter.

Note

1. See also Slaby and Choudhury (2018).

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6

What Is a Constructive, Enabling Institution?

Back now to the nineteenth century—this time the late nineteenth century—and also to the early twentieth century. This is what the self-professed anarchist Peter Kropotkin and the self-professed socialist Oscar Wilde have to say:

> [N]either the crushing powers of the centralized State nor the teachings of mutual hatred and pitiless struggle which came, adorned with the attributes of science, from obliging philosophers and sociologists, could weed out the feeling of human solidarity, deeply lodged in men's understanding and heart…. And the need of mutual aid and support which had lately taken refuge in the narrow circle of the family, or the slum neighbours, in the village, or the secret union of workers, re-asserts itself again, even in our modern society, and claims its rights to be, as it always has been, the chief leader towards further progress. (Kropotkin 1902, ch. 8)

> A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which Humanity is always landing. And when Humanity lands there, it looks out, and, seeing a better country, sets sail. Progress is the realisation of Utopias. (Wilde 1891)

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We've claimed that the "technologies of self" associated with social institutions involve the training and modification of individuals, not just in terms of cultivating particular skills, but also soliciting specific attitudes. Inside neoliberal social institutions, shared practices, enculturated expectations, language, and technologies of audit work together to cultivate, solicit, and literally shape essentially embodied affective framings (mental habits) that impede human flourishing. However, "technologies of the self" can be employed not only to perpetuate domination, but also to break from rigid habits that stunt human development. In order to help people to develop their full potential and develop healthy habits of mind, we must *change* the social institutions through which habits are instilled in us (Burkitt 2002, p. 229), and create *constructive, enabling* social institutions instead.

The first and simplest characterization of a constructive, enabling institution is that it is at once *mutually-aiding* in Kropotkin's sense and also *utopian* in Wilde's sense. The concept of "mutual aid" is self-explanatory: this is when people cooperate with one another in order to satisfy their true human needs, both basic and humanity-realizing. But there are two fundamentally different conceptions of "utopia." One conception, call it *millenarian utopia*, begins with an uncompromising vision of an ideal human community in a far-off future, and is all-too-often often used by authoritarian political regimes in order to justify coercive social engineering in the present, thereby molding people to fit the uncompromising vision, inevitably ending in actual *dystopia*. This is the concept of utopia that people usually have in mind when they criticize some social institution, some idea or theory, or someone's beliefs, feelings, or actions, by disparagingly or pejoratively *calling them* "utopian." Nevertheless, the other conception of utopia, call it *real-world utopia*, epitomized by Wilde's famous essay, instead provides a guiding idea of a morally and politically better world, as a ground of rational hope for progressive social activism and change in the present moment and in the actual world. In the spirit of Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid* and Wilde's essay, then, but also from the theoretical and practical standpoint of the political philosophy of mind, we're committed to the following substantive two-part thesis:

(i) that some constructive, enabling social institutions actually have existed and actually do currently exist, and
(ii) that a detailed, theoretically and practically well-grounded, philosophy of mind-oriented account of the nature of constructive, enabling institutions is really possible.

In this chapter and the next, we'll elaborate and defend those theses.

6.1 Negating and Reformulating the Eight Criteria

A usefully rich *preliminary* characterization of constructive, enabling institutions can be generated simply by negating each criterion in the list of working criteria for destructive/deforming institutions in contemporary neoliberal democratic societies, and then reformulating each negated criterion in positive terms. In this way, a constructive, enabling institution must satisfy the following eight criteria:

1. Anti-Commodifying or *Self-Realizing*
2. Anti-Mechanistic or *Organicist*
3. Anti-Coercive or *Dignitarian*
4. Anti-Mind-Dividing or *Integrative*
5. Anti-Affect-Reversing or *Authenticating*
6. Anti-Autonomy-Damaging or *Autonomy-Promoting*
7. Anti-Desire-Incentivizing or *True-Desire-Promoting*
8. Anti-False-Consciousness-Producing or *Critical-Consciousness-Priming*

We will now briefly spell out each of these criteria.

6.1.1 Anti-Commodifying or *Self-Realizing*

The subject should have and exercise choice and control over both the product of her labor and also the work that she does. She should be able

to do work that allows her to express herself, given her unique dispositions, interests, and talents. That is, the producer-subject should *own and freely control* not only the product of her labor, but also the activity of production itself. This double-ownership is therefore a self-realizing achievement. Similarly, what Fromm calls *participatory democracy* requires that a worker not only possesses knowledge about the job he or she is actually doing, but also understands "the economic function of the enterprise he is working for, and its relationship to the economic needs and problems of the community as a whole" (1955, pp. 280–281; see also Hanna 2018d, section 2.10). And the only way that a worker can become an active, interested, and responsible participant, according to Fromm, if he or she has an influence on the whole enterprise, by way of being an active participant in management and decision-making (p. 281).

6.1.2 Anti-Mechanistic or *Organicist*

Neoliberal ideology and social organization are mechanistic, grounded in socio-scientism, and closely resemble classical Fordist models of big-capitalist production. But constructive, enabling social organization is *processual*; correspondingly, social processes should be allowed to develop organically, as natural responses to the true human needs and aims of the people embedded and enmeshed in the relevant social institution. Such processes should be fluid rather than static, constantly changing during real-time, and fully sensitive not only to what each individual does from one moment to the next, but also to the collective dynamics of all the other individuals engaged in that social institution. Therefore, to impose overly strict, coercive rules or production-output guidelines is deeply stifling, or even deathly. Turing-computable algorithms are fine, as reliable or simplifying sub-routines in organic social processes. But when they are dominant, it is *the heat-death* of that social process. More generally, social processes should mirror goal-directed, natural life-processes as closely as possible, against the larger backdrop of an *organicist* conception of the natural and social world (see Hanna 2018a, essay 2.2).

6.1.3 Anti-Coercive or *Dignitarian*

The subject's mental and behavioral discipline should always be a matter of *self*-discipline, never externally-imposed, *coercive authoritarian* discipline. As we pointed out in Chap. 3, by *coercion*, we mean:

either (i) using violence (for example, injuring, torturing, or killing) or the threat of violence, in order to manipulate people according to certain purely instrumental purposes of the coercer (primary coercion),
or (ii) inflicting appreciable, salient harm (for example, imprisonment, termination of employment, large monetary penalties) or deploying the threat of appreciable, salient harm, in order to manipulate people according to certain purely instrumental purposes of the coercer (secondary coercion).

So again, all coercion is *manipulation*, that is, either treating people as mere means to the coercer's ends, or treating people as mere things. Since treating people as mere means or mere things is immoral, then all coercion is immoral. And again, by *authoritarianism*, we mean whenever *A* (the purported authority) tells *B* (someone else) to obey commands or do things, *just because A has told B to obey those commands or do those things*, and also possesses the power to coerce, not for any objectively morally or otherwise rationally well-justified reason. Since telling people to do things or obey commands without a good reason is arbitrary and rationally unjustified, then all authoritarianism is rationally unjustified. So coercive authoritarianism is rationally unjustified and immoral, and any social institution that operates according to coercive authoritarian principles is thereby also rationally unjustified and immoral.

As Remy Debes has compellingly argued (Debes 2018, 2017), although the essentially Kantian concept of *human dignity* has emerged since WW II as a moral and political rallying-point for oppressed people, moral universalists, and moral cosmopolitans, it remains profoundly *fragile*. That is, human dignity remains

(i) widely ideologically contested as a concept, as flowing historically from the much-criticized Enlightenment,

and far more scandalously and even near-satanically (in the case of, for example, genocide),

(ii) factually much-violated in actual moral and political practice.

One key source of the fragility of human dignity, we believe, is the all-encompassing rise of neoliberalism as a hegemonic ideology and as a set of powerful social-institutional practices since the end of the Second World War.

By diametric opposition, then, it follows that constructive, enabling social institutions must be anti-coercive or *dignitarian*. In Chap. 3 above, we briefly characterized the concept of "human dignity in the Kantian sense." But now we need to spell out this concept in more detail (see also Hanna 2018b, esp. ch. 6; 2018c, esp. ch. 3).

All human persons have dignity, or what Kant calls *Würde*. Human persons are metaphysically defined as such by their being biologically human and *also* possessing a set of innate capacities for consciousness or subjective experience, affect and desire (aka *caring*), cognition, free will, and rationality (that is, being sensitive to and guided by reasons and/or principles). Correspondingly, human dignity *is the absolute, nondenumerably infinite, intrinsic, objective value of human persons, by virtue of their personhood-defining set of innate capacities*. We believe that all conscious, caring animals, whether human or non-human, have intrinsic moral value simply by virtue of their possessing the capacities for consciousness and caring, and therefore are worthy of our serious moral concern. While *only* persons have dignity, it is plausibly arguable that some *non-human* animals are *also* persons, and therefore *also* possess dignity. But for our purposes in this book, we will concentrate on specifically *human* persons and specifically *human* dignity.

Objective values are whatever anyone can care about, that is, whatever anyone can aim her desire-based emotions at. Otherwise put, objective values are what Kant called "ends" (*Zwecke*). In turn, "absolute" means "unconditionally necessary." So to say that human persons have dignity is

to say that their value as ends is an unconditionally necessary, internal feature of the kind of being they are. Now many things are intrinsically objectively valuable, or ends-in-themselves—for example, pleasant bodily or sensory experiences, vivid emotional experiences, beautiful natural objects and environments, fine craftsmanship, skillfully-played sports, good science, good philosophy, good works of art, and any job well done. To say that human persons are absolutely, nondenumerably infinitely, intrinsically, objectively valuable, or that they have dignity, however, is to say that each of us has a moral value that is like a transfinite cardinal quantity in relation to all denumerable or countable, economic kinds of value.

In accordance with this mathematical analogy, our moral value as human persons transcends every *denumerable* value quantity, and therefore every *economic* value quantity, yet remains fully in the natural world. As human persons, we are essentially *in* and *of* the natural world, but we are *not* "merely material" or "merely physical." Nor are we in any way *commodities*, which of course enables the Kantian concept of human dignity to overlap significantly with early Marx's political theory, as formulated, for example, in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* of 1844. Any social institution or system that *commodifies* us thereby violates our human dignity. Again, the absolute, nondenumerably infinite, intrinsic, objective value of human persons is the highest possible kind of intrinsic objective value, sovereign over, or transcendent to, all other kinds; and the moral value of human persons cannot be provided either with an equivalent or anything greater in terms of any denumerable, economic value, commodity, or price. Thus, human persons do not have a price or a market value; human persons are not commodities; the value of human persons is not merely instrumental; and more generally, human persons cannot permissibly be merely used, abused, used up, or destroyed at will, and then thrown or flushed away. In turn, human dignity is adequately recognized by the moral attitudes and/or emotions of *empathy* and *respect*. Correspondingly, *human oppression* is any violation of sufficient empathy and respect for human dignity. Finally, human persons do not have to *do* anything in order to have human dignity, nor can they lose their human dignity *by acting badly*. Human dignity is neither *an achievement* nor *a reward for good conduct*: on the contrary, it is *an innate endowment*.

Therefore, in a constructive, enabling social institution, the institutional framework should be inherently anti-coercive or dignitarian. Coercive authoritarian social institutions violate sufficient respect for human dignity and therefore are inherently oppressive; in addition, all social regimes incorporating coercive authoritarian codes of discipline produce mental slavery and lead to deformities of consciousness, affect/emotion, and action. Within constructive, enabling social institutions, in contrast, all manner of alternative opinions and lifestyles—Mill's "experiments of living" (1978, p. 54)—are permitted, the only limits of which are the maintenance of sufficient empathy and respect for human dignity and resisting human oppression. But even in cases where forceful action is undertaken for the sake of upholding human dignity and resisting human oppression, coercion is *never* permissible; on the contrary, only minimally sufficient defensive, protective, or preventive uses of force are ever permissible. Only in this way can any constructive, enabling social institution adequately promote, realize, and sustain its essentially anti-coercive, dignitarian character.

6.1.4 Anti-Mind-Dividing or *Integrative*, and Anti-Affect-Reversing or *Authenticating*

Within this anti-coercive, dignitarian framework, social institutions should also always promote, realize, and sustain the self-unification of people's lives. Hence institutions should always include *aesthetic and spiritual components* that allow for self-exploration, self-expression and self-reflection. Activities within the institution should satisfy basic needs for creative, meaningful activity—and of course, given the natural variety of people's dispositions, there must be room for all different kinds of such activity.

6.1.5 Anti-Autonomy-Damaging or *Autonomy-Promoting*

Social-institutional structures should promote and sustain a subject's capacity for autonomous agency and her ability to exercise this capacity.

All activities should flow from the subject herself as the source of agency, and yield acts or other products for which she takes *deep responsibility* (see Hanna 2018b, esp. ch. 3; Wolf 2015). By "deep responsibility" for any choice or action *X*, we mean that *X flows from the agent herself, that is, from the real person she is*, and that the normative value of *X*, especially any moral value of *X* or of some of *X*'s consequences that there might be, also *attaches to the agent herself*. It should also be noted that, strictly speaking, deep responsibility need not be *moral* responsibility, if the normative value that attaches to the agent herself is *non-moral*. For example, the creator of a beautiful work of art is deeply responsible for the work and its beauty, even if these facts are essentially artistic/aesthetic and non-moral. In constructive, enabling social institutions, therefore, there must be scaffolding put in place for the promotion, realization, and nurture of deep moral and non-moral responsibility.

Moreover, there must be social-institutional spaces for new ways of imagining and creating communities, and social-institutional opportunities to engage in communicative action to identify and understand people's true needs in all their specificity. In view of the constructive, enabling social institution's commitment to autonomy and deep responsibility, all association with others within the institution is itself autonomous and deeply responsible—*including* the freedom to opt out of, aka "walk away from," that social institution itself, without any punishment or other reprisals or sanctions. Hence, all basic activities within that institution will flow from individual subjects as sources of agency. Above all, within the framework of a constructive, enabling social institution, it also has to be really possible to try out Millian "experiments in living" and make *big mistakes*, without being administratively disciplined, cast out/exiled/made homeless, imprisoned, tortured, or killed.

6.1.6 Anti-Desire-Incentivizing or *True-Desire-Promoting*

The problem with desire-incentivization within destructive, deforming institutions is not only the fact that all desires are transformed into merely instrumental desires, but also the fact that such institutions incentivize

the *wrong* desires. Institutions should not only permit but actually promote, realize, and sustain non-instrumental, *altruistic* desires and *altruistic* action. But authentic altruism cannot be coerced or manufactured: at most, the constructive, enabling institution can supply social matrices for the self-development of our altruistic capacities. Furthermore, altruistic capacities and altruistic desires are only two central ones among the *many* affective capacities that should be promoted and sustained. There are also the desires to be creative, to have meaningful personal relationships, to do work you enjoy, and to have the opportunity to learn and do new things as an end in itself, to mention only a very few.

6.1.7 Anti-False-Consciousness-Producing or *Critical-Consciousness-Priming*

People achieve cognitive, practical, and emotional maturity when they are capable of and ready for critical consciousness, and this happens only via critical, dialogical free inquiry; so institutions should promote and sustain such inquiry. More generally, in the context of constructive, enabling institutions, all subjects should engage in participatory decision-making—sometimes also called "direct democracy"—whose goal is the rationally-guided development of what the Brazilians call *concordar*, or "shared heart," in order to undertake effective collective action (Hanna 2018d, sections 2.9 and 2.10). Correspondingly, the antidote to alienation, as Fromm well understood, is unity and collaboration with others, aka "robust solidarity" or "anthropological solidarity" (see Chap. 2). Along these lines, John Dewey (1903) states that the "ultimate ethical habit" is "interest in the community welfare, an interest which is intellectual and practical, as well as emotional" (p. 21). It is important to have opportunities to come together with others to raise questions, challenge everyday practices, and critique the way that society is organized: "the commitment is to a form of living together in which we attempt to reach agreement about difficult matters in a discussion that is free from domination" (Fleming 2012, p. 133).

Social institutions that make decisions and carry out actions by means of coercive authoritarian commands—whether issued by individual lead-

ers, by governing elites, or by big-capitalist elites embedded within "the deep state," the military-industrial-digital-university complex; whether by means of the rule of the rule of the minority or the majority; and whether via overt coercion or covert coercion, aka "manufactured consent" and "mind control"—are all inherently socially destructive and deforming.

6.2 Affording Flexible Habits of Mind

In Sect. 6.1, we characterized constructive, enabling institutions as self-realizing, organicist, dignitarian, integrative, and authenticating; and we claimed that they promote autonomy, deep responsibility, the satisfaction of people's true desires, and critical consciousness. Can insights from philosophy of mind shed light on the influence of such institutions? In this section, we look once again to the pragmatist notion of habit and the concept of "affordances."

According to John Dewey's version of pragmatism, the development of flexible habits is central to self-growth. While some habits do involve a great degree of mechanical repetition, it is possible for habits to become more varied and adaptable, so that one can fluidly take advantage of the wide range of possibilities offered by the environment (Levine 2012, p. 264). Learning can be understood as "the reconstruction or reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience, and which increases ability to direct the course of subsequent experience" (Dewey 1916). This ability to shift how one organizes experience and to direct the course of later experience requires that people be capable of fluid and flexible action and interpretation so that they can adjust to the peculiarities of their present situation. Of course, it is crucial that individuals' "situation," including the social institutions that they inhabit, allow them significant choice and control, and also that they afford dynamism and flexibility. That is, in order to cultivate flexible habits of mind, social institutions themselves must be dynamic, tolerant of a wide range of opinions and lifestyles, and open to numerous forms of creative, meaningful activity. Given that one of our true human desires is for meaningful personal relationships, such institutions should cultivate habits of mind that facilitate such relationships; and given that critical conscious-

ness and dialogical free inquiry play a central role in ongoing self-growth and collective action, it is important for constructive, enabling institutions to foster the development of such capacities.

In *Human Nature and Conduct*, Dewey says that what is needed are habits "which are more intelligent, more sensitively percipient, more informed with foresight, more aware of what they are about, more direct and sincere, more flexibly responsive than those now current" (1922). Constructive, enabling institutions, as we understand them, are those that afford the development of flexible, essentially embodied mental habits. That is, such institutions support and amplify our cognitive, affective, and agential capacities so that we are capable of autonomous agency, critical engagement, and collaboration. They do so by providing a specific landscape of affordances, one which calls forth or solicits specific kinds of engagement. In particular, such institutions provide people with opportunities to break away from "tried and true," traditional, and ossified modes of thought, action, and feeling that hinder their development, self-understandings, or relations with others.

Some key examples of flexible, essentially embodied habits of mind include empathy, curiosity, imagination, and humility, all of which help someone to remain continually open and sensitive to new insights and considerations.

First, empathy can be a powerful way to "open oneself up to different ways of knowing and new forms of intersubjectivity, with the potential to dislodge and rearticulate dominant assumptions, truths and boundaries" (Pedwell 2012, p. 164). Through empathetic identification and coming face-to-face with what others feel and experience, subjects may encounter a shift in perspective that allows them to see reality in new ways. This promotes critical consciousness and tolerance of diverse viewpoints and forms of life, and also opens up space for "experiments in living." Indeed, the capacity for "contextually attuned emotional engagement" (Carse 2005, p. 170) can be understood as a habit of mind that is crucial for ongoing self-growth, autonomous agency, and altruistic engagement. These habits of empathy, openness, and altruism are crucial for the sort of "robust solidarity" discussed earlier, but notably and notoriously missing in the realms of Neoliberal U. and Dr. Bigbrother.

Second, constructive, enabling institutions are those which afford the development of mental habits of curiosity and imagination. Being curious involves becoming appropriately engaged, connected, and interested in another person's life experiences and felt condition. In her work on care, Noddings (1984) has emphasized the importance of adopting an open and curious stance, and "stepping out of one's own personal frame of reference into the other's" (p. 24). This centrally involves questioning assumptions, considering the perspectives of others who are differently situated, learning to do new things, and imagining the world otherwise. In Dewey's sense, imagination is the ability to perceive what is in front of us in light of what could be; he emphasizes the importance of possibility, of openness, and of meanings that proliferate rather than stagnate (Cuffari 2011, p. 539). Flexibility, fertility of imagination, and creativity of thought help subjects to respond dynamically to whatever internal and external conflicts they encounter and envision new sorts of solutions. Individuals with these sorts of flexible habits of mind will become capable of acting as "maverick perceivers," those who can attend to aspects of reality not countenanced by the dominant conceptual scheme (Concepciòn and Elfin 2009, p. 194). Thus, social institutions that cultivate curiosity and imagination also promote tolerance, critical consciousness, and self-realization. Individuals who have developed habits of curiosity and imagination are in a good position to think for themselves, to gain an appreciation of the perspectives of those very different from them, and to envision newer and better ways of solving problems. This is crucial for agential autonomy and relational autonomy alike, and also for robust solidarity.

Third, constructive, enabling institutions are those that cultivate a habit of humility, which can help us to remain open in our interpretations and to resist foisting our own interpretations too rigidly onto others (Carse 2005, p. 191). The recognition that our current assumptions or understandings may be inaccurate or limited also can help us to remain open to alternative ways of thinking, feeling, and acting. Humility is crucial for learning and for moving beyond customary modes of behavior and problem-solving in order to more fully realize one's potential. This prevents us from becoming and behaving as mere cogs in the capitalist machine, nothing but biological automata who respond only in routine,

mechanistic ways to our surroundings; instead we continually remain open to other ways of doing, thinking, feeling, and being in the world.

6.3 How to Expunge Our Inner Hobbes

Hobbesians and neo-Hobbesians are not merely mistaken, but in fact dangerously, spectacularly wrong that *all human beings* are egoistic and mutually antagonistic *by nature*. On the contrary, even though, obviously, many human beings are indeed egoistic and mutually antagonistic, at least part of the time, nevertheless *all human persons* are fully capable of altruism, kindness, and mutual aid, and the Hobbesian or neo-Hobbesian thesis is nothing but a *cognitive wall* and a *cultural myth* generated by destructive, deforming institutions, and self-servingly used to justify personal egoism/self-interest or authoritarian oppression and tyranny.

Another version of the same cognitive wall and cultural myth is the clearly false thesis that if everyone always pursued egoistic ends, then they would be better off than if not everyone or no one did. That is because the egoist always has sufficient reason to cheat, maim, or murder his competitors for limited resources and rewards *if no one else is watching*. Moreover, the classic claim that every apparently altruistic choice or action satisfies some deeper egoistic imperative or urge is patently question-begging and sophistical, since it refuses to tell us what could ever count as acceptable evidence in favor of altruism, by presupposing that every item of apparent evidence for altruism is reinterpreted to confirm egoism.

Altruism, it should also be noted, encompasses not merely self-sacrificing choices or action for the sake of others, but also idealistic non-egoistic, non-hedonistic, non-instrumental, non-consequentialist choice or action of *any* kind. As per our discussion of collective intelligence in Chap. 2, by *collective altruism* we mean an emergent property of human or otherwise animal mindedness that is constituted by the practical capacities and practical activities of a group of individuals *as* a group, especially including group deliberation and participatory decision-making. More specifically, like collective wisdom, collective altruism is a relatively high

level of altruistic group activity that is *not* a function of high average levels of altruism across individual group members, but instead is produced by effective collaborative interaction within the group. In other words, and to put it simply, *you do not have to be an all-star altruist yourself* in order to engage in *highly successful team altruism*, aka collective altruism.

6.4 Real-World Examples of Collectively Wise Institutions

Here are some not-merely-imagined, *real-world* examples of collectively wise, collectively altruistic constructive, enabling institutions.

6.4.1 Disaster Communities

"Disaster communities," as described, for example, by Rebecca Solnit (2010) in *A Paradise Built in Hell*, provide an antithesis of the destructive, deforming social institutions that are normal and standard in contemporary neoliberal societies. Her detailed cases-in-point are social histories of the San Francisco earthquake, the Halifax explosion, the Mexico City earthquake, and New York City immediately after 9/11.

Solnit writes:

> The existing system [in contemporary neoliberal nation-states] is built on fear of each other and of scarcity and more to be afraid of. It is mitigated every day by altruism, mutual aid, and solidarity, by the acts of individuals and organizations who are motivated by hope and love rather than by fear. They are akin to a shadow government—another system ready to move were they voted into power. Disaster votes them in, in a sense, because in an emergency these skills and ties work while fear and divisiveness do not. Disaster reveals what else the world could be like—reveals the strength of that hope, that generosity, and that solidarity. It reveals mutual aid as a default operating principle and civil society as something waiting in the wings when it's absent from the stage.
>
> A world could be built on that basis, and to do so would redress the long divides that produce everyday pain, poverty, and loneliness in times of cri-

> sis, homicidal fear, and opportunism… The paradises built in hell are improvisational; we make them up as we go along, and in so doing they call on all our strength and creativity and leave us free to invent even as we find ourselves enmeshed in community. These paradises built in hell show us both what we want and what we can be. (Solnit 2010, p. 312)

An excellent contemporary example of a more permanent, and also fully cosmopolitan, disaster community is *Médecins Sans Frontières/ Doctors Without Borders*, aka MSF, which won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1999:

> How we treat migrants and refugees making the journey from Central America to the United States has become a focus of attention in [the USA] and abroad. [MSF's] attention to this issue has been sharpened following the recent introduction of "zero tolerance" policies [imposed] by the US administration intended to curb migration, including … the accelerated detention of migrant populations, the separation of children from their families, and the return of asylum seekers to their home countries without due legal process. The decision earlier [in 2018] by the US Attorney General to eliminate domestic abuse and gang violence as legal grounds for asylum will further endanger thousands of people facing serious threats. While the legal and policy debates around these topics are nuanced, the medical issues are clear-cut. We provide medical care to those who need it most, regardless of their nationality or legal status…. While we take pride in the medical services we offer, we also recognize how important it is to create more space for the voices of the patients we serve. This is an essential aspect of our commitment to bear witness and speak out about the suffering we see. Gathering first-hand testimonies from individuals at risk not only helps the public to better understand their plight, but also allows patients to provide input on what their specific medical needs are, and how well MSF may have succeeded in addressing those needs. (2018)

How infinitely different MSF is from the social institutions of healthcare, and especially mental healthcare, run by Dr. Bigbrother!

More generally, disaster communities inherently involve participatory sense-making, joint action, collective wisdom, and participatory decision-making. In order to deal with the problems generated by the disaster,

people must work together, combine forces, and integrate their individual strengths. In addition, such communities depend on the adoption of flexible habits of mind. People must use their imagination to find creative ways to deal with challenges, draw on empathy and feelings of genuine concern for others, and incorporate diverse perspectives to meet people's varying needs. All of this points to the sort of robust solidarity and collective altruism we have described previously. In many cases, people also must go beyond the tried and true to deal with the problems at hand; precisely because it is an emergency situation, status quo problem-solving methods are likely to prove ineffective.

6.4.2 Various Phases in the History of the American Left

Various phases in the history of the American Left provide another antithesis of the destructive, deforming social institutions that are normal and standard in contemporary neoliberal nation-states. Consider, for example, the best moments in the abolitionist movement, the suffragette/feminist movement, anarcho-socialism, the labor movement, the civil rights movement, and so on, as described by Michael Kazin:

> At a nadir of the historical [American] left, perhaps utopia could use a few words in its defense. A world of freebooting capitalisms has delivered neither material abundance nor social harmony to most of the world's people. Failed states, religious wars, environmental disasters, clashes between immigrants and the native-born are common features of current history, as they were in earlier times. But the perception that there is no alternative to chronic crisis except somehow to muddle through exacerbates the problem. As Max Weber wrote, just after his famous line that "politics is the boring of hard boards": "Certainly all historical experience confirms the truth that man would not have attained the possible unless time and again he had reached out for the impossible." (2012, pp. 276–277)

Very like disaster communities, the best moments in the history of the American Left have depended significantly on joint action, collective wisdom, and a sense of shared purpose. Much of this solidarity drew its

impetus from shared indignation about injustice, from an uncompromising sense of empathy and respect for human dignity, and from a genuine and passionate desire to make the world a radically better place not just for oneself, but also for others. Participants have made substantial and even herculean efforts to sustain universal empathy and respect for human dignity, to reframe social problems, to criticize status-quo ideology, to raise consciousness, and to emancipate all. Within the context of those movements, visionary activists like Martin Luther King, Jr. have demonstrated a powerful capacity to imagine the world otherwise and to convey that vision to other people.

These examples show that the creation of constructive, enabling institutions is not only *really possible*, but also in some real-world cases already *actual*, hence within our immediate practical reach. In the next chapter, we will present a proposal about how this could be done.

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7

How to Design a Constructive, Enabling Institution

In the early 1920s, John Dewey wrote this—

> If an individual were alone in the world, he would form his habits (assuming the impossible, namely that he would be able to form them) in a moral vacuum. They would belong to him alone, or to him only in reference to physical forces. Responsibility and virtue would be his alone. But since habits involve the support of environing conditions, a society or some specific group of fellow-men is always accessory before and after the fact. (Dewey 1922, p. 16)

Directly changing an individual's mental habits is not possible, according to Dewey. Instead, we can change mental habits indirectly, "by modifying conditions, by an intelligent selecting and weighting of the objects which engage attention and which influence the fulfillment of desires" (1922). *Social engineering* is the coercive authoritarian, top-down imposition of social organizations and various schemes for human improvement, whether the people on whom they are imposed want them or not, and whether these social organizations and schemes are actually good for them or not. And, as James C. Scott's *Seeing Like a State* brilliantly shows, not only do the people enmeshed in the social institutions created

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according to such schemes often intensely *dislike* them, even if they do *obediently conform* to them, but also, characteristically, such schemes are in fact *very bad* for those people (1998). But, on the contrary, by *reverse social engineering*, we mean the exact opposite of social engineering. In reverse social engineering, one starts out with a concept of a way of human life that actually satisfies true human needs, especially humanity-realizing needs, and then, bottom-up, one designs social institutions whose structure and dynamics are such that they do in fact bring about the satisfaction of those needs. In this chapter, we propose that the best way to design a constructive, enabling institution is to reverse social engineer it from the concept of *enactive-transformative learning*.

The concept of transformative learning, introduced by Jack Mezirow in 1978, was influenced by Paulo Freire's notion of "conscientization" (Freire 1970), Thomas Kuhn's ideas about "paradigm shifts" (Kuhn 1970), the conception of "consciousness raising" in the women's movement, and the work of Jurgen Habermas. Drawing in particular from the work of Habermas, Mezirow's education theory holds that the conditions needed for the realization of democracy are the same conditions necessary for transformative learning. The sort of communicative education he has in mind involves less emphasis on hierarchical authority and more on participatory decision-making; the elimination of corporate culture and the nourishing of self-government; and a clear priority given to social analysis, critical reflection, and social justice. As Fleming (2012) puts it, "a democratized civil society is a learning society" (p. 133).

Similarly, we hold that transformative learning environments can serve as a model for the reverse engineering of constructive, enabling institutions more generally. We have claimed that such institutions centrally involve the affordance, realization, and promotion of *flexible habits of mind*—that is, essentially embodied affective framing that is self-realizing, organicist, dignitarian, integrative, authenticating, autonomous, deeply responsible, and critically conscious. Moreover, we believe that educational social institutions have the potential to serve as striking examples of this; what is needed are deliberate efforts and designs that support changes in the "dynamic architecture" of a learner's form of knowing (Kegan 2000). An examination of transformative learning provides us with a model for how to scaffold the development of capacities for creative

and imaginative problem-solving, collective wisdom, and robust solidarity, so that people are in a better position to satisfy their own and others' true human needs. Such education can also be correctly understood as an adventurous exercise in dignitarian direct democracy:

> effective learners in an emancipatory, democratic society—a learning society—become a community of cultural critics and social activists, and the dichotomy of individual and society is transcended by understanding knowledge (and learning) as intersubjective. (Fleming 2012, p. 134)

Since Mezirow introduced the concept in 1978, several different "takes" on transformative learning have emerged.[1] But as Mezirow understands it, transformative learning at its core is defined as the process by which we alter problematic *frames of reference*, which include habits of mind, meaning perspectives, assumptions, and expectations. Building on this idea, Edmund O'Sullivan et al. (2002) hold that "transformative learning involves experiencing a deep, structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions" and describe it as "a shift of consciousness that dramatically and irreversibly alters our way of being in the world" (p. 18). Such learning is not simply a matter of students gaining access to new knowledge and information, but instead centers upon *personal transformation*: it alters students' perspectives, interpretations, and responses, and also involves changes in the way that they feel about themselves and their surroundings. How should learning that brings about these sorts of dramatic shifts in perspective be understood from the standpoints of philosophy of mind and cognitive science, and in the context of an explicitly social-institutional and political setting?

The adoption of different theoretical frameworks can lead "to very different conceptions of the nature of mind itself and how the mind should be cultivated" (Bruner 2009, p. 159). Within mainstream philosophy of mind and cognitive science, there has been a long-standing assumption that cognition and thought are abstract, intellectual, disembodied processes that occur separately from emotion and affect, and that cognitive processing can be treated as a kind of computation that unfolds according to the brain's internal rules. Correspondingly, proponents of the view that Andy Clark (2008) aptly calls "BRAINBOUND" claim that

mindedness is essentially inner and always and everywhere neurally realized. According to this outlook, self-transformation might be construed as the forging of new neural connections and the development of new cognitive "programs" that can guide a subject's thought and behavior. Although self-transformation theorists usually do not explicitly endorse this BRAINBOUND-style, cognitivist approach, there are good reasons to think that some of the key assumptions associated with this view have implicitly guided much of the theorizing about transformative learning. Mezirow (1997; Mezirow et al. 2000), for example, has described transformative learning primarily in terms of critical reflection, meta-cognitive reasoning, and the questioning of assumptions and beliefs. Although many learning theorists have criticized Mezirow's account for neglecting learning's affective dimension, there has been relatively little analysis of the nature of emotion's role in transformative learning.

In this chapter, we argue that our proposed essential embodiment thesis, together with enactivism, offer us an importantly different and more productive way to conceptualize the intended effects of transformative learning, *especially* when this work is foregrounded against the backdrop of the mind-shaping thesis and our conception of collectively wise, constructive, enabling social institutions.

Like other proponents of embodied cognition, we hold that there is "a unique, non-trivial, and cognitively limiting role for the body in the determination of mental states" (Kiverstein and Clark 2009, p. 2) and that bodily dynamics *partially constitute* cognition. According to what Lawrence Shapiro (2010) calls "The Constitution Hypothesis," the body plays a constitutive role, not merely a causal one, in cognitive processing. The claim is not that cognition is "going on" in the non-neural constituents of thought, such as the lungs or limbs, but rather that these non-neural constituents "must, like veins in a circulatory system, be integrated with other parts of a cognitive system in a way that certifies them as constituents of the system" (Shapiro 2010, p. 208). To say that various non-neural parts of the body are central constituents in cognitive processes is to say that cognition would break down, or be incomplete, or be something other than what it is, without their constituency (Shapiro 2010, p. 160). Building on these ideas, we have argued elsewhere that

crucial structural aspects of mentality—such as its egocentric, spatial, and temporal dimensions—are physically grounded in the neurobiological dynamics of living animal bodies (Hanna and Maiese 2009; Maiese 2011, 2015).

Furthermore, like proponents of enactivism, we hold that cognition (sense-making) occurs via the embodied action and engagement of a living organism within its world. This means that the computational view of the mind, which treats information as something already settled in relation to some preexisting, rule-bound code, is mistaken: sense-making is not a matter of passively receiving and processing stimuli from an external world. Instead, according to the enactivist view, "cognition is a thoroughly relational and action-oriented dynamic process involving an organism's brain, body, and environment" (Brancazio 2018). And, since cognitive processes are a matter of a subject's responding to a world in terms of its apparent significance, there is good reason to think that sense-making also is deeply *affective* and thoroughly bound up with a subject's concerns and emotions (Colombetti 2014).

Moreover, sense-making among humans has an integral social component. Recall that our mind-shaping thesis says that insofar as we are essentially *social* minded animals, cognition and affectivity are best seen as socially embedded, and that the affective framings that comprise our essentially embodied human form of life are all *partially determined* and *literally shaped* by our social-institutional surroundings. As we noted in Chap. 1, by a "partial determination" or "literal shaping" of our essentially embodied minds by something *X*, we mean that *X* affects us, and thereby has an influence on us, as minded animals, in a salient, significant way that is at once:

(i) causal,
(ii) itself partially determined or shaped by means of complex dynamic, self-reflexive feedback-loops, and
(iii) irreducibly normative.

And as we also noted in Chap. 1, we hold that *X* has a *causal influence* upon *Y* just in case:

(i) *X* has some sort of necessary, efficacious role to play in the production (at a time, or over time) of some mental or physical properties of or facts about *Y*,
(ii) there is some sort of general, distinctively rule-like or lawlike connection governing the production of *Y*-properties or *Y*-facts by *X*, and
(iii) had *X* not existed, then those *Y*-properties or *Y*-facts would not have existed.

Therefore, to suppose that social interactions and social structures have a causal influence on mindedness is to suppose that these social factors have a necessary, efficacious role to play in the production of a subject's desires, beliefs, emotions, etc., and that without the contribution of these social factors, these various dimensions of essentially embodied mindedness would not have existed.

Importantly, the influence of the social environment can be either beneficial or detrimental. More specifically, existing social norms and dynamics

either (i) cultivate adaptive habits of mind that promote human flourishing and the satisfaction of people's true human needs,
or else (ii) they contribute to maladaptive habits of mind that alienate people from deep-rooted true human needs and interfere with their overall well-being.

In other words, the mind-shaping that social institutions bring about can be *either* constructive and enabling (collective wisdom), *or* destructive and deforming (collective sociopathy). In turn, collectively sociopathic social institutions are destructive and deforming in various degrees, more or less; but collectively wise, constructive, enabling social institutions are categorically different.

It seems self-evidently obvious that social institutions, whether they are constructive/enabling or destructive/deforming, impact people cognitively, affectively, and practically. Nevertheless, recent and contemporary philosophy of mind and cognitive science often displays not only an *intellectualist, conceptualist* bias towards studying specifically "cognitive" or theoretical capacities, as opposed to specifically practical or affective capacities, but also an *individualist* bias towards studying the endogenous

or infra-organismic (and especially BRAINBOUND) basis of mental content and action, as opposed to *their exogenous or extra-organismic factors*. By sharp contrast, we have emphasized, following Colombetti and Krueger (2015), that environmental resources not only importantly influence but also literally shape *human affectivity and practical agency*, and that this centrally involves the cultivation of essentially embodied mental habits in social action and interaction. Individual minded human animals are drawn into certain modes of interaction by way of affective attunement and habituation to interaction patterns, modes of valuation, and feeling patterns that are customary for that domain. What Slaby calls "relational affect" is an "intra-active dynamic that inheres in social domains of practice" (2016, p. 15). Particular social settings involve a particular affective atmosphere that incentivizes participants to feel, think, and behave in specific ways rather than others. By way of social coordination, "engaged, active collectives are capable of exerting a forceful affective pull on individuals" (2016, p. 10) that literally shapes their essentially embodied affective framings, cognition, and action.

Moreover, and for closely-related reasons—namely, biases towards intellectualism/conceptualism and individualism—most contemporary philosophers of mind and cognitive scientists also do not take into account the irreducibly *normative* aspect of the causal contribution made by the natural and social environment. In a basic biological sense, norms are linked to vital requirements, that is, the biological self-production and self-maintenance of a precarious system. A living organism regulates its coupling with the environment according to norms established by its own viability conditions (Barandiaran et al. 2009, p. 8). Whatever the living system is doing, there is something that it *ought* to be doing to ensure its continued existence. Normativity arises via processes of self-production and self-maintenance; and "through its ongoing individuation, the system intrinsically determines" which interactions support its continued existence, and which interactions threaten its survival (Buhrmann and Di Paolo 2015). Thus, at a basic biological level, what is good or bad for a living organism, that is, its norms of self-maintenance, are determined by its own internal organization. An agent modulates and transforms its environmental coupling so as to satisfy a norm, and thus

must be able to distinguish between the "value" of different physical outcomes of this environmental coupling.

However, the origin of *social norms* does not lie fully within the individual living organism; instead these norms are acquired in other self-sustained, psychological, or cultural modes of life. This is to say that adaptive agency in a complex social world such as ours requires that subjects navigate through a particular socio-cultural context, form relationships with others, and adjust to social demands. What Rietveld and Kiverstein (2014) call "situated normativity" goes beyond mere survival and adaptivity and encompasses norms of adequacy and optimality associated with particular social institutions. As they grow up, individuals will continuously adjust and adapt their behaviors and judgments so as conform to the patterns of behavior and judgment that are customary in a specific material setting. They find themselves situated in a cultural setting that they did not choose, but which inevitably provides the backdrop for their affective framings. Social norms provide a framework within which people form values, attitudes, and desires, think thoughts, and execute intentions; and social institutions scaffold and solicit specific patterns of affect, thought, and action by providing a normative framework that rewards or discourages certain kinds of stances and behaviors.

Therefore, as we discussed in Chap. 2, all habits are normative insofar as "they are acquired through training or instruction which have a normative framework, even if it not made explicit," and because all our actions are subject to some sort of evaluation (Burkitt 2002, p. 233). What matters for successful coordination with the activities of others is that one can reliably act in ways that fit with a sociocultural practice or communal custom, and also with the specific details of the particular situation in which the activity unfolds (Rietveld and Kiverstein 2014, p. 333). Some interactions are good for the socially situated subject and some are bad; some regulations and modes of coupling with the sociocultural world are adequate and adaptive insofar as they enable the individual to fare well in that social environment (to gain status and social recognition, for example), and some are maladaptive (insofar as they involve heavy penalties, sanctions, or social disapproval). While some institutions foster highly dialogical collaborative activities, empathy, and cooperation, others encourage hyper-competitiveness or toxic group

interaction. By virtue of participating in a social institution, subjects come to be bound together in a certain kind of social interaction that is characterized by specific norms and solicits specific patterns of cognitive and affective response.

Still, although the origin of social norms does not lie essentially or fully within the individual, there is also a real sense in which the individual *internalizes* them. We have claimed that the notion of an essentially embodied mental habit helps to make sense of the idea that social influences and norms become *sedimented* in the body in the form of recurring affective framings and complex dynamic patterns of feeling, cognition, and action. Since our minded bodily habits and interpretive tendencies are crucially dependent on social norms, and since we make sense of the world only in and through our minded living bodies, norms literally shape both our minds and our lives. Via the development of integrated patterns of behavior and attention, as Joe Higgins (2017) points out, the living body "becomes normatively laden by societal expectations and mores." He also aptly points to gender as a good example. Due to various expectations and norms regarding the enactment of "feminine" and "masculine" activity, individuals routinely adopt gendered mannerisms and habitually come to regard and experience their bodies in gendered ways. Moreover, if people are expected to perform gender roles and perform them well, it is much better for them to be motivated to perform them; the norms must be internalized, so that people understand their identity, their goals, and what counts as "success" in relation to these norms (Brancazio 2018).

Correspondingly, we hold that "internalizing" norms of "masculinity" and "femininity" centrally involves the adoption of specific essentially embodied mental habits of interpretation, movement, expressivity, and response. Simply as a result of living in gendered social institutions, gender norms are always already pre-reflectively present in the body's disclosure of the range of possibilities for action and the ways in which those actions may be undertaken (Brancazio 2018). There are characteristic modes of speaking, walking, gesturing, dressing, and interacting with others associated with "femininity" and "masculinity," and people begin to develop and express these habits from an early age, turning themselves into "girls" and "boys," and then "women" and "men."

Habits develop in part because social institutions encourage or reward the adoption of certain patterns of bodily and affective engagement while discouraging and sanctioning others. In the case of gender, there are serious penalties associated with displaying habits that run counter to socially prescribed gender norms. Likewise, workplaces provide a normative framework that rewards particular affective tendencies and inclinations while discouraging others. Those who exhibit the expected attitudes and behaviors are rewarded with social approval, compliments, and promotions; and those who fail to comply are scolded, formally reprimanded, or even fired. In response to these pressures, subjects adjust their behavior and develop the sorts of habits that are demanded by the normative framework in question. Following Foucault (1995), we have claimed that the "conduct of conduct" can be understood in terms of the various ways in which social institutions direct essentially embodied subjects to control and govern themselves; and they exhibit such self-governance via the modification of their own affective framing patterns.

Importantly, the relationship between habits of mind and normative practices is reciprocal. In Chap. 2, we argued that a minded subject is not only shaped by the social world, but also helps to shape the social environment through her active and reactive responses and modes of engagement. When people accept prevailing norms and adjust their choices and actions accordingly, they thereby reinforce those standing practices and norms. It is crucial to note, however, that although subjects do very often act so as to reinforce particular social practices and norms, they *also* have the capacity to defy and undermine them, in a range of different ways and to varying degrees. It would be a huge mistake to suppose that once they become sedimented, habits are fixed and unchangeable; on the contrary, insofar as they are held in the body in a continuous and ongoing way, they are both active and continually activated (Ngo 2016, p. 864). Because the reproduction of habits depends on a network of social interactions, it is really possible for people embedded and enmeshed in social institutions to alter their affective frames and cultivate new habits of mind, and for this to have not only a direct effect on their actions, but also a salient rippling effect on other agents. Indeed, sometimes the contribution made by a particular agent or group of agents may result in a *radical* modification of the social-institutional world, so that norms that

once were dominant begin to fade away and new sociocultural practices, norms, and values begin to take their place.

For these reasons, although individuals do very often get "locked into" particular modes of movement and engagement as affective framings become more engrained, these patterns are *not* unchangeable. We are *not* machines—even if some or even many of the processes running through our bodies and the natural and social environments are indeed mechanical. *Not everything* in our lives is caused by the Big Bang—we remain capable of *free agency*, even under various natural-mechanical and social-institutional constraints and parameters—*and not everything* either in or about our lives can be reduced to machine-like big-capitalist commodities, without personal, moral, and political disaster (Hanna 2018b, c, d). Thus, there is always some definite real potential for people to shift and modify their affective framings. Nevertheless, such changes must *also* be buttressed and scaffolded by corresponding efforts to change the social institutions through which such essentially embodied habits of mind are promoted, realized, and sustained in us (Burkitt 2002, p. 229).

In light of all that, then, in the rest of this chapter we want to use enactivism in order to understand the nature of transformative learning, and, in so doing, deploy *the enactive-transformative principle* in service of *the constructive Gemeinschaft/collective wisdom thesis*. Remember that the enactive-transformative principle says this:

> enacting salient changes in the structure and complex dynamics of a social institution produces corresponding salient changes in the structure and complex dynamics of the essentially embodied minds of the people belonging to that institution, thereby fundamentally affecting their lives, for worse or better.

And the collective wisdom thesis says this:

> some social institutions can make it really possible for us to self-realize, connect with others in a mutually aiding way, liberate ourselves, and be mentally healthy, authentic, and deeply happy.

In particular, we examine how some of the central ideas from enactivism can shed light on the significant experiential and neurobiological changes

associated with self-transformation. Such changes come about inside social institutions whose structure and dynamics are configured specifically in order to sustain and promote the satisfaction of our true human needs, especially our humanity-realizing needs.

An appreciation of these significant experiential and neurobiological changes can, in turn, help us to understand the sense in which transformative learning involves a "deep, structural shift" in a subject's mode of being. From the standpoint of enactivism, the experience of transformative learning is thoroughly bound up with the cognitive shifts that it involves, and it also encompasses significant changes in the neurobiological dynamics of the living body. Moreover, personal transformation is not simply something that happens to subjects, but rather a process in which they are actively and dynamically engaged. This enactivist conception of learning, which centers on Thompson's (2007) notion of sense-making, certainly resonates deeply with the constructivist view of learning, which centers on what Mezirow and other transformative learning theorists call "meaning-making." Their common emphasis on the active nature of learning indicates a natural affinity between enactivism and Mezirow's account. However, the enactivist approach further stresses that the learning process takes place in and through subjects' *bodily feelings of caring* (Maiese 2017), and thus that meaning-making is fully embodied and fundamentally *affective*. This means that the process of critical reflection emphasized in Mezirow's work is both influenced and enhanced by affectivity.

Our account illuminates the dramatic shift in consciousness brought about via transformative learning inside social institutions that are designed specifically in order to make this kind of emancipatory learning possible. Once such modification to a subject's concerns and perspective has occurred, new insight that previously was inaccessible becomes available to her. This is in large part because subjects become *receptive* to new information and more able to appreciate the salience of factors that previously had remained obscure. Although conceptual reframing no doubt plays a role in this shift in perspective, there also is change that occurs at a more basic, affective and bodily level. We will argue that a subject's new "openness" and attunement to certain features of their surroundings involves a shift that is simultaneously both cognitive and affective; and

this change in cognitive-affective orientation brings with it a transformation of an essentially embodied subject's *habits of mind*, which, as we have been claiming, can be understood best as a dramatic shift in *affective framing patterns*.

7.1 Affective Framing Patterns Redux

As we pointed out in Chap. 1, an affective frame can be understood as an "affective mode of presentation" that pre-structures subjects' encounters with the world "by providing a fine-grained, pre-reflective evaluative framework, according to which [they] perceive events, situations, and objects as, for example, threatening, dangerous, or disgusting" (Jacobs et al. 2014, p. 91). Such patterns of interpretation come to constitute a subject's basic "affective orientation," whereby she focuses her attention on some facts or considerations, while ignoring others. In some cases, affective framing lies more in the periphery, and functions much like the background existential orientation which Ratcliffe (2005, 2008) maintains structures all experience and conceptualization. Ratcliffe appeals repeatedly to the work of Heidegger and his claim that all mental states, including perceptions and thoughts about things in the world, presuppose a background sense of belonging to the world. Moods, as Heidegger understands them, disclose the world as a realm of significance, and this contributes to the way someone perceives the world and understands its meaning. Insofar as they constitute the range of ways in which things take on importance, moods are "essential to a sense of the kinds of significant possibility that the world can offer up for us" (Ratcliffe 2013, p. 159).

However, in the case of occurrent, object-directed emotions, the bodily feelings involved in affective framing occupy more of the foreground, typically adding content and valence to what lies at the focal point of our experience. For example, being sad about something that has happened is a matter of framing those events in a particular way (that is, in relation to some sort of loss); and interpreting those events in this way, and as having this particular sort of significance, is a matter of negatively-valenced feelings associated with particular bodily changes and responses. Thus, the notion of affective framing fully reflects our essential embodiment

thesis and the claim that sense-making is essentially embodied and fundamentally affective. Insofar as subjects enact meaning and personal significance *in-and-through* their feeling bodies, affective framing engages the living body as a whole.

At a basic biological level, affective framing selectively attunes minded animals to their environment and allows them to appraise the relevance of particular factors in light of their own particular needs, movement repertoire, and current context. This is crucial for survival insofar as it is a means of focusing attention that allows them to deal with the complexity of their surrounding world. However, adaptive regulation of environmental engagement is not simply subordinated to viability constraints imposed by "survival conditions," but also governed by the need to maintain neuro-dynamic and behavior organization. We have claimed that this can be understood in terms of the self-maintenance of coherent behavioral and interpretive patterns (Barandiaran et al. 2009, p. 11), and what we have described as the formation of habits. Examples include characteristic facial expressions, gestures, postures, movements, overall bodily comportment, and customary patterns of interpretation.

We have emphasized that these affective framing patterns are not just fully embodied, but also socially embedded. As human animals interact with their environment, a global pattern of distributed, coherent neural and bodily activity comes to govern their sense-making activities, and bodily dynamics entrain and form integrated configurations. Together with biology and developmental factors, environmental influences play a central role in shaping a living animal's affective framings. Although this includes recurrent movement sequences, habits and affective framings also encompass our characteristic ways of attending to and interpreting the surrounding world. Customs and traditions help to afford and solicit particular habits of mind, and it is by virtue of interaction with other human beings that human animals develop the habits, capacities, and skills that mark them out as individual members of a social and cultural group (Burkitt 2002, p. 224). In creatures that are sufficiently neurobiologically complex, these affective framings and highly integrated patterns of behavior become quite extensive and sophisticated, giving rise to a characteristically human form of life. And at a more fine-grained, individual level, such patterns constitute each subject's particular *bodily-*

affective style or *temperament* and her characteristic ways of attending to and engaging with her surroundings.

When transformation occurs and affective framings begin to shift, there is not just a change in brain activity, but also a modification in a minded animal's overall bodily comportment. From a phenomenological perspective, personal transformation inside a social institution can be understood as *affective reframing*, that is, a pronounced alteration in cognitive-affective orientation; and from a neurobiological perspective, the development of new habits of mind can be understood as the reconfiguration of highly integrated patterns of bodily engagement and response. A better understanding of these fully embodied, neurobiological processes is deeply important, then, precisely because:

(i) it can help us to understand the integral role that affectivity plays in transforming a subject's *overall mode of being*, including her characteristic ways of attending to, interpreting, and engaging with her surroundings, and
(ii) it lends support to a holistic approach to self-transformation in general, and transformative learning in particular (Taylor 2008), namely, an approach that emphasizes the importance of techniques and pedagogies that directly engage the body and emotions.

In turn, gaining a better understanding of how social institutions can scaffold positive self-transformation and affective reframing puts us in a better position to reverse engineer constructive and enabling institutions that meet people's true human needs.

7.2 The Cognitivist Approach to Transformative Learning

According to the "rationalist doctrine" that pervades many formal education efforts (Dirkx 2001, p. 63), learning and "meaning-making" center on reflection and reasoning. Correspondingly, theorists often have characterized transformative learning as a rational, conceptually-driven cog-

nitive process, and have found it natural to suppose that such learning brings about some sort of epistemic shift, namely, a change in what a subject knows, believes, or assumes. According to Mezirow (2009), for example, transformative learning "is essentially a metacognitive process of reassessing reasons supporting our problematic meaning perspectives" (p. 96). The process of transformative learning begins with a "disorienting dilemma," which often is some sort of personal crisis. Participants then engage in critical reflection and reevaluate the assumptions they have made about themselves and their world. The hope is that by reflecting on their meaning perspectives and assumptions, students can modify and enlarge their perspective. This requires that learners examine evidence, use empirical research to determine whether certain claims are true, and participate freely and fully in informed discourse with other students in order to arrive at more justified beliefs. The goal is for students to form a more developed frame of reference, one that is more inclusive, differentiable, permeable, critically reflective, and integrative of experience (Mezirow 1996, p. 163). Since this requires a conscious and explicit reassessment of the origin and implications of one's meaning structures and assumptions, pedagogical practices that foster critical reflection, group deliberation, and group problem-solving are crucial (Mezirow 1997, p. 10). Along these lines, a pedagogical discourse approach known as community of inquiry "is a post-Socratic communal speech model that is egalitarian, distributive, and potentially empowering, and that helps students acquire critical thinking and dialogical skills and dispositions that allow them to participate in meaningful collective dialogue" (Kennedy 2012, p. 435). It involves inviting students to pose questions about their own learning practices, as well as the relation between these practices and the broader world.

We agree that self-reflection, dialogue, and the provision of information often are central to learning and self-transformation, and that once students gain new knowledge, they may be in a better position to recognize the shortcomings of a particular world view or set of assumptions. In his work on ideology-critique, Tommie Shelby (2014) aptly describes ideology as "a widely held set of loosely associated beliefs and implicit judgments that misrepresent significant social realities and that function, through this distortion, to bring about or perpetuate unjust social rela-

tions" (p. 66). What is morally and politically troubling about these beliefs and assumptions is that "they contribute to the production and reproduction of unjust social arrangements by concealing the fact that these arrangements are unjust" (Shelby 2014, p. 66). The purpose of critical theory, he states, is to identify an ideology's cognitive failings: once scientific and philosophical inquiry provide people with relevant evidence that undermines oppressive ideologies, people will alter their beliefs. And in an earlier paper, Shelby (2003) further states that "were the cognitive failings of an ideology to become widely recognized and acknowledged, the relations of domination and exploitation that it serves to reinforce would, other things being equal, become less stable and perhaps even amenable to reform" (p. 174).

Employing this general conception of ideology-critique, we might reasonably conclude that the critical reflection associated with transformative learning is largely a matter of acquiring new concepts, information, and evidence. Once students learn, for example, that science tells us that there is no such thing as "race" in some metaphysically real, essentialist sense, their frames of reference will be altered, racist ideology will be undermined, and they will be transformed. No doubt there is something right about the idea that the acquisition of new knowledge and the dispelling of ignorance are crucial for personal transformation. By becoming aware of new concepts, facts, and evidence about how the world actually works, students can begin to question some of their preconceptions and come to gain new insights, for example, enhanced understanding about how specific social structures oppress and marginalize members of particular groups. This has the potential alter their perspectives and overall habits of interpretation. Nevertheless, as we will discuss in Chap. 8, the provision of information and evidence is *not always enough* to change people's perspectives; indeed, very often it produces a sharply counterproductive result known as *the backfire effect*: people retrench, shut down, or even double-down on their pre-existing concepts, beliefs, and theories.

Such observations help to reveal that ideology is not *simply* a set of commonly held beliefs, and that demonstrating the cognitive failings of an ideology, on its own, often is not *sufficient* to disrupt dominant ideology. As Shelby (2014) himself points out, "the locus of ideology is common sense, that reservoir of background assumptions that agents draw on

spontaneously as they engage in social intercourse" (p. 67). He also rightly notes that "individuals now absorb, through processes of socialization and mass media, the attitudes and habits of mind that are constitutive of racial ideology" (p. 71), and that this ideology frames their experience of the world as well as their engagement with it. What results, for example, is racism in the form of habitual perception and bodily response, which includes, for example, suspicious surveilling in shops, holding on tightly to one's handbag, and constricted breathing when confronted with the Black male body (Ngo 2016). Racism thus operates insidiously at the level of someone's bodily orientation, beneath the level of conscious awareness. It appears, then, that what is absorbed is not just a set of beliefs, but also particular habits of mind and attention and a tendency to be sensitive and responsive to particular features of one's surroundings. These sensitivities and prejudices often cannot be revised merely as a result of reasoning and in response to evidence. Rather, they require that people undergo a change in overall mindset and worldview. If so, then changing how we think often depends significantly on changing tacit assumptions and habits of mind.

Similarly, Sally Haslanger (2007) holds that ideology critique is not simply a matter of showing that particular beliefs are false or unwarranted; instead, it requires "a critique of our schemas for interacting with the world" (p. 88). She characterizes schemas as fundamental tools of thought, conventions, and patterns of perception and behavior that are embodied in "a shared cluster of open-dispositions to see things a certain way or to respond habitually in particular circumstances" (2007, p. 78). What Haslanger calls "deep schemas" are pervasive habits of mind that are unconsciously "internalized by individuals to form the basis of our response to socially meaningful objects, actions, and events" (p. 80). These "intersubjective patterns of perception, thought, and behavior" (Haslanger 2012, p. 415) provide scripts for interaction and also encode knowledge, and thus might be understood as the shared habits of a culture. Because "deep" schemas are so pervasive and also relatively unconscious, they are extremely difficult to change. Nonetheless, in cases of what Mezirow has called *perspective transformation*, these habits of mind are revised and meaning schemes are altered, resulting in a "more inclusive, discriminating, permeable, and integrative perspective" (1990,

p. 14). As many education theorists have emphasized, while informational learning changes *what* we know, transformative learning changes *how* we know (Kegan 2000, p. 49).

Perhaps, then, transformative learning should be understood as learning that changes the *conceptual frames* that people rely on to interpret incoming data, perceive their surroundings, and construct their reality. After all, there is little doubt that concepts help subjects to organize complex information into coherent categories and thereby get their cognitive and practical encounters with the world ready for judgment, inference, and self-conscious deliberative intentions. A shift in conceptual repertoire thereby involves a corresponding shift in the cognitive "tools" students have at their disposal, and once students alter and reframe their thinking practices, they will be personally transformed. One way to shift habits of mind is via the disruption of commonly used terms or the creation of new and potentially emancipatory concepts (Haslanger 2015). For example, conceptualizing rape as a form of terrorism that functions to control women may allow students to understand the role that sexual violence plays in sustaining patriarchal social structures. Similarly, the introduction of the term 'mansplaining' has helped many people to pinpoint and understand the ways in which men often dominate conversation and presume that they have more authority to speak than women. It seems clear that such conceptual shifts go beyond the mere provision of information and also involve a modification of subjects' overall perspectives. Identifying and correcting cognitive failings play a crucial role in the learning process.

But what role, if any, do affects and emotions play? For many years, theorists had relatively little to say about the role that feelings play in the learning process, focusing instead on the intellect and rationality as the primary foundations for learning (Dirkx 2001, p. 67). When emotions *were* discussed, often they were treated as "baggage" that tended to detract from the learning process and therefore needed to be managed, limited, or controlled. However, a growing number of theorists rightly have begun to challenge this overly intellectualist approach to learning, noting that emotions and feelings are deeply interrelated with cognitive processes associated with perceptions, memory, reasoning, and learning (Dirkx 2001, p. 68); and, correspondingly, some theorists have criticized

Mezirow's approach for ignoring the affective dimension of learning (Baumgartner 2001; Clark and Wilson 1991). Empirical research also shows that ideologies, schemas, and frames of reference should not be viewed as thinking practices that are devoid of emotion (Taylor 1997). Individuals develop assumptions based on their lived emotional experiences, which usually are shaped by family life, social and religious factors, and idiosyncratic personal life events. As many theorists have pointed out, this suggests that frames of reference should not be understood as purely and exclusively rational or conceptual. Although the development of new habits of mind certainly involves the development of new tools of thought, it also crucially, and simultaneously, involves the formation of new patterns of attention and *modes of feeling*. Personally significant, transformative learning is fundamentally grounded in, and derived from, an individual's affective and emotional connection with the self and with the broader social world (Dirkx 2001, p. 64).

To be fair, in his more recent work, Mezirow (2009) does mention that questions have been raised about the role that affects, emotions, intuition, and imagination play in his account; and he does acknowledge that much transformative learning takes place outside of self-conscious, reflective awareness, with intuition substituting for critical reflection. Even in some of his earlier work, he describes transformative learning as a process whereby "we attempt to justify our beliefs… by rationally examining assumptions, often in response to *intuitively becoming aware* that something is wrong with the result of our thought" (1995, p. 46, our emphasis). What Mezirow calls "intuition" is indeed central to critical reflection, and centers on a process of gauging significance and detecting relevant tensions in our patterns of thought and attention. We can become intuitively aware, for example, of the fact that some of our beliefs are inaccurate, or that there are tensions between some of our deeply held assumptions. Much of our sense-making and interpretation occurs pre-reflectively, and outside of explicit self-conscious awareness; and because many aspects of our schemas and frames of reference rely heavily on so-called "gut instinct," or non-conceptual intuition, conceptual reframing may not be sufficient to alter them. Insofar as the shifts associated with transformative learning are concerned, at least in part, with the realm of lived experi-

ence (Purvis and Hunt 1993, p. 479), they involve changes in thinking practices that are constituted, in part, by modifications in *feeling practices*. As Mezirow (2009) acknowledges, though, the claim that intuition and affectivity often substitute for critical self-reflection needs further conceptual development (p. 95). What sort of role do affective and emotional experiences play, and in which parts of the learning process?

In some of his work, Mezirow characterizes frames of reference as broad habits of mind that encompass not just cognitive elements, but also *conative* and *affective/emotional* components, and which include habitual ways of feeling as well as habitual ways of thinking (1997, p. 5; 2009, p. 92). He suggests that because frames of reference result in large part from repetitive affective experiences, they are taken-for-granted and not readily available to someone's conscious awareness, but nonetheless serve as an important filter for interpreting the meaning of experience. Thus, it is crucially important to recognize and understand how learning is shaped, *outside of self-conscious awareness*, by essentially embodied intuitive and affective dimensions. Still, Mezirow emphasizes that the essential dimension of any definition of transformative learning must include "explicit recognition of the foundational process, within awareness, involving critical assessment of epistemic assumptions" (Dirkx and Mezirow 2006, p. 125).

There are several important critical points to raise here.

First, Mezirow's tendency to speak of habitual ways of thinking and habitual ways of feeling as if they were separable from each other is quite misleading. Insofar as frames of reference are shaped by culture, past experience, and personal concerns, they have a crucial affective and emotional dimension. They are better viewed as "habits of thinking-and-feeling" that shape how we interpret and engage with our surroundings. Once frames of reference are understood in this way, in line with our proposed account of affective framing, we are able to see that a shift thinking is constituted in part by a shift in affectivity and feeling.

Second, there is a real possibility that even the "foundational process" of critical assessment that occurs *within self-conscious awareness* has an affective dimension. Indeed, on our view, even the explicit processes of critical reflection that Mezirow describes, which involve questioning and

assessing one's own beliefs and assumptions, are enabled and enhanced by affectivity. This means that the reframing processes that take place over the course of transformative learning always and necessarily have an affective dimension.

Third, although we certainly do not want to deny that critical reflection has great potential to increase self-understanding and to allow people to revise pre-existing frames of reference, it is crucial to keep in mind that this is a top-down process whereby more sophisticated reasoning processes allow people to reevaluate and shift their patterns of thought, feeling, and action. Given that our habits of mind are essentially embodied and fundamentally affective, however, it is deeply important not to overlook the fact that constructive, enabling institutions also can bring about positive change from the bottom-up, by prestructuring and priming participants' bodily comportment, feelings, desires, and emotions. We need to think much more carefully, then, about what sorts of pedagogies work from the bottom-up to solicit the sorts of *flexible habits of mind*—essentially embodied affective framing that is self-realizing, organicist, dignitarian, integrative, authenticating, autonomous, deeply responsible, and critically conscious—that we discussed in Chap. 6.

The goal of personal transformation, as we understand it, is a "psychic reorientation" that alters the "whole of the phenomenal framework in and through which the individual receives, classifies, channels, and responds to her experiences" (Ruth 1973, p. 291). We hold that psychic reorientation in this sense necessarily encompasses changes that occur at a pre-reflectively conscious, affective, bodily level, and that these changes are bound up inextricably with shifts in cognitive functioning and intentional agency. In order to reverse-engineer social institutions that scaffold and support this sort of positive self-transformation, what is needed is "a more integrated and holistic understanding of subjectivity" and transformative learning, one which reflects the intellectual, emotional, embodied, and personal aspects of our "being in the world" (Dirkx and Mezirow 2006, p. 125). Is there a way to unpack and make sense of these insights from the standpoints of philosophy of mind and cognitive science, and in the larger context of the *political* philosophy of mind?

7.3 Enactivism, Essential Embodiment, and Affective Framing

We have proposed that the notion of *affective framing* can help us to understand how both relatively basic and more sophisticated modes of sense-making are essentially embodied and affective. It is important to note that although we are borrowing the term *framing* from the field of cognitive science, we are not using the term in its usual way. Within that field, it is common for theorists to treat thought as a kind of computation and to treat cognitive processes as a matter of "running" various computer programs. Along these lines, researchers in AI whose goal it is to create a computer that can mimic intelligent human behavior face various challenges, one of which is to get the system to notice the features of the environment that are salient given its required task. This difficulty stems from computers having too much potential data to consider and no way to "frame" or make a cut from the stream of information. What is necessary is some sort of process that can help the computer to get a handle on which facts to pay attention to and which to ignore. Nevertheless, it is entirely unclear how to devise a computer program that can accomplish the task of selective attention.

Although it is true that *concepts* help us to organize complex information into coherent categories, at a more basic level, the affective framing carried out by human agents often is *essentially non-conceptual* (Hanna 2015, esp. ch. 2) and *nondeliberative*, and also fully involves bodily engagement, bodily fluency, and bodily attunement (Maiese 2011). All of us have a sensible, pre-theoretical, non-intellectual, non-inferential, non-propositional, and non-self-reflectively conscious awareness of where to direct our attention in a given context, which is built up through learning and mediated by the body's past and current conditions and activity. Insofar as we perceive and evaluate our surroundings through a corporeity that is always already affectively nuanced (Colombetti 2007, p. 542), the body serves as a sort of "sounding board" (Ratcliffe 2005, p. 188) that structures our orientation toward the world and allows us to focus our cognitive and agential attention on what matters to us. These patterns of interpretation come to constitute our basic "affective orientation" and

point of view, and thereby provide the backdrop for all of our sense-making activities. This notion of affective framing thus emphasizes the way in which cognitive processes are essentially embodied, and also *enactive*: via affective framing, subjects play an active role in determining the meaning, significance, and import of things in their surroundings. What affects the subject arouses bodily feelings, what is experienced *matters* in some way or another, and the very way in which the world is disclosed to the subject is shaped and contoured by these bodily feelings. Indeed, it is only through the felt and feeling body–the body as an *emotional sensorium*–that someone can apprehend something as significant (Maiese 2011, p. 123).

Because the ability to gauge significance and home in on relevant features of one's surroundings is central to sense-making, both cognition and action are deeply dependent on affective framing. As subjects navigate through the world, they do not sequentially process all of the cognitive and practical information that is potentially available to them, but instead focus their attention on certain very specific things rather than others. In order for subjects to engage fluidly and effectively with their surroundings, they must be able to gauge relevance quickly and without having to rely on explicit deliberation or inference-making. Our view says that much of this fine-grained attention-focusing occurs at a pre-reflective, non-conceptual, essentially embodied level: affective reactions to stimuli typically are the very first cognitive reactions that subjects have, and they go on to inform and shape "higher-level" cognitive and practical acts of perception, conceptualization, thought, judgment, choice and decision. If these cognitive processes did not involve an underlying process of affective framing, then agents in the world would be faced with a potentially endless array of cognitive and interpretive options and action possibilities and would be incapable of engaging effectively with their surroundings.

Furthermore, there is good reason to think that *much* of our meaning-making is strictly *underdetermined* by conceptual, propositional, and inferential framing. Familiar examples of perceptual multistability, such as the Jastrow duck-rabbit phenomenon, show that the mapping from attention to the natural stimulus can be uniformly underdetermined even across our species, including all cognizers who possess the concepts

DUCK, RABBIT, and PICTURE. Because cognizers attend to different aspects of a visual stimulus, they may see either the duck or the rabbit, and what they attend to is essentially a function of what they *feel* is important. Likewise, although we tend not to notice it, selective attention plays a central role in all of our interactions with our surroundings, including sensory perception and spontaneous intentional action, as well as more abstract thought processes, deliberative choices, and planned actions. It is by virtue of affective framing that we are able to find definite points, lines, and contours of salience in the complex world around us, and thereby able to orient ourselves in that world. Affective schemas structure our consciousness of our surroundings, offer modes of interpretation, and also license different ways of interacting with objects and other people. The ways in which we affectively frame an object, situation, or event, highlighting some considerations while ignoring others, carve out *the jumping-off points* for all the more sophisticated cognitive or intellectual and practical processes (Maiese 2011).

This account of affective framing can help us to understand what sort of changes are associated with transformative learning (Maiese 2017). Self-transformation, as we understand it, centrally involves a shift in affective framing, which encompasses modifications to subjects' perspectives, preferences, and overall habits of attention and engagement. In addition, there are significant alterations to their patterns of bodily sensitivity and responsivity, which can be understood at the pre-reflective, experiential level as a change in what the essentially embodied subject *feels to be important "in her bones"*. In short, the shift in how someone thinks or acts is partially constituted by a shift in essentially embodied affectivity, including feeling, desires, and emotions. While it is true that new concepts and thoughts can be emancipatory, and also that conceptual, propositional, and inferential reframing can play a key role in promoting transformation, subjects also need to be transformed more fundamentally in terms of *what they, as essentially embodied minds, really care about*.

In addition, they need to develop *flexible habits of mind* that allow them to become more keenly aware of pertinent facts, more attuned to biases and inconsistencies that previously remained unnoticed, and more capable of detecting oversimplifications, exaggerations, and false dichotomies. Insofar as personal transformation involves coming to see and make

sense of the world in new ways, it can enable subjects to become more aware, for example, of the rationally unjustified and immoral racist, sexist, ableist, classist, big-capitalist, and more generally *oppressive* and *dignity-undermining* biases and cognitive walls that are everywhere in public discourse, media, pop culture, and everyday life. Affective reframing also can make subjects more critically conscious and empathetic, and it can dramatically change their sense of what sorts of actions are possible, opening up radically new avenues for social engagement and response.

Within the feminist and anti-racist literatures, affective self-transformation has been understood as central to achieving social justice. Often writers point to empathy as a way to "open oneself up to different ways of knowing and new forms of intersubjectivity, with the potential to dislodge and rearticulate dominant assumptions, truths, and boundaries which underscore gendered, racialized, and classed hierarchies" (Pedwell 2012, p. 164). For example, Sandra Bartky (1996) writes:

> When feminists of color take white feminists to task for racial bias, I understand them to mean more than that white feminists acquire additional information or that they abandon assumptions that once seemed self-evident. What they are demanding from white women and what women, particularly feminists, demand from many men, I venture, is a knowing that transforms the self who knows, a knowing that brings new sympathies, new affects as well as new cognitions and new forms of intersubjectivity. The demand, in a word, is for a knowing that has a particular affective taste. (p. 179)

The notion of essentially affective reframing explains what an affective self-transformation *basically is and what it entails*, and also fully illuminates the importance of this "knowing that has a particular affective taste." Radical changes in essentially embodied affectivity enable subjects to undergo significant shifts towards flexible habits of mind, which in turn allow them to recognize and effectively respond to the workings of various structures of moral, social, and political oppression.

As we noted earlier, while Mezirow acknowledges that affectivity and intuition are involved in learning that takes place outside of self-conscious awareness, he also holds that once brought into reflective awareness,

transformative learning should be understood as a rational, conceptual process of critical reflection (Dirkx and Mezirow 2006, p. 134). In his view, this is what prevents transformative learning from being reduced to mere faith or prejudice. However, there is good reason to think that accurate, meaningful critical reflection *must* incorporate an irreducibly affective dimension, and that far from undermining critical examination, the right kind of affectivity not only helps to guide and assist these processes, but also supercharges them for choice and action.

To see this, note that self-conscious awareness involves explicitly directing one's attention to how one is thinking, feeling, and acting in a particular situation; and which aspects of self-experience are deemed worthy of examination has fundamentally to do with an individual's cares and concerns. For example, if one does not *care* whether one's presuppositions and beliefs are racist or big-capitalist, one will never direct critical attention to this aspect of one's thinking patterns. In other words, what learners find personally relevant or meaningful plays an essential role in determining which of their presuppositions and beliefs are subjected to critical rational examination and questioning. In this regard, feelings of caring get the process of reflection *off the ground* by allowing subjects to filter information and focus their attention. Moreover, critical examination depends significantly on being able to take up an affective stance of curiosity and openness that encompasses *caring* about one's relation to others, being *concerned* about the impact of one's actions, and being *sensitive and responsive* to others' points of view. Being able to take up a "meta" position and engage in fruitful critical self-reflection therefore depends upon the capacity to take up a particular kind of affective stance, and upon the flexible habits of mind discussed in Chap. 6.

7.4 The Neurobiological Dynamics of Affective Reframing

We have claimed that cognitive and practical self-transformation should be understood as a matter of affective reframing occurring inside constructive, enabling social institutions specifically designed to bring about

the satisfaction of our true human needs. But how are we to understand this from the standpoint of neurobiology? The neurobiological view of transformative learning has emphasized that the structure of the brain actually changes during the learning process (Janik 2007, p. 12). Using imaging techniques to study brain functions, researchers have found that patients recovering from psychological trauma undergo neurobiological transformation that alters the learning process. In this connection, Lilian Hill (2001) emphasizes the flexibility of the adult brain and maintains that over the course of an individual's life span, the brain continues to change and reorganize in response to environmental stimulation. Selectively attending to particular information results in *neural pruning*, whereas *neural branching* involves the forging of new connections between neurons. Hill claims that strategies that encourage divergent thinking, or that invite students to analyze the complex set of circumstances that make up a phenomenon, "can overcome the brain's tendency to simplify events" (Hill 2001, p. 75).

Although we certainly do not dispute the central role played by the brain, we believe that any tendency to focus solely on neural structure and activity should be firmly resisted. It is a huge mistake to think that in order to make sense of new information, it is simply the brain that connects new experiences to previous ones. Such a view reflects a commitment to BRAINBOUND and an acceptance of the widespread assumption that cognition or action is wholly a neural achievement. The essentially embodied, enactivist approach that we favor, in contrast, emphasizes that the *whole living body* plays an active and partially constitutive role in all cognitive, interpretive, and practical processes. As Daniel Janik notes, the changes associated with personal transformation encompass the autonomic nervous system and the endocrine system; and as Hill points out, emotional states and sensory experiences are integrally involved in learning. While the prefrontal lobe certainly plays a crucial role in the learning process, the provision of affective and motivational color or tone to events and situations is fully embodied and best understood as distributed over a complex network of bodily processes. Affective reframing not only engages the brain, but also involves metabolic changes, hormonal changes, cardiovascular responses, and even changes in skin conductance; and it is only *in and through* these modified bodily feelings

that subjects are able to make sense of the surrounding world in new ways. Therefore, in our view, processes of critical examination are not merely *strengthened* or *causally supported* by essentially embodied affective, sensory, and kinesthetic experiences, as Janik and Hill suppose, but also *partially constituted and anchored* by these bodily-affective features (Maiese 2017).

We propose that concepts drawn from complex dynamic systems theory can help us to understand the neurobiological dynamics associated with affective reframing (Maiese 2017). Dynamic systems theory is the mathematical theory of sets of physical elements—where each such set is perceived by us as a single entity—whose states change over time in ways that depend on their current states according to rules. The collective behaviors, effects, and outputs of dynamic systems occur in some ordered pattern that can be mathematically described in relation to their present conditions. One way to describe such patterns is in terms of *ontogenetic landscapes*, which can be understood as constantly modified, dynamical portraits of a system and its interactions with the environment over time. Attractors can be understood as valleys or basins that represent the coordinates that the system is likely to visit, whereas separatrices are sharp peaks that represent the states that the system is unlikely to occupy.

Some theorists have utilized dynamic systems theory to characterize neural processing. For example, Hubert Dreyfus (2007) looks to Walter Freeman's (1991, 2000) work and the notion that it is the brain of an active animal, understood as a non-linear dynamic system, which enables it to select facts about its environment that are significant. According to this model, each new learning experience sets up a new attractor and rearranges the other attractor basins in the landscape, so that patterns of neural activity are constantly dissolving, reforming, and changing. The upshot is that "the whole brain can be tuned by past experience to influence individual neural activity," so that neural activity constantly is drawn toward particular characteristic patterns (Freeman 2000, p. 22).

Nevertheless, as Dreyfus correctly points out, "how we directly pick up significance and improve our sensitivity to relevance depends on our responding to what is significant for *us* given our needs, body size, ways of moving, and so forth" (2007, p. 265). So why not suppose that the *minded animal body as a whole*, and not just the brain, operates as a non-

linear dynamic system? We believe that ontogenetic landscapes—that is, constantly modified, dynamical portraits of a system and its interactions with the environment over time—can be used as a descriptive framework for modelling not just our neurological dynamics, but also bodily dynamics more broadly construed. The top-down constrains of affective framing are selectionist and reduce the number of ways in which component aspects of our living bodily dynamics can operate. This includes the operation of integrated neural-somatic systems, sensorimotor processes, hormones, the circulatory system, and the respiratory system, so that as the subject interacts with the environment, the whole human body behaves as a "pattern-forming, self-organized system governed by nonlinear dynamical laws" (Kelso 1995, p. 6).

In fact, one could go even further and argue that relationships among the component parts of social institutions could be better understood via an appeal to dynamic systems theory. Building on the ideas of Manuel DeLanda (1991, 2002, 2006) and Deleuze (1968), Protevi (2009) proposes that this theory can be used as a model to better understand the development and dynamics of "assemblages formed from biological, social, and technical components" (pp. 10–11). He rightly notes that the notions of emergence, reciprocal causation, and attractor formation move us past mechanistic determinism and allow us to view the brain-body-environment assemblage as a complex dynamical system (Protevi 2009, p. 17).

While we are sympathetic to this suggestion, we focus here on what Protevi calls "first-order bodies politic," that is, individual minded animals. We believe that insofar as dynamic systems theory characterizes systems in terms of dynamic movement and patterned change over time, it can serve as a useful tool for conceptualizing the behavior of living systems in interaction with their environment. Indeed, dynamic systems theory helps us to conceptualize how past engagements serve to constrain future ones, and also how subjects sometimes can undergo a significant change in lived bodily dynamics, so that their contours of their phase space (which encompasses their range of possible interactions) shift dramatically.

We maintain that the affective framing patterns we have discussed throughout this book should be understood as self-organizing structures

(attractors) that shape the contours of the system's overall organization and thereby constrain its available alternatives such that its behavior is characteristically drawn to certain patterns (Juarrero 1999, pp. 153–154). Initial conditions of someone's genetic makeup plus learning and socialization shape the contours of this bodily landscape, so that a caring-contoured topography unique to each individual is constructed progressively over time. In the language of complex dynamic systems theory, one can rightly say that affective framing carves out a *phase space* and thereby sets the scope of "rather than" alternatives (Juarrero 1999, p. 181) that constrain a subject's future behavior and modulate her focus of attention. Local environments and their associated practices solicit particular patterns of coordinated action and attention from participants; and these patterns act as dynamical attractors on the field of affordances, directing action and perception in certain characteristic ways rather than others (Ramstead et al. 2016). *Habits* then can be understood as dominant patterns of goal-directed movement and efficacious activity that encompass all parts of the nervous system, the physiological and structural systems of the body, and complex dynamic patterns of behavior and attention more generally.

We have claimed that habits of mind encompass schemas for interacting and engaging with our environment, and include, for example, a tendency to notice particular features of our surroundings and to interpret events in particular ways. Crucially, these habits are susceptible to ongoing modification via learning and socialization, and sometimes also through sustained effort on the part of the subject herself. While some changes occur gradually and are relatively subtle, in other instances there is a dramatic and sudden reconfiguration of habits and a pronounced "affective re-orientation" that changes how subjects attend to and actively engage with their surroundings. In the framework of dynamic systems theory, such changes (whether gradual or sudden) can be conceptualized as the formation of new attractor basins and separatrices on the ontogenetic landscape—by which, again, we mean a constantly modified, dynamical portrait of a system and its interactions with the environment over time. Along these lines, Protevi (2009) maintains that for resilient systems, "a trigger that provokes a response that overwhelms its stereotyped defense patterns and pushes the system beyond the thresholds of its

comfort zones will result … in the creation of new attractors representing new behaviors" (p. 7). Such alteration involves significant changes to neurobiological dynamics and patterns of bodily attunement, a reconfiguration of habits, and a profound shift in what essentially embodied subjects *care about* and deem significant. This framework allows us to see transformative learning as a deep from of change, one which alters learners' very *mode of being*, including their bodily dynamics and patterns of engagement with their surroundings (Maiese 2017).

7.5 Tapping into the Affective Dimension of Transformative Learning

Mezirow's influential account characterizes transformative learning as "the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide future action" (1996, p. 162). We have argued that this shift in interpretation should be understood neither in exclusively conceptual/propositional/inferential terms, nor as a process that is either devoid of affect or contains affect only accidentally or superfluously. Indeed, according to the theory of self-transformation that we have proposed, deeply held presuppositions and standing beliefs are best understood as flowing from subjects' overall affective framing patterns and habits of mind inside social institutions. Thus, what is changed over the course of transformative learning is a subject's *essentially embodied existential orientation*. On our view, even critical self-reflection and the explicit reassessment of one's presuppositions and beliefs are guided by this existential-social orientation, and therefore they depend on the patterns of attention and response that are solicited in the social institutions to which subjects belong. This means that shifts in thinking, perspective, choice, and action are driven in large part by changes that occur pre-reflectively and implicitly, by way of an alternation in a subject's feelings and affective framing patterns, via those social institutions. If so, then social-institutional processes of education that engage these affective and bodily dimensions have a crucially important role to play in transforming the way that subjects frame their experiences, surroundings, and deliberative action-planning.

The notion of essentially embodied affective framing inside social-institutional frameworks helps us to see that "cognitive," "affective," and "practical" aspects of transformative learning are not clearly distinguishable, but rather go essentially hand-in-hand. What we are proposing, in fact, is that cognition, affect, and practice inside social institutions are *mutually constituting, inseparable, irreducibly social, and literally mind-shaped aspects* of educational self-transformation. As noted earlier, merely being exposed to empirical research that indicates that there is no such thing as "race" certainly can help to undermine racist ideology; likewise, learning that there actually are more than two sexes, as a matter of biological fact, can help to undermine essentialist sex and gender binaries; and studying both Marxist-socialist critiques of big capitalism and social-anarchist critiques of statism can help to undermine neoliberal ideology. What we wish to emphasize is that such transformative learning is also constituted, *inherently*, by a radical shift in essentially embodied affective orientation. Bodily reverberation and empathic mirroring make it really possible for students to understand alternative perspectives; and carefully orchestrated pedagogical exercises can elicit powerful affective experiences that refocus subjects' attention and highlight considerations or facts that previously were hidden or unclear. As a result of shifts in affective framing, students can actually become more *receptive* to this new information, as well as more able to appreciate the relevance and salience of factors that previously had remained obscure (Maiese 2017). Thus, socially-driven, constructive, enabling education brings about affective self-transformation that changes subjects' basic sense of what is true, worth caring about, and do-able. It thereby can guide them towards imagining alternative, real-world utopian ways the world might be, and help them to envision radically new modes of social interaction and individual action.

In order to scaffold this sort of emancipatory mind-shaping, designers of social institutions and teachers will need to devise

> exercises to boot [students] out of complacency, indifference, or self-absorption, to encourage them to reach beyond their own perspectives, to feel and see along with others. (Carse 2005, p. 190)

The leading idea here is that education inside a constructive, enabling social institution—hence education that engages "the whole person"—can catalyze some sort of experiential break, one that affectively moves or even jolts students, and subverts or even revolutionizes their existing affective framing patterns. For example, listening to and imaginatively exploring others' perspectives and ways of life can affectively "move" students, disrupt their existing schemas, and radically change the way that they frame the topics under discussion. To *see* and *hear* and *feel* another person give voice to an alternative perspective is to have that point of view become something real, "in your face," and subjectively potent. Coming face-to-face with another's sadness, anger, or experiences of oppression, for instance, can arouse feelings that highlight previously unnoticed considerations, lead to a radical shift in perspective, allow one to see complex issues in new ways, and prime choice and action. An excellent contemporary example of this is MSF-USA's *Forced From Home* traveling interactive exhibition (Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders 2018).

But although affective orientations certainly can be modified significantly over the course of dialogical exchange, the sort of verbal discourse that Mezirow emphasizes in his work on communicative learning is not the only way for students to form radically new habits of mind. Indeed, research substantiates the need for a holistic approach to transformative learning, one that fully recognizes the role of affect and fully incorporates intuitive and bodily modes of cognition and practice (Taylor 1997). Insofar as perspective transformation is essentially embodied and permeated with affectivity, we need educational social institutions whose structures and dynamics incorporate pedagogies that can target affective and bodily dimensions and help people to tap into pre-reflectively conscious aspects of their capacities.

Concepción and Elfin (2009) recommend *learning-centered pedagogy*, which centers around activities that facilitate certain kinds of valuable experience. Such pedagogy is essentially embodied in the sense that students participate in exercises *in living* and are not merely told about relevant ideas. Lived learning activities also encourage students to speak from their own life experiences and reflect upon them. The authors discuss one exercise that they used to "bring to life" the topic of feminist

separatist communities. These professors asked the women in their feminist philosophy class to assemble in one classroom and the men to assemble in another. After having separate conversations for part of the class session, they all reassembled and were given an opportunity to share highlights from their respective conversations. Many of the women reported that it was a relief to have men out of the room, and sometimes they chose not to report key aspects of their discussion. The women's choice to reduce men's access and the men's frustration about this reduction in access were among the topics that these professors hoped to discuss when evaluating separatism (Concepción and Elfin 2009, p. 191). On another day, they asked students to throw a football to each other and see whether they noticed any gender-related differences in bodily comportment; and another day, they asked them to observe other students' behavior in the student union center.

Exercises such as these do not simply convey information or *tell* students something; rather, by embodying the course material, these pedagogies *show* them important insights and allow them to "live the idea" (Concepción and Elfin 2009, p. 194). This allows them to encounter the depth of topics and questions that typically are discussed only at a distance, and thus has the potential to open them up to new considerations and ways of thinking. As a result of participating in such activities, students' ability to empathically imagine perspectives other than their own grows; their sensitivity increases, and they feel more emotionally connected to the course material; and, at least in some cases, it can change their lives.

Likewise, Preston and Aslett (2014) describe how, through student dialogues and collaborative learning, they aimed to create a space in the classroom for dismantling entrenched yet misinformed ideas and opening new ways of thinking. This was made possible, they maintain, through the formation of relationships that allowed for engagement with provocative content. Utilizing what they call an "activist pedagogy," they approached the classroom as a collection of participants who could come together to enact activist principles of anti-oppressive practice. Activist pedagogy, as they describe it, "acknowledges and unpacks social injustices, implicates personal and structural histories and currencies, and is founded in a commitment to personal and social change both inside and

outside the classroom and the academy" (Preston and Aslett 2014, p. 514). Working together as a class, they conducted several campaigns to raise money or supplies for local organizations; and they circulated petitions to students about various social and political issues. When course-content regarding advocacy and activism was explored, they discussed notions of political leverage and efficacy. While the professors initiated the first few efforts, students typically organized subsequent campaigns. The authors note that by the final year of teaching their social work course, students were becoming newly engaged in some campaign or activity towards social justice on a weekly basis (Preston and Aslett 2014, p. 507). For example, they wrote letters to politicians and university administrators, sought opportunities to bring speakers to campus, and joined picket lines.

Similarly, Cuffari (2011) stresses that "habits of transformation" can be developed via practices that involve the accumulation of implicit knowledge (knowledge-how) as well as intelligence and reflection (p. 546). Drawing from McWhorter (1999), she suggests that pleasure can be used as a tool of habit cultivation and growth. McWhorter points to two practices of pleasure that helped her to develop habits of getting beyond herself, opening herself up to other people, and opening herself up to new self-understandings: line dancing and gardening. While such activities did not take place in the context of formal education, it is not difficult to envision how many different kinds of creative and pleasurable activities might be utilized in the classroom to encourage habits of openness and imagination. Teachers who hope to nurture flexible mental habits in their students should attempt to design "exercises to boot them out of complacency, indifference, or self-absorption, to encourage them to reach beyond their own perspectives, to feel and see along with others" (Carse 2005, p. 190). Because it provokes inquiry and innovation, but also relies on sheer fun and pleasurable activity, creative expression holds great potential to disrupt affective framings in a productive way. This suggests that pedagogical practices that incorporate expressive arts might be one powerful way to shift affective framings and afford the development of flexible habits of mind.

Along these lines, Lyle Yorks and Elizabeth Kasl (2002) hold that by "affording glimpses into the other's world of experience," expressive ways

of knowing such as story-telling, drawing, and dance can help learners to shift their perspective (p. 187). What they call "learning-within-relationship" is "a process in which persons strive to become engaged with both their own whole-person knowing and the whole-person knowing of their fellow learners" (2002, p. 185). Expressive activities provide learners with a "brief portal of entry" into another person's experience so that they can share in that experience and relate it to their own experiential knowledge (Yorks and Kasl 2006, p. 52); and they function by way of emotional exposure, rather than conventional intellect, to shift and enlarge participants' perspectives.

Dance, for example, can help to establish empathic connections and contribute to shared understandings. *Movement statements* can be understood as "kinetic explorations" (Pallaro and Fischlein-Rupp 2002) of images and themes that often are outside conscious awareness and yet characterize the participants' outlooks on the world. As the members take turns executing new movements and mirroring each other, they become more aware of feelings and states of mind associated with various modes of bodily interaction and also begin to express nonverbal empathy (Pallaro and Fischlein-Rupp 2002, p. 38). Moving in synchrony or coordinating poses and gestures with others can foster a feeling of togetherness and interpersonal resonance and thereby contribute to social cohesion by building positive rapport and trust among participants. By *moving together*, subjects are able to *create meaning together* and deepen their understanding of both themselves and others. Group bodily coordination can open up a "shared bodily affective space" (Colombetti 2014, p. 201) in which perspectives are modified and new interpretive frames and habits of attention are formed.

Dance also affords opportunities to experiment with new movement patterns, postures, gestures, and bodily styles, and thus has potential to scaffold flexible mental habits. Once people get moving, they may find that they become more open to new ways of thinking, feeling, and being in the world. In addition, because movement brings to the fore the integral relationship between our affective and tactile-kinesthetic bodies (Sheets-Johnstone 2010, p. 7), dance has the potential to increase self-insight. Moods and emotions are felt and lived in and through bodily feelings, and emotion and movement go hand in hand. Meaning emerges

from basic hedonic experiences associated with movement, such as "liking-disliking, approaching-withdrawing, opening-closing, [and] growing-shrinking" (Koch and Fischman 2011, p. 65). We commonly think in movement and make sense of the world via movement (for example, when we bend over to inspect something or draw ourselves closer to hear something) (Sheets-Johnstone 2010, p. 11). Because our sense-making conjoins thinking and doing, a subject's style of movement and bodily comportment plays an integral role in how she engages with and responds to her surroundings. Insofar as they facilitate "a keener awareness of the complexities and subtleties of kinesthetic experience," dance exercises have the potential to provide scaffolding for "a keener awareness of the qualitative dynamics" of self-movement, which in turn can reveal important insights about one's sense-making (Sheets-Johnstone 2010, p. 11).

Likewise, music has the potential to tap into motivational, emotional, and relational elements of subjects' lives and thereby foster the development and radical change of affective framing patterns. The strengthening or reconfiguration of such patterns, in turn, can result in heightened emotional sensitivity, increased interest and motivation, and an improved ability to relate to others (by way of increased bodily resonance and affective attunement). Thus, like dance, music has the potential to generate what Krueger (2011) calls "we-space": "an emotion-rich coordinative space dynamically structured via the ongoing engagement of social agents" (p. 644). The notion of a "we-space" shares certain features with Heidegger's notion of *Mitsein*, or "being-with" (Heidegger 1962), in that a subject's pre-reflective or self-conscious intentional connectedness with others, for better (e.g., solidarity) or worse (e.g., conflict), is a necessary feature of such spaces. But the "we-space" goes essentially beyond that, since it includes the actual complex dynamic processes of shared intentional activity. A shared "we-space" centers upon co-regulated interaction, whereby participants continually and mutually adjust their expressions, gestures, vocalizations, and actions. Listening to music together with others can act as a tool for shared feeling and pave the way toward interpersonal bodily coordination and emotional convergence (Krueger 2014, p. 15).

As we spelled it out earlier, the coordination of action and attention via affective frames gives participants an opportunity to engage in participatory sense-making and co-construct meaning. When music shapes and coordinates the experience of multiple listeners, it affords a "mutual tuning-in relationship" (Schutz 1976, p. 161) that allows for bodily entrainment and provides a sense that participants are sharing in a musical event with one another. This intimate sensorimotor coordination establishes a mutual emotional resonance among participants and a convergence of affective responses (Krueger 2014, p. 19). As in the case of dance, this can be understood in terms of the creation of "we-space" that affords opportunities for joint cognition, participatory sense-making, and collective intelligence. While little research has yet been done on the use of dance and music in educational settings, there is already some evidence from the field of conflict resolution which suggests that these sorts of expressive activities can play a significant role in shifting perspectives (Maiese 2007). This is because in cases of intractable conflict, mere persuasion or the provision of more information is unlikely to transform how subjects affectively frame their situation. Because expressive activities offer a way to shift individuals' "cognitive and emotive path" (Long and Brecke 2003, p. 28) and thereby foster new understandings about their relationships to others and to the larger social institutions to which they belong (LeBaron 2002, p 139), they have the potential to be even *more effective* than dialogue in some cases.

Like dance, drama practice can be used to foster flexible mental habits, innovative engagement, and what Carden (2006) terms "creative intelligence" (p. 33). Staging and performing in a play can allow students to adopt the point of view of a character very different from themselves and to seriously consider alternative perspectives. In order to adopt the roles of different characters, students need to imagine themselves differently and behave differently; that is, they must "experiment" with a wide range of bodily habits and points of view. Another potentially transformative element of drama practice is that it allows students to collaborate and work together to create and explore artistic acts (Cody 2015). Such cooperation requires that participants negotiate diverse viewpoints, exercise empathy, and trust those with whom they are working. In addition, students who act as co-artists and are able take ownership of creative work

(for example, by writing a script or co-directing a short play) invest more and care more about the quality of their work. That is, they become highly emotionally invested in the learning process. On a more modest scale, drama games that involve humor and high levels of participation can be used to promote active listening, cooperation, and openness to different ways of being in the world. Greenwood (2012) further claims that drama can help to stimulate critical engagement and foster the attitudes and skills associated with political life. In addition to expressing their agency and exploring various social roles, students can examine various sorts of human conflict and live through it vicariously via the character they are performing. Participating in drama practice also gives students an opportunity to explore ideas through mythic and metaphorical lenses, which can open up space for raising questions about power, identity, society, and big capitalism.

One might object, however, that it is dangerous to utilize pedagogical techniques that incorporate expressive arts, given that affectivity tends to have a distorting influence on learning. After all, maladaptive habits of feeling, desire, and emotion can serve to reinforce false assumptions and render subjects unable to appraise things accurately and realistically. We know full well that emotions sometimes "skew the epistemic landscape" (Goldie 2004, p. 99) by highlighting features of the world that *are not truth-tracking or truly relevant*, steeping us in bias, or blinding us to certain aspects of our situation. Indeed, once we understand affect's role in providing us with an existential interpretive lens, the danger of relying on warped affective framing becomes readily apparent. Cases in which affective framing leads to factual, moral, or political error include moments when we "actually only [look] at the world through the lens of our disgust, or our shame, and mistakenly [suppose] the evoking situation to have the kind of morally significant features that would warrant these emotions" (Jones 2006, p. 48). These are cases in which there is a need for affective frames to be repaired (Bennett-Goleman 2001). For example, suppose that we have a feeling of disgust in response to our classmate's or colleague's comments about her and her same-sex partner's experience of adopting a child. Here our affective framing patterns threaten to distort judgment and alienate us from one other, and from the social institutions of intimate partnership and family, insofar as they highlight the negative

significance of the parents' sexual orientation. Similarly, suppose we feel outraged in response to the very idea of *open borders*. Here our affective framing patterns are in tension with human dignity, anti-coercion, mutual aid, and cosmopolitan morality, insofar as these framing patterns impose a negative interpretation on immigrants and refugees.

It's self-evidently true that if people do not have the right affective dispositions that properly attune them to the world, to others, to themselves, and to the social institutions that literally shape their minds, their affective framings will distort perception and contribute directly to faulty presuppositions, false factual beliefs, and false moral and political beliefs. As a result of being consumed by affectively charged biases, they will direct their attention to features of the situation at hand that are actually morally irrelevant and arbitrary. Feelings of fear, disgust, contempt, offense, or hatred will lead subjects to dismiss, neglect, denigrate, degrade, and coerce others, or to adopt an attitude of indifference, callousness, or outright cruelty. Such feelings also will lead subjects to overlook the harmful influence of toxic, rationally unjustified, and immoral ideologies, and to become blind to the ways in which the workings of many social institutions undermine human flourishing and human dignity.

Nevertheless, to the extent that subjects *do* have the right affective dispositions, their cognitive and practical processes will be more accurate, effective, insightful, rationally justified, and morally true (Maiese 2011). Therefore, the goal should *not* be to eliminate affect from the process of transformative learning and perspective transformation—as it were, *Mr Spock-ism*—since this arguably is impossible. Instead, the goal should be to design social institutions that scaffold the proper emotional dispositions and habits of mind, so that people inside those social institutions

(i) can feel, desire, and emote appropriately at appropriate times, and in relation to their appropriate objects,
(ii) effectively rely on these affective frames to make sense of their natural and social surroundings, and apprehend real possibilities for acting and living within those surroundings, and
(iii) effectively rely on these affective frames to engage in perspective-taking, critical engagement, and creative problem-solving.

In short, Aristotle, Kant, Schiller, Kierkegaard, early Marx, and Kropotkin were all *correct*: cognitive and practical capacities and their successful exercise depend significantly on the cultivation of intellectual and moral virtues, inside social institutions whose structures and complex dynamics make possible the satisfaction of true human needs, especially humanity-realizing needs; and in this way, socially-shaped affectivity has the power radically to change the way in which the world both inside and outside social institutions is understood and imagined.

A related concern is that according to our account, liberation depends partly on processes that are pre-reflectively conscious, and that allegedly transformative educational practices will function by way of affective manipulation. If so, aren't such efforts in danger of compromising the rational autonomy of the subjects involved? What can stop efforts to cultivate the "right kind of affectivity" from becoming precisely the sort of mind control that transformative learning is meant to help subjects resist?

Again, we do not deny that critical reflection and reasoning play a pivotal role in the cultivation of "healthy" habits of mind inside constructive, enabling social institutions. With the help of self-conscious rational assessment, we might come to disregard the features that affective framing initially highlighted as relevant, by recognizing them as a false alarm or developing new concepts that help us to make sense of things. There is little doubt that logical and practical reasoning, conceptualization, and judgment can and should directly influence our affective habits of mind. Just as cognitive and practical processes are partially constituted by affectivity, so too the sort of affective framing patterns that a person develops are influenced significantly by reflective thought processes. What we are proposing is that affectivity and conscious reasoning are not clearly distinguishable or separable processes at all. Instead, they are better understood as deeply interdependent, mutually modulating aspects that jointly constitute a creature's sense-making capacities. Efforts to promote transformative learning need to engage both aspects.

Furthermore, the central aim of transformative learning is most emphatically not to *manipulate* affective states, but instead to help people to become more emotionally attuned to important considerations. In our view, the "right sort of affectivity" is that which connects us directly to that which is truly worth caring about. As Karen Jones puts it, "correct

framings capture considerations that obtain in the situation and that mesh with concerns that the agent should value" (Jones 2004, p. 344). In her view, rational framings are ones produced by a method that is reliable at latching onto these relevant considerations and well keyed to the reason-giving features present in the situation. There are some things that we all care about, or should care about, simply by virtue of our being living, rational, human animals: namely, considerations that tap into true human interests. According to our proposed account, these are the affective framings that answer to the true human needs, including humanity-realizing needs, of both ourselves and others.

Our central claim in this chapter is that *affective reframing plays a central, fundamental role in personal, moral, and political transformation*, and that this kind of learning is made possible by certain kinds of specifically educational social institutions. Thus, by means of reverse social engineering, enactive-transformative learning provides us with a working model for the design of constructive, enabling social institutions. Such social institutions, as we understand them, scaffold direct, dignitarian democratic modes of engagement, promote robust solidarity and emancipation from oppression, and cultivate flexible habits of mind; and they do so, in large part, by tapping into subjects' essentially embodied affects.

What further implications does this philosophical picture have for mental health practice? In his discussion of "liberatory psychiatry," Cohen (2008) recommends that psychiatry adopt "an embodied relational perspective" that understands human persons as physical beings within social relations (p. 11). In his view, biology, language, and sociocultural embeddedness are all extremely important when it comes to understanding cognition and behavior. Just as it is a huge mistake to take a reductive view of mental illness and view it as a brain disease, so too it is a huge mistake to think that society and culture determine all that we think and do. People are born into an active, social world from which they learn values and encounter various intersubjective demands, but they then go on to act on the world that they inhabit. The way that various individuals interact, engage in activities, and relate to one another, together with whatever material artifacts they produce, comprise what we call "society" (Cohen 2008, p. 21). Even though their options are constrained by societal

norms, people still face real choices as to how to conduct themselves, and insubordination and subversion are real possibilities. Strict biological determinism and sociocultural determinism are both profoundly mistaken: on the contrary, we have an innate capacity for metaphysically robust *natural-libertarian free agency* (Hanna 2018b). On the one hand, focusing on serotonin or dopamine or some other neurochemical deludes us into blaming our brains alone, rather than the societies we live in, for mental illness (Svenaeus 2007, p. 162). On the other hand, focusing only on society may lead us to overlook the fact that mental illness involves very real disruptions in neurobiological dynamics. Therefore, we need to approach human subjectivity and agency in a way that recognizes that we are essentially embodied minded animals, and also that our animal body is fully embedded and enmeshed in a world of "culture," aka social institutions (Thomas and Bracken 2008, p. 49); and as a consequence, we need to investigate how the social and biological worlds together partially determine individuals' psychological development and literally shape their affective framings. In addition to studying biology and the human body, doctors need to study the humanities and the social sciences, and they also need forms of education that involve reciprocal learning from patients (Thomas and Bracken 2008, p. 49).

Correspondingly, healing efforts need to recognize that neither culture nor biology can be written out of human experience (Thomas and Bracken 2008); hence constructive and enabling mental health practices, as we understand them, necessarily adopt a holistic outlook on mental disorder. On this view, distortions to sense-making involve disruptions to essential embodiment, to affectivity, and to social relations. This means that there is a wide range of contact points at which we might intervene to promote healing, and that we should adopt a flexibly-minded, pluralistic approach to treating mental disorders. The use of medication should be complemented by other efforts to shift affective framings and restore subjects' bodily attunement. This includes treatments that target people's thinking patterns (for example, cognitive-behavioral therapy) as well as treatments that target their affects and emotions (for example, expressive arts therapy).

Mental health practice needs to be structured so as to accommodate this pluralistic approach, and also answer to the specific needs and

expressed wishes of individual patients. Diagnostic and treatment practices need to be grounded in mutual respect for human dignity, and psychiatric practice needs to be informed by the essentially embodied perspectives of those who are mentally ill, and also seek to empower them. We must move beyond hegemonic notions of knowledge and expertise and the tendency to view psychiatrists as experts with privileged access to light and truth (Thomas and Bracken 2008, p. 46). Mental health should not to be viewed as the gift of a professional group; as Thomas and Bracken (2008) note, perhaps the single most harmful aspect of modern psychiatry is its failure to engage with people's personal stories and experiences (p. 49). Further efforts should be made to incorporate the voices of "experts by experience"—the subjects of mental illness—and to do so in a way that does not exploit these stories for profit. In addition, this constructive, enabling vision for psychiatry acknowledges that efforts to promote mental health are inextricable from efforts to create social institutions in which people are free from oppression, able to exercise autonomous agency, and capable of satisfying their true human needs.

* * *

What essentially characterizes constructive and enabling social institutions, we are claiming, is their priming, soliciting, and nurturing of habits of mind that are genuinely flexible, and that allow people to develop their capacities fully and well. Again, flexible mental habits consist in essentially embodied affective framing that is self-realizing, organicist, dignitarian, integrative, authenticating, autonomous, deeply responsible, and critically conscious. Examples of such habits include empathy, perspective-taking, openness, and curiosity; and the tendencies fostered include questioning, cooperating, collaborating, and imagining things otherwise. To foster this kind of literal mind-shaping, institutions need, as much as possible, to give all participants a chance to voice their opinions and participate in decision-making. To be sure, as in the case of the student-teacher relationship in education, various kinds of social structure and "local hierarchy" may be required in order for the social institu-

tion to perform its constructive, enabling function. Still, as Freire notes (1970), it is a pernicious mistake for us to view teachers as "experts" and authority figures and to view students as "containers" waiting to be "filled" with knowledge by teachers. Instead, we should view teachers and students as "critical co-investigators." Likewise, in the context of the workplace, it is a pernicious mistake to treat high-ranking executives and managers as coercive authority figures who impose policies and rules, and to view workers as nothing but mechanical "cogs" in the corporate capitalist machine, who must follow established rules and policies without question, in order to maximize profits. Instead, we should see decision-making as collaborative and dialogical and view current ways of doing things as continually improvable and open to change. And in the context of mental health practice, it is crucial that mental health services truly be "person-centered," that they involve asking patients about their needs, and that patients be genuinely involved in making decisions about the mode of treatment they receive.

Moreover, constructive and enabling institutions most emphatically *do not* rely on surveillance, micro-management, and authoritarian coercion to ensure that participants are acting as they are "supposed" to act. Instead, and diametrically to the contrary, such institutions tap into human creativity, our natural love of work, and our natural desire for making meaningful social connections. The central aim of such institutions is *not* to maximize profits, but instead to help people, both individually and collectively, to satisfy their true human needs. This inherently includes cultivating individuals' capacity for autonomous agency and ensuring that their mental habits are flexible. Dewey (1916) rightly observes that fixity of habit involves a loss of freshness, open-mindedness, and originality; and this typically brings with it an aversion to change that makes it difficult to do and think otherwise (ch. 4). Only social institutions that involve the full use of intelligence and the ongoing interrogation of current modes of thinking, feeling, and acting can counteract this tendency. Constructive, enabling institutions allow individuals to develop, flourish, and thereby achieve their full rational human potential by scaffolding and cultivating "sympathetic curiosity, unbiased responsiveness, and openness of mind" (Dewey 1916, ch. 4).

Note

1. See Mezirow (2009) for a survey of different approaches to transformative learning.

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8

Conclusion: Cognitive Walls, Cognitive-Affective Revolution, and Real-World Utopias

We come back again, finally, to Thoreau:

> It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right… Law never made men a whit more just; and, by means of their respect for it, even the well-disposed are daily made the agents of injustice. A common and natural result of an undue respect for law is, that you may see a file of soldiers, colonel, captain, corporal, privates, powder-monkeys, and all, marching in admirable order over hill and dale to the wars, against their wills, ay, against common sense and consciences, …. The mass of men serve the state thus, not as men mainly, but as machines, with their bodies…. I think that it is not too soon for honest men to rebel and revolutionize…. Action from principle, the perception and the performance of right, changes things and relations; it is essentially revolutionary, and does not consist wholly with anything that was. (Thoreau 1995)

And, in the same vein, we turn again to John Stuart Mill. His devastating critique of the tyranny of the "customary" in mid-nineteenth century social institutions, which we briefly discussed in Chap. 3, contains these two deeply important sentences: "I do not mean that they choose what is customary in preference to what suits their own inclination. It does not

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occur to them to have any inclination except for what is customary" (Mill 1977, p. 265).

More generally, we are saying that a fundamental part of the truly malign effect of destructive, deforming institutions in contemporary neoliberal nation-states is that they systematically build up cognitive defense-mechanisms—what we call *cognitive walls*—in the subjects embedded in those institutions. A cognitive wall is an entrenched or habitual belief, memory, stereotypical mental image, feeling, or emotion that acts as *an effective screen against manifest reality and truth* as it actually is presented by sense perception, reliable testimonial evidence, or rational argument. A simple, morally benign, and non-institutional example of a cognitive wall is the fact that ordinary, healthy people with normal stereoscopic vision all have their noses right in the middle of their visual fields, yet normally do not see them at all. Hence the familiar admonishing comment, "it's as plain as the nose on your face!" Of course, the nose-blindness phenomenon can be easily corrected by someone else's touching (or punching) your nose, or by self-consciously touching your own nose, crossing your eyes inwards, or looking in a mirror.

Nevertheless, other cases of cognitive walls, by sharp contrast, are not only extremely hard to correct, but also morally malignant, precisely because they flow from our belonging to, participating in, or falling under the jurisdiction of, collectively sociopathic social institutions. Indeed, as Zamyatin's *We*, Huxley's *Brave New World*, Orwell's *1984*, Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, and real-world twenty-first century sociopolitical life all illustrate, a significant amount of the life-deforming work done by destructive social institutions is devoted precisely to building up, maintaining, and reinforcing cognitive walls. As a result, people tend to unthinkingly reproduce the habits of mind associated with these social institutions rather than reflectively adjusting their actions and attitudes with the aid of critical thought (Burkitt 2002, p. 232). This helps to explain why especially harmful habits of mind, such as racist, sexist, ableist, neoliberal, or coercive authoritarian habits, tend not only to persist, but also to go unnoticed or unrecognized. As we've seen in Chap. 4, the prevalence of cognitive walls is especially problematic in the context of higher education in contemporary neoliberal democratic states. For, classically, and putatively, the goal of such higher education is precisely to enable students to think critically and resist morally problematic, misin-

formed, common ways of thinking. Unfortunately, however, as we have also seen in Chap. 4, from at least the middle of the nineteenth century, but especially since the end of the Second World War, higher education in big capitalist democratic states increasingly has become a powerful social engine of commodification, mechanization, more or less subtle coercion, and false consciousness.

This is sharply and tragically different from the way that Kant, Schiller, the eighteenth century French Enlightenment *philosophes*—Voltaire, Diderot, and Rousseau—early Marx, Thoreau, Mill (in *On Liberty*), and twentieth century radical thinkers in the tradition of the Frankfurt School, have viewed education. For radical Enlightenment thinkers, education is not merely or even essentially a process of mastering bodies of knowledge, but fundamentally and above all a process of intellectual, affective, and practical maturation, whereby one learns how to think, feel, and act for oneself. In short, for radical Enlightenment thinkers, education is fundamentally and above all a process of *self-education*. We have deepened and extended this radical Enlightenment account, via our proposal in Chap. 7 that we can collectively design social institutions whose specific aim is to bring about enactive-transformative learning by means of affective reframing. By developing flexible habits of mind via affective reframing, subjects become capable of critical self-awareness and autonomous agency. This in turn puts them in a position to satisfy their true human needs.

By sharp contrast to self-education in the radical Enlightenment sense, as deepened and extended by enactive-transformative learning and reverse social engineering, however, let us consider now the sociological and psychological phenomena known as *the persistence of false beliefs* and *the backfire effect*.[1] Tristan Bridges observes that the Trump administration repeatedly has made false statements and reports, whether about the size of his inauguration crowd or the rates of violent crimes in the United States. Despite attempts to correct each falsehood after it is made, the inaccuracies and misinformation persist. Bridges acknowledges that there is more than one reason for this, but one especially interesting part of the explanation is what social scientists call the "backfire effect":

> As a rule, misinformed people do not change their minds once they have been presented with facts that challenge their beliefs. But, beyond simply not changing their minds when they should, research shows that they are

> likely to become more attached to their mistaken beliefs. The factual information "backfires." (Bridges 2017)

In other words, presenting misinformed people with facts to support your case might actually make their false beliefs *more entrenched*.

To investigate this, Brendan Nyhan and Jason Reifler (2010) asked study participants to read news articles that included false statements from politicians. While one group read articles that included corrective information immediately following the inaccurate statements, the other group read articles that contained no corrective information. Afterward, all participants answered a series of questions about the article as well as their personal opinions about the issue. Nyhan and Reifler found that participants' responses to the factual corrections varied systematically depending on how ideologically committed they were to the beliefs that such facts supported. For those who already believed the popular misinformation, the provision of additional factual information did not cause them to change their opinion—in fact, it often had the effect of strengthening their ideologically grounded, false beliefs (Bridges 2017).

Investigation of the backfire effect shows that cognitive walls, especially those concerning persistent false beliefs, memories, stereotypical mental images, feelings, or emotions, are *self-reinforcing*. The more you try to confront a person's cognitive walls with contrary correct facts, the higher and thicker he builds his walls, without even knowing what he is doing, and all the while fully convinced that he is in the right. So cognitive walls are the basic vehicles of *self-induced, self-deceiving mental slavery*. The reason for this, in turn, is that a person's cognitive walls are essentially of two kinds:

(i) walls concerning *his sense of individual identity as a person*, and
(ii) walls concerning *his sense of group identity as a "card-carrying" member of some important social community or institution*.

In both cases, the cognitive walls need to be *critically and freely taken apart by the rational human agent herself, in a transformative process of essentially embodied critical self-education*—or, to use an older and much more contested term, *enlightenment*—in order to achieve cognitive, practical, and affective maturity.

We believe that both the building up of cognitive walls, as well as the transformative process of essentially embodied critical self-education, should be viewed in terms of affective frames, which, as we have said, are the fundamental-level mental habits or patterns of desire-based, emotional sense-making or interpretation that guide thought and action (Hanna and Maiese 2009, ch. 5; Maiese 2011). Cognitive walls are, to an important extent, a matter of an essentially embodied subject's simply *being stuck in certain affective frames* that arise via her engagement with destructive, deforming social institutions. In turn, we can help ourselves to concepts from complex dynamic systems theory in order to make sense of cognitive walls and the notion that subjects sometimes get "stuck" in rigid and inflexible habits or established ways of thinking. As we noted in Chap. 7, *ontogenetic landscapes* can be understood as constantly modified, dynamical portraits of a system and its interactions with the environment over time. Such topological portraits represent a system's phase space or its potential over time, and illustrate the coordinates which that system is more and less likely to occupy in the future. Attractors can be understood as valleys that represent the coordinates that the system is likely to visit. The deeper the valley, the stronger the attractor's pull; and the broader the basin, the greater the variability in behavior the attractor allows. Separatrices, on the other hand, are sharp peaks that represent the states that the system is unlikely to occupy. The steeper the walls of the separatrix, the more unlikely it is that the system will make the transition to that state.

Several theorists have utilized dynamic systems theory as a tool for modelling neural dynamics. Juarrero (1999), for example, describes the human brain as a self-organized, complex adaptive system and maintains that prior intentions restructure a system's multidimensional phase space so that a new set of coordinates and dynamics obtain. Similarly, according to Freeman's (2000) neurodynamical model, the brain can be understood as a non-linear dynamic system, characteristic patterns of neural activity can be understood as "attractors," and the set of "basins of attraction" that an animal has learned can be understood as an "attractor landscape." However, we have claimed that a minded animal's capacity for detecting salience is grounded in its bodily form, structure, and neurobiological dynamics, and thus that the *animal body as a whole* should be understood as a non-linear dynamic system. Once orderly pattern and

structure appear in the form of habits, living bodily dynamics entrain and form integrated configurations.

According to our account, a living organism is a complex dynamic system whose phase space encompasses its current behavior as well as its potential over time. Affective frames can be understood as self-organized attractors that shape the contours of the living system's overall organization and thereby constrain its available alternatives such that behaviors and interpretations are characteristically drawn to certain patterns. Ideally, affective framing patterns are *loosely assembled* (Colombetti 2014), relatively fluid, and susceptible to ongoing change. Having the sort of flexible habits that Dewey describes allows people to respond with ease to new challenges that present themselves and accommodate new information that may conflict with their previous assumptions. Inflexible habits, in contrast, can be conceptualized as a matter of being stuck in a particularly deep and narrow set of attractor basins. While the pull of these attractor basins is strong, their narrowness doesn't allow for much variability in terms of thought, feeling, and action. Such self-organized attractors also have particularly deep basins, making it is difficult for the subject to transition to a new position on the ontogenetic landscape. In addition, the individual's phase space is characterized by separatrices that are especially steep, making it difficult or unlikely that the living system will transition to particular segments of the landscape. These coordinates that the living system is unlikely to "visit" can be understood to represent alternate future possibilities or modes of response, and the steep separatrices can be understood as cognitive and affective walls.

Once such walls develop and someone becomes "stuck," at the *neurobiological level*, in a relatively fixed pattern of dynamics, essentially embodied mental habits stagnate: the subject becomes "locked into" particular patterns of engagement, response, thought, and feeling, and the usual possibilities for dynamic movement and change may be forestalled. At the level of everyday experience, this is a matter of becoming "stuck" in particular modes of behaving, engaging, and responding. Because subjects have internalized social norms and dominant schemas, certain interactive and interpretive possibilities become closed off, so much so that subjects do not even recognize these options as genuine possibilities. Indeed, people's awareness of themselves as situated within specific sociocultural net-

works, and as subject to certain kinds of expectations, can effectively wall off various available affordances. If stagnant patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting begin to overrule or inhibit the expression of other situationally relevant habits (Ramírez-Vizcaya and Froese 2019), subjects will be unable to gain an "optimal grip" on available options and interpretive possibilities. This will make it increasingly difficult for them to see things in new ways, incorporate new factual information, or imagine the world otherwise.

Taking apart cognitive walls in a transformative process of essentially embodied self-education would require that the subject undertake a fundamental change of heart and/or a fundamental shift in group allegiance—in effect, *a cognitive-affective revolution*, comprised of a dramatic shift in affective framing patterns and a modification in neurobiological dynamics—and most people are desperately afraid of and deeply averse to doing this. The reason why such change is so existentially frightening and apt to be experienced as a threat to one's self, according to the account of habits we presented in Chap. 2, is that there is a real sense in which *habits constitute the self*. A dramatic change in habits, then, constitutes a dramatic change in the constitution of the self.

We therefore need to think more seriously about how to disrupt pre-existing habits of mind, dismantle cognitive walls, engage in transformative essentially embodied critical self-education, and thereby make a life of flexible mental habits inside constructive, enabling social institutions really possible. To accomplish this, we must acknowledge that alongside their inherent ambiguity between stability and plasticity, mental habits involve two primary affects: ease and anxiety (Proctor 2016, p. 255). On the one hand, because mental habits give us ways of being in the world that are useful in multiple contexts, they provide one with a sense that one recognizes the world and knows what one is doing. Such ease and familiarity crucially give us the confidence to try something new, but also have a tendency to block self-development by preventing people from seeing (or even considering) that things could be different. On the other hand, mental habits also can result in anxiety in cases where individuals encounter disruption, customary ways of behaving prove detrimental, or habits fail to function as expected. In cases where people experience unusually high amounts of incoherence between their pre-existing understandings and the new ideas that they encounter, there is a danger that they will

retrench, "shut down," and retreat mechanically into pre-existing ways of thinking (Concepciòn and Elfin 2009, p. 182). They may even *double*-down on their established views, as evidenced by the backfire effect. It is profoundly difficult to motivate someone to shift her modes of thinking when such a shift would disrupt her social and material world and there are no supports in place to compensate for this disruption.

Nevertheless, such discomfort and anxiety are crucial insofar as they afford an opportunity for us to reflect on how we want to be in the world, experiment with new ways of thinking and behaving, and overcome cognitive walls. Indeed, plasticity and openness are valuable precisely because of the risk they pose to the self (Cuffari 2011, p. 548); but we must not forget that "doing things differently entails becoming more comfortable with and learning to employ these anxieties" (Proctor 2016, p. 257), and that dismantling cognitive walls will require that we strike a balance between ease and anxiety. That is, people need to feel safe enough to question and explore without losing their footing in the world altogether, and yet also unsettled enough to begin rethinking their prior assumptions.

Moreover, although constructive, enabling institutions do indeed scaffold and facilitate the dismantling of cognitive walls, transformative processes of essentially embodied critical self-education, and the development of flexible mental habits, ultimately, it is the agent *herself* who must bring this about. Paradoxically, as Zamyatin's *We*, Huxley's *Brave New World*, Orwell's *1984*, Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, and recent sociological and psychological literature on "manufactured consent" (See Herman and Chomsky 1988) and "mind control" (see, for example, Wikipedia 2018a) all show—

(i) although cognitive walls themselves not only *can* be but almost always *are* coercively compelled or imposed from the outside, by means of our engagement with destructive, deforming social institutions, most often without our even realizing it,
(ii) nevertheless, breaking through or tearing down cognitive walls requires a self-conscious act of free will and agential autonomy whereby the subject takes deep responsibility for who she is as an individual or as a social being; hence that act cannot be coercively compelled or imposed from the outside, though it can be environmentally scaffolded in important ways.

Indeed, it *is* really possible for subjects freely to dismantle these walls and cognitively liberate themselves, by means of essentially embodied critical consciousness, affective reframing, and cognitive-affective resistance. In part, such resistance involves investigating "whether or not the practices we engage in either reinforce or resist the manner in which our freedom—how we think, act, and speak—has been governed in ways that are limiting and intolerable" (Hamann 2009, p. 58). One way to disrupt dominant ways of thinking and feeling is to become "more attentive to the ways that we are drawn to interact with our environments," critically reflecting on our habits of interaction and how we use our bodies to achieve our goals (Brancazio 2018). Freire (1970) has correctly pointed out that the crucial step towards critical consciousness is taken when a subject who is embedded in a destructive, deforming social institution finally comes to the self-realization that she has "internalized the oppressor," that is, she has unintentionally allowed the institution to deform and mis-shape her own life and habits into a structural analogue of the very institution that oppresses her.

In Chap. 7, we discussed how critical self-consciousness can be cultivated not only through critical inquiry, but also through direct experiences that tap into subjects' affects and scaffold habits of empathy, openness, curiosity, and imagination. Once this difficult critical self-consciousness about structural internalization has finally been achieved, subjects are cognitively and affectively poised to *resist*, *rebel*, and *revolutionize*. As Mühlhoff and Slaby (2017) so aptly put it: "If governance hijacks the way individuals are capable of affecting and being affected, empowerment calls for a collective practice based on a shared will 'not to be affected like this' any more" (p. 19). That is, subjects need to become cognitively and affectively poised to dismantle the cognitive walls that mentally enslave them and at the same time undertake the creation of new constructive, enabling institutions. This radical cognitive-affective process of dismantling and creating, however, is nothing more and nothing less than the complex, dynamic, essentially embodied, intersubjective, public process of reciprocal, critical, dialogical, radically enlightened *self-education*. Therefore, if we are correct, this process also directly deploys the enactive-transformative principle:

> Enacting salient changes in the structure and complex dynamics of a social institution produces corresponding salient changes in the structure and complex dynamics of the lives of the people belonging to, participating in, or falling under the jurisdiction of, that institution, thereby fundamentally affecting their lives, for worse or better.

Strictly speaking, the enactive-transformative principle tells us simply that changing social institutions literally *changes* the globally dominant structures of the essentially embodied minds of the people inside them. Of course, this change could be either in the direction of destructive, deforming social institutions, or in the direction of constructive, enabling institutions; hence, it could be change either for the worse or for the better. A transformative process of essentially embodied critical self-education, via reverse social engineering, therefore, is precisely *that* application of the enactive-transformative principle which specifically guides it towards the better and the best.

Thoreau's *Walden* is a brilliant mid-nineteenth century pastoral allegory for this socially-enabled, transformative process of essentially embodied critical self-education. But in order to recognize more fully what faces the twenty-first century subject who is attempting critical consciousness, cognitive-affective resistance, and a transformative process of essentially embodied critical self-education in the midst of her ongoing social-institutional life in contemporary neoliberal nation-states, we believe that *Walden* should also be read alongside—at the very least—these twelve books:

- Karl Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*
- John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*
- Peter Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid*
- Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We*
- Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*
- George Orwell's *1984*
- Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*
- Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem* and *Origins of Totalitarianism*
- C. Wright Mills's *The Power Elite*
- R.D. Laing's *Politics of Experience*

- Herbert Marcuse's *One Dimensional Man*
- Edward Herman's and Noam Chomsky's *Manufacturing Consent*

In other words, subjects must *not only* be deeply imbued with the classical aims of enlightened existential humanism, *but also* self-consciously prepared to think long and hard about:

- large-scale capitalism and systematic human alienation (early Marx)
- the tyranny of the "customary" and the systematic suppression of free expression and individuality in democratic societies (Mill)
- the natural, real possibility of freely-chosen altruistic, reciprocal collective action (Kropotkin)
- belief-manipulation and mind control as basic forms of human oppression (Zamyatin, Huxley, Orwell, and Bradbury)
- the banality of evil in institutional settings (Arendt)
- the nature of coercive ultra-authoritarian states (Arendt)
- the institutional shaping of mental health and mental illness (Laing)
- large-scale technocratic capitalism, its largely hidden power-structure, and systematic human alienation (Mills and Marcuse)
- systematic media-based techniques of belief-manipulation and mind control under large-scale technocratic capitalism (Herman and Chomsky).

Nevertheless, it is above all crucial to keep in mind that mental habits and affective framings are comprised of "embodied, internalized schemas that operate at a preconscious level, and represent a sedimentation of experience that manifests as bodily gestures, tastes, and preferences, and designate as much a way of being in the body as tendencies, propensities, and inclinations" (Kennedy 2012, pp. 427–428). So precisely *because* they are essentially embodied, nondeliberative, and pre-reflective, and precisely *because* they regulate attention, choice, and action without relying on explicit rules, mental habits often are beyond the reach of reflection and do not easily lend themselves to transformation through argumentation (Mihai 2016, p. 30). Moreover, since imagination may be limited and confined to what everyday common sense permits as thinkable, it may not be sufficient, on its own, to move us beyond status quo ways of thinking. In order to shift habits and break down cognitive walls,

"we must problematize the very categories through which the citizens see the world" (Mihai 2016, p. 33). Therefore, in addition to various modes of critical thought and self-reflection, subjects need to be prepared to have certain kinds of affective, aesthetic, and spiritual experiences that productively disrupt their existing habits of mind. Efforts to shift the habitus should incorporate bodily experience, affect, storytelling, and art of all kinds.

Subjects need to be exposed, for example, to various modes of artistic expression and real-life experience, including the experience of talking to people very different from themselves and hearing them give voice to alternative perspectives and divergent life experiences. In her description of feminism as a "transformational politic," bell hooks (2010) recommends grassroots sharing of feminist thinking in small group settings that involve inclusive dialogue and "getting real." She envisions people from a variety of racial, ethnic, class, and educational backgrounds sitting together at kitchen tables to discuss their experiences and brainstorm about ways to move forward. She maintains that critical self-examination is required: we should seek to increase our awareness of how we ourselves perpetuate the systems of domination by listening to the testimony of others. This may require painful confrontation, "yet if we cannot engage dialectically in a committed, rigorous, humanizing manner, we cannot hope to change the world" (hooks 2010, p. 675). Central to this process of coming to understand others' perspectives, and then beginning to work together to identify and face up to our differences, is *love*.

These modes of critical thought and emotional engagement can help us to move from (1) a critical and negative political philosophy of mind, focused on real-world social institutions and our more-or-less destroyed, deformed, essentially embodied institutional lives inside them, to (2) a creative and positive political philosophy of mind, focused on the aspirational, hopeful, real possibility of our essentially embodied lives inside constructive, enabling social institutions. Otherwise put, by means of the enactive-transformative principle and reverse social engineering, the goal is to move from our contemporary, neoliberal social-institutional *dystopia* to a *real-world utopia*.

The murky grey dawn of essentially embodied critical consciousness and the explosive awakening of cognitive-affective resistance, aimed ulti-

mately at the transformative process of essentially embodied critical self-education, can be a truly unsettling experience, indeed a cognitive and existential crisis; and genuinely constructive, enabling, institutions that are real-world utopian can seem literally unimaginable. In turn, we think that this double effect, cognitive crisis and utopia-denial, are highly analogous to *anosognosia* (see, for example, Wikipedia 2018b), the cognitive and/or affective deficit that consists in the inability to recognize that one actually has a cognitive and/or affective deficit.

The influential neuroscientist V.S. Ramachandran, for example, discusses asognosia in the context of a conversation he has with a patient, Mrs. Dodds, who was completely paralyzed on the left side of her body after a stroke that damaged the right hemisphere of her brain. He notes that although patients usually have many questions about their paralysis, there is a small subset of patients with right hemisphere damage who seem to be indifferent to their predicament and unaware that the left side of their body is paralyzed. This tendency to ignore or even deny the fact that one's arm or leg is paralyzed was termed anosognosia ("unaware of illness") by the French neurologist Joseph François Babinski, who first observed it clinically in 1908. Ramachandran says about his therapeutic work with the anosognosic Mrs. Dodds that

> [w]atching [such] patients is like observing human nature through a magnifying lens; I'm reminded of all aspects of human folly and of how prone to self-deception we all are. For here, embodied in one elderly woman in a wheelchair, is a comically exaggerated version of all those psychological defense mechanisms that Sigmund and Anna Freud talked about at the beginning of the twentieth century—mechanisms used by you, me and everyone else when we are confronted with disturbing facts about ourselves. Freud claimed that our minds use these various psychological tricks to "defend the ego." His ideas have such intuitive appeal that many of the words he used have infiltrated popular parlance, although no one thinks of them as science because he never did any experiments…. In the most extreme cases, a patient will not only deny that the arm (or leg) is paralyzed, but assert that the arm lying in the bed next to him, his own paralyzed arm, doesn't belong to him! There's an unbridled willingness to accept absurd ideas. (Ramachandran and Blakesee 1998, p. 94)

Ramachandran's highly insightful remarks vividly point up how truly painful and cognitively and affectively dissonant it can be for subjects when they start dismantling the cognitive walls that mentally enslave and imprison them. Indeed, the very idea of real alternatives, and of cognitive-affective revolution itself, can seem unimaginable and practically impossible, or even completely pointless and absurd—as "they" sarcastically say, like voting for unicorns. Moreover, and now thinking metaphilosophically, it is both historically true and also self-critically illuminating that those radically enlightened philosophers of the past who seriously attempted to dismantle ideological and emotional walls, and cognitively liberate the real-world utopian, altruistic imagination from utopia-denial, were almost always widely despised, laughed at, or characterized as having "mental health issues." Some were put in jail overnight, like Thoreau, or even imprisoned and then put to death, like Socrates—and, in the history of philosophy and radical politics, many other philosophers and free thinkers have suffered similar fates (Bradatan 2015). Again, consider how early-Marx-inspired socialists and Kropotkin-inspired social anarchists or anarcho-socialists have been and still are popularly *demonized*.

Therefore, as contemporary political philosophers of mind, living in neoliberal nation-states, we must dedicate ourselves, by means of our philosophical writing and teaching, to helping one another to dismantle our ideological and emotional walls, overcome our cognitive crises, and liberate our imaginations. We also must work together, in robust solidarity, to develop new means of engaging people's emotions in productive ways so that they are able to have the sorts of valuable experiences that expand their perspectives, afford the development of flexible habits of mind, and prime their affective and practical capacities so that they can freely bring about the satisfaction of their true human needs. And we must do so precisely in order to demonstrate, to both ourselves and the larger world, that constructive, enabling social institutions are not only *really possible*, but also, by means of the enactive-transformative principle and reverse social engineering, *within our immediate practical reach*.

Note

1. See, for example, Nyhan and Reifler (2010) and Lewandowsky et al. (2012).

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