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Economic Misery, Ecological Unsustainability, and the Remedial Responsibility of the Global Affluent

Abstract: The global affluent are contributing to and benefiting from the systemic cause of economic misery and ecological unsustainability. Some philosophers have invoked this relational point to discuss the responsibility of the affluent because by doing so, they assume, one can formulate a more compelling argument than non-relational arguments. This paper supports this relational strand by drawing upon David Miller's theory of 'remedial responsibility.' Although Miller himself seems to deny the said relational point, this paper shall defend it based upon critical economic studies. The first section summarises Miller's non-relational argument. The second section assesses it, and in the process develops what can be described as a 'relational remedial theory of global justice.' The third section discusses a few significant problems that this theory would encounter. Specifically, it argues that the establishment of a 'cosmopolitan democracy,' which would facilitate dialogues among global citizens, may serve to overcome those problems.

Keywords: basic rights; cosmopolitan democracy; global justice; Miller; remedial responsibility

Introduction

There is a dual global problem of economic misery (poverty, labour exploitation, etc.) and ecological unsustainability. These are linked in three ways. First, as some philosophers suggest, solutions to one problem may exacerbate the other (see Moellendorf, 2014: 24-26, 230-33; Shue, 2014: 320-21). For example, a solution designed to push up the cost of carbon energy may have an adverse impact upon the lives of the global poor. Therefore, both must be tackled as inseparable issues. Second, as I have already indicated elsewhere (Hayward and Iwaki, 2016; Iwaki, 2021), and as this paper shall reiterate, both may have the same structural cause, which is the capitalist global economic system. Third, related to the second point, the same patterns of moral reasoning can be applied to both. The global poor are vulnerable to the dire effects of these problems, whereas the global affluent are *causally contributing* to and *benefiting* from their systemic cause. Some philosophers have applied this relational point to discuss the responsibility of the affluent (see Hayward, 2008; Pogge, 2008; Young, 2011). For these reasons, this paper shall address both these problems

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together.

This paper shall argue that the global affluent should be held responsible for tackling the dual global problem for three reasons. First, there is a morally unacceptable state of affairs in urgent need of remedy. Second, the affluent have the capacity to put right the situation (or at least to contribute to remedial projects). Third, the affluent also have a special relationship to the situation to be put right. The point of departure for this argument is the theory of remedial responsibility developed by David Miller (2007: 97-107). This paper is intended to reformulate the argument that Miller presents based upon this theory, by integrating the relational point indicated above (the one that the affluent are causally contributing to and benefiting from the systemic cause of the dual global problem). As I shall argue, Miller's argument is fairly compelling as it is. However, by integrating the said relational point, his argument can be made more compelling, and also consistent with his earlier critique of capitalism (Miller, 1989).

This paper shall also address two significant problems that the argument in this paper encounters. The first problem is that it is extremely difficult to find a fair way of distributing responsibilities based upon relational factors such as causal contribution and benefiting. If we distribute responsibilities based upon these, a fair way of doing this may be to hold each agent responsible in proportion to the degree of his or her causal contribution or benefiting. However, it is next to impossible to disentangle each agent's particular actions from the complex causal system in which he or she is involved (see Young, 2004: 372). This means that it is next to impossible to identify not only how but also how much (the degree to which) each agent is contributing to or benefiting from the system that is perpetuating the dual global problem. This can be described as a 'disentanglement problem.'[1] This problem does not disappear even if we shift our focus from an individual agent (an affluent person) to a collective one (say, an affluent nation or corporation).

We may be able to solve this problem by adopting a pure capacity-based approach, considering solely how much each agent can do to contribute to remedial projects. What and how much each agent can do to contribute to such projects may be much easier to identify than the degree to which he or she is contributing to or benefiting from the present economic system. However, even if we accept this point, there remains a second problem, which can be described as a 'coordination problem.'

1 I am grateful to one of the reviewers for giving this appropriate name to this problem.

Remedial projects designed to solve the dual global problem demand collaborative actions of many agents. This seems obvious in so far as institutional projects are concerned. (For such projects that can be implemented without transcending capitalism, see, among many others, Pogge, 2008: 202-21; Shue, 2014: 319-39. For a bit more radical project, see, for example, Miller, 1989; Schweickart, 2002. For an even more radical one, see O'Neill, 1998: 176-77. I shall offer a brief summary of each of these projects later in this paper). New institutions cannot be established without collective actions demanding their establishment, and they cannot be sustained without active public support and general compliance. But the same is true of such individual donations demanded by effective altruists (e.g. Singer, 1972). A donation from one single affluent person would not suffice to eradicate widespread poverty. The latter requires donations from many. In short, remedial projects designed to solve the dual global problem demand coordination among the affluent (and with the poor, since they are clearly relevant stakeholders). Therefore, a significant problem is how to ensure such coordination.[2] I shall argue in favour of a forum for coordination that has been referred to as a 'cosmopolitan democracy' (see Caney, 2005: 19, 148-88).

Moreover, if there is such a forum for coordination, the disentanglement problem mentioned above may be sorted out. In this forum, relevant stakeholders can discuss a fair way of distributing responsibilities, and through this discussion, they may reach the agreement that the said problem is negligible. They may agree (at a moral level) that they have a strong reason to assume and fulfil the responsibility for tackling the dual global problem, and that this reason is stronger than just because they have capacities – the reason is because they have a special relationship to the problem to be tackled. But they may also agree (at a practical level) that what is truly important is to solve the dual global problem, and thus that the most important question is which agent has what capacity to contribute to which remedial project, and not how much he/she/it has contributed to or benefited from the systemic cause of the problem.

This paper shall take the following three steps. In the first section, I shall present a somewhat crude summary of the argument Miller has developed based upon his theory of remedial responsibility. I have said that the summary will be 'somewhat crude' since I will leave aside nationalist elements that can be found in Miller's argument. For example, the 'global affluent' in this paper refer not to

2 I am grateful to the other reviewer for indicating this important problem.

affluent nation-states, but to all individuals who are gaining considerable material advantages directly from the present global economic system, or indirectly from collective entities (e.g. nation-states, corporations, etc.) that are gaining such advantages from the system. Meanwhile, the 'global poor' refer to those who are either exploited as sources of cheap and long labour or excluded from the material benefits humans need to secure a minimally decent life. As we shall see, a 'minimally decent life' here means a life in which 'basic rights' as Henry Shue (1996) defines them are guaranteed.

In the second section, I shall assess Miller's argument from the following three perspectives: *moral force* (how strong Miller's argument is from a moral perspective), *empirical grounds* (how tenable it is from an empirical perspective), and *theoretical consistency* (whether it is consistent with his earlier works). The claims to be made are these. First, Miller's argument seems fairly compelling from a moral perspective because it is grounded in Shue's concept of basic rights. In the same section, I shall explain why Shue's concept of basic rights provides fairly compelling grounds for moral arguments. Second, however, Miller's argument seems at least questionable, if not completely untenable, from an empirical perspective. This point can be shown by drawing upon key insights from critical economic studies (e.g. Harvey, 2010; Hornborg, 2013; Sassen, 2001). Although this paper shall highlight only a limited range of research in the relevant field, this will suffice (I suggest) to cast doubt upon Miller's empirical grounds, and also to make the following conditional claim: the one that, *if* the analyses of global capitalism highlighted in this paper are correct, then we can develop a more compelling argument for the remedial responsibility of the global affluent than the one presented by Miller. And third, Miller's argument concerning global economic institutions seems inconsistent with his earlier argument concerning social economic institutions that can be found in his 1989 book *Market, State, and Community*. In this book, Miller characterises capitalism *within* society as structurally exploitative and argues in favour of socialism (more exactly, what he describes as 'market socialism'). However, it seems that he has failed to maintain a similar critical attitude to capitalism *beyond* society.

In the third section, I shall argue in favour of the establishment of cosmopolitan democracy. As already noted, this political framework can possibly help us overcome the two significant problems that the argument in this paper encounters (i.e. the disentanglement problem and the coordination problem). I shall explain this point in greater detail by identifying some of the things that stakeholders may need to discuss and share in global democratic forums. One of the things that may need to be discussed and shared is an answer to this important policy question: exactly what is to be done to tackle the dual global

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problem. Therefore, in the same section, I shall offer brief summaries of the remedial projects that have been proposed by several influential philosophers, including Miller himself. An additional point to note is that my argument for cosmopolitan democracy is rather unique since it is derived from Miller's (a nationalist's) interesting remark. I shall explain this point in the third section. Also, in the same section, I shall indicate a few reasons as to why even nationalists such as Miller could accept cosmopolitan democracy.

Miller's Argument for the Responsibility of the Global Affluent

Let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that the affluent are causally contributing to and benefiting from the causes of the dual global problem. Some philosophers have drawn upon this relational point to argue that the affluent have the responsibility to tackle the dual global problem. In this sense, their position can be described as 'relationism.' They consider this relational point morally important because they assume that, by drawing upon it, they can discuss a stringent kind of responsibility. Other philosophers do not consider this relational point so important. Their position can be described as 'non-relationism.' They argue that the affluent have the responsibility to tackle the dual global problem even if they do not have any special relationship to the causes of the problem, because, for example, the affluent have the capacity to fulfil this responsibility. (Relational philosophers would add that the affluent have acquired this capacity partly by contributing to or benefiting from the causes of the problem; but non-relational philosophers do not.) These positions are not mutually exclusive. It is possible to develop an argument that integrates both (see, for example, Caney, 2009: 240-44). Such an argument may ground the responsibility of the affluent mainly in the capacity that they have, but raise the said relational point as an additional reason for holding them responsible. (For more on these two positions, see Risse, 2012: 92-94.)

As we shall see shortly, Miller regards relational factors such as causal contribution and benefiting as possible sources of what he calls 'remedial responsibility' (the kind of responsibility assigned based upon a 'remedial reasoning,' which is to be explained shortly). However, as we shall see in the next section, Miller does not think that these relational factors can be applied to the case of global poverty. In this sense, Miller's argument (in so far as global poverty is concerned) can be classified into the non-relational camp.

There is another distinction to draw to understand Miller's argument: the one between backward-looking 'reparatory' reasoning and forward-looking 'remedial' reasoning. The reparatory reasoning starts from asking who has contributed to or benefited from a certain process and who has been made worse off through

the same process. It then tries to transfer the gains reaped by the former to offset the losses incurred by the latter. This reasoning also makes a proportionality assumption: those who have contributed to or benefited from a problem should compensate the victims in proportion to the degrees to which they have contributed or benefited.

Some (not all) relational philosophers apply this reasoning. In particular, those who discuss environmental responsibilities tend to do so. For example, in defence of a polluter-pays principle, Peter Singer argues as follows: 'as far as the atmosphere is concerned, the developed nations broke it,' and therefore they should assume environmental responsibilities 'in proportion to their responsibility for breaking it' (Singer, 2004: 33-34). Meanwhile, Shue (1999: 533-37) argues that the developed nations have derived enormous economic benefits from the historical destruction of the global environment. 'Benefits,' he also argues, 'carry across generations'; but so do 'rights and responsibilities' (Shue, 1999: 537). So, he justifies a beneficiary-pays principle: the one that the present populations of the developed nations should shoulder environmental responsibilities 'at least to the extent of the unfair advantage previously taken' (Shue, 1999: 534). As we can see from these, in so far as environmental responsibilities are concerned, both Singer and Shue adopt the reparatory reasoning, and also accept the proportionality assumption.

By contrast, Miller (2007: 97-107) has adopted the other – remedial – reasoning. The remedial reasoning starts from the observation that there exists a problem that must be solved immediately. This observation is grounded in the moral judgement that the problem in question is so serious that it is morally unacceptable to leave it unsolved.

Also, this reasoning is forward-looking in that it seeks primarily to solve the problem in question. So, it does not necessarily seek to assign responsibilities to causal contributors or beneficiaries; it can assign them to those who simply happen to have the capacities to fulfil them. Related to this, it is noteworthy that the remedial reasoning can take two different courses when it comes to the assignment of responsibilities. Those in the non-relational camp would assign responsibilities to any capable agent, whereas those in the relational camp would seek to assign them to causal contributors and beneficiaries (i.e. those who have a special relationship to the problem in question). Miller leaves both courses open. He has specified both relational and non-relational sources of remedial responsibility, including causal contribution, benefiting, and capacity (see Miller, 2007: 100-104).

Some philosophers, such as Iris Marion Young, have developed relational reme-

dial theories (see Young, 2011).[3] The aim of this paper is to develop this strand even further by integrating insights from critical economic studies, on the assumption that the presupposition of relational philosophers (the one that relational responsibility is more stringent than non-relational one) is correct. However, Miller himself, as we shall see shortly, presents a non-relational remedial theory. As I shall show in the next section, his argument, non-relational though it is, seems morally compelling. However, it seems empirically questionable, and theoretically inconsistent.

Assessment: Moral Force, Empirical Grounds, and Theoretical Consistency

In what follows, I shall assess Miller's (non-relational) argument for the (remedial) responsibility of the global affluent (hereinafter, a 'non-relational remedial theory of global justice'). Three questions to be discussed are (1) how strong its moral force is, (2) how tenable its empirical grounds are, and (3) whether it is consistent with his earlier economic critique.

Moral Force

Miller's remedial theory of global justice, non-relational though it is, is fairly compelling because it is grounded in the theory of basic human rights (Miller, 2007: 163-200). Miller suggests that the present global state of affairs is morally unacceptable, and thus in urgent need of remedy, because the poor live a life below a minimum threshold of justice. And Miller identifies this threshold by referring to basic human rights, such as the rights to 'food and water, clothing and shelter, physical security, health care, education, work and leisure, freedoms of movement, conscience, and expression' (Miller, 2007: 184). In setting this global minimum, Miller draws upon Shue's theory of 'basic rights' (see Miller, 2007: 164 fn2). And the latter indicates two reasons as to why a remedial theory grounded in it is compelling (see Shue, 1996: 18-19, 26-27).

First, according to Shue, basic rights specify the 'morality of the depths' – 'the line beneath which no one is to be allowed [or, one can reasonably add, made] to sink' (Shue, 1996: 18). A person needs the substances of the basic human rights identified by Miller in order to enjoy central human faculties and capacities – in order to live a minimally decent life with dignity and self-respect. If we take dignity and self-respect seriously as the moral foundations of justice,

3 It should be noted that Young, to the best of my knowledge, does not draw upon Miller's theory of remedial responsibility, although she critically remarks upon his nationalist conception of justice (see Young, 2011: 135). However, Young's theory of global responsibility seems to be grounded in the remedial reasoning as I have defined it in this section.

then we must consider the present global state of affairs (in which basic rights are not guaranteed for all) to be fundamentally unjust, since it violates the very foundations of justice. In this sense, basic human rights specify the absolute line of justice. At present, there are a vast number of people living beneath this line, and this state of affairs prompts an urgent, pressing, or compelling call for global remedial action, since this situation is fundamentally unjust.

Second, according to Shue, basic rights are 'basic' in a logical sense too, in that 'enjoyment of them is essential to the enjoyment of all other rights' (Shue, 1996: 19). To enjoy a right means to enjoy its substance (what the right is a right to) *both freely and securely*. If any of the substances of basic human rights is threatened as a result of choosing to enjoy the substance of a given non-basic right, then the enjoyment of the latter is neither free nor secure. For example, let us imagine a social condition in which a worker is likely to be deprived of his or her job as a result of choosing to join a trade union. What people can do in this condition is to 'merely hope for the best' (Shue, 1996: 27) – to hope that they are lucky enough not to lose their jobs as a result of their choice. In this case, workers are not enjoying the right to assemble *as a right* – that is, as the secure and free opportunity to enjoy assembly. In short, the enjoyment of any right entails, with logical necessity, the enjoyment of basic human rights.

This second point shows that there is a good practical reason for remedial theorists such as Miller to draw upon the theory of basic human rights to discuss the responsibility of the global affluent. If basic rights are, as Shue argues, logically inherent in any right, then all those who use the language of rights or some translated version of it – probably, most of the global population – can be deemed to have tacitly consented to the normative paramountcy of basic rights. It is logically inconsistent to claim that a certain right is paramount but that basic rights are not, since the latter are after all inherent in the former. Therefore, most of the global population will – or at least logically should – regard basic human rights as paramount norms, and recognise that the present global state of affairs prompts a compelling call for remedial action, since it is infringing upon those paramount norms.

To sum up, Miller's non-relational remedial theory of global justice is fairly compelling because it is grounded in the compelling theory of basic rights.

Empirical Grounds

As noted repeatedly, although Miller has specified relational factors such as causal contribution and benefiting as possible sources of remedial responsibility, he presents a *non-relational* remedial theory of global justice. He denies or

at least calls into question the empirical claim that relational philosophers have made, which is that the global affluent (in Miller's argument, the populations of affluent nations) have causally contributed to or benefited from the causes of global poverty. He suggests that present-day global poverty cannot be attributed to historical causes (e.g. the colonial past) or the systemic cause (i.e. the present global system) (see Miller, 2007: 240-44, 251).

According to Miller, some formerly impoverished societies have experienced economic success under the present global system, and these include previously colonised societies. Moreover, in his view, the present global system is analogous to a reasonably safe roundabout where 'drivers of normal competence, paying due care and attention, can navigate safely' (Miller, 2007: 240). He asks 'whether it provides reasonable opportunities for societies to lift themselves out of poverty, or whether it places obstacles in their path that are quite difficult to overcome, requiring an extraordinary economic performance on the part of a developing society' (Miller, 2007: 241). Miller's answer is the former: namely, that the present global economy provides such opportunities, and therefore cannot be seen as the primary cause of global poverty.

Miller, nevertheless, seems to admit that the affluent have non-relational remedial responsibility based upon their problem-solving capacities (Miller, 2007: 247-48, 254-59). If Miller is right, neither the colonial past nor the existing global system can explain present-day global affluence and poverty. However, Miller judges the present global state of affairs to be morally unacceptable and in urgent need of remedy because the poor live a life below the minimum threshold of justice (the one that he has defined in terms of basic human rights). The affluent happen to have the capacity to provide aid. Therefore, they ought to tackle global poverty together with the governments of poverty-stricken societies.

My claim here is that Miller's empirical points are questionable, if not entirely untenable. To make those points, Miller draws upon several economic historians (e.g. Acemoglu et al., 2001; Harrison and Huntington, 2000; Landes, 1998). However, there is also a critical strand of empirical research that Miller has avoided (e.g. Harvey, 2010; Hornborg, 2013; Sassen, 2001), and this seems to support a view that contradicts Miller's – more precisely, the view that the present global system 'places obstacles in [the poor's] path that are quite difficult to overcome' (to use Miller's phrase quoted above). The social scientists who have contributed to the development of this critical strand have tried to prove the following point: that the existing global system is so structured as to impede the lives of the global poor. Therefore, their research supports a *rela-*

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tional remedial theory of global justice (as opposed to Miller's non-relational one). Furthermore, their research demonstrates this point too: that the existing global system is not only impeding the lives of the poor but also causing ecological unsustainability. In what follows, I shall offer summaries of some of the key elements that can be found in their analyses.

First, the present global system is a capitalist system so structured as to facilitate endless material growth and fierce competition (Harvey, 2010: 43). In this system, investors and firms must either sustain a 'healthy' rate of profitability or lose to competitors (Harvey, 2010: 27). Such fierce competition creates a strong incentive for economic actors to overcome or circumvent barriers to profit maximisation, including ecological, labour, spatial, and temporal barriers (Harvey, 2010: 41-43, 47, 157-58). This has stimulated constant technical innovations, and such innovations have enabled capital to move ever faster and farther over the earth, appropriate ever greater amounts of ecological resources, and reduce labour-related costs. The ultimate purpose of such innovations is to let capital grow ever more quickly, and perpetually. This has an obvious ecological implication. Perpetual growth is biophysically impossible because it requires infinite inputs from and outputs to finite ecological space. Therefore, it can be argued that capitalism has an inherent logic that is contradictory to ecological sustainability.

Second, the survival of the capitalist system has become increasingly reliant upon the consumption of luxury goods by affluent workers/consumers (see Harvey, 2010: 106-108). A commodity does not generate any profit if no one needs, wants, or desires it, or if no one has the money to buy it. Who holds an extra amount of money to facilitate the purchase? Affluent workers do. Therefore, they can be seen as an important source of effective demand. If they hold money rather than spending it on material pursuits, a capitalist economy will encounter an 'underconsumption problem': the situation where most of the commodities produced are left unsold and thus fail to generate the original money plus a profit. Therefore, affluent workers' consumer sentiment and confidence are 'not only keys to endless capital accumulation but are more and more the fulcrum upon which the survival of capitalism depends' (Harvey, 2010: 107).

Third, as the first point shows, capitalism demands quick and perpetual growth. This means two things. First, investors and firms must reinvest parts of their earnings in further expansion, which necessarily entails further appropriation of ecological space. Otherwise, they would lose to competitors. Second, they must reinvest *immediately* after they have gained those earnings. Otherwise, a 'liquidity trap' would occur (Harvey, 2010: 111). This refers to the situation

where people hold money, effective demand declines, reinvestment becomes less profitable, and, as a result, a downward spiral occurs.

These points, as well as the first one, have a significant ecological implication. Ecological sustainability demands sustainable consumption and production, and sustainable consumption and production virtually mean considerable reductions in consumption and production. However, it seems next to impossible to seek such material contraction within the capitalist system. If consumption is reduced without a reduction in production, the underconsumption problem will occur. However, if consumption and production are reduced at the same time – that is, if consumers, investors and firms all choose to hold money instead of spending or reinvesting it – then the liquidity trap will occur. In short, if sustainable consumption and production are pursued within the capitalist system, economic crises will follow. All these indicate (again) that capitalism has an inherent logic that is contradictory to ecological sustainability.

Now, it has been shown that the present global system is so structured as to cause ecological unsustainability. Here, I wish to add that this issue can jeopardise basic human rights. For example, pollution and climate change can affect people's health, and agricultural and marine products that they consume. Resource depletion can make productive activities difficult, and thus place obstacles to human lives. Therefore, the remedial reasoning can be applied to this issue: ecological unsustainability is morally unacceptable and in urgent need of remedy because it can violate the minimum threshold of justice.

Finally, the present global system also seems to have an inherent mechanism that can perpetuate economic issues such as poverty and labour exploitation. Capital moves over the earth to find better opportunities for profit maximisation, such as 'sufficient accessible reserves of labour power' (Harvey, 2010: 58). Poorer parts of the world provide such reserves – especially, cheap ones. Therefore, production processes tend to move from affluent parts to poorer parts. However, head offices have not moved from affluent parts. Capitalist firms in affluent parts of the world retain command and ownership over dispersed production chains and the commodities produced in those chains (Sassen, 2001: 23-36). Moreover, such command and ownership have been consolidated by various producer services (financial, legal, accounting, consulting, advertising, research and development, and so forth) that have expanded in affluent parts as well (Sassen, 2001: 23-36).

As a result, commodities, in aggregate, tend to move from poor parts of the world to affluent parts (see Hornborg, 2013). Also, the employers and employees working in head offices in affluent parts tend to gain considerable economic

benefits, whereas the workers in poor parts providing original labour inputs tend to receive only meagre wages (see Simas et al., 2015). Also clearly, there are a vast number of unemployed people. They are excluded from wage relationships, and many of them lack access to social security. They are enduring a much worse life than poor wage workers. We can then classify those who are deriving enormous benefits from these economic processes as the global affluent, and those who are either exploited in or excluded from these processes as the global poor.

So, if we draw upon empirical research in the critical strand, we can argue that the present global system (the system that the affluent are contributing to and benefiting from) is so structured as to perpetuate the dual global problem of economic misery and ecological unsustainability.[4] This argument supports a relational remedial theory of global justice, as opposed to Miller's non-relational one. More precisely, it supports the following view: the one that the dual global problem is morally unacceptable and in urgent need of remedy, and that the affluent should be held responsible for tackling it not only because they have capacities but also because they are contributing to and benefiting from its systemic cause. Whether we accept Miller's non-relational view or the relational one presented here depends upon which strand of empirical research we find convincing. However, to the best of my knowledge, there seems to be no good reason to reject either of the two strands as empirically ungrounded. Therefore, there is no good reason either to believe that Miller's empirical points are unquestionable.

Theoretical Consistency

What is interesting about Miller is that he presents a powerful socialist critique in so far as capitalism within society is concerned but fails to maintain the same critical attitude when it comes to global capitalism. In his 1989 book *Market, State, and Community*, Miller analyses the basic mechanism of the capitalist social economy and concludes that it is structurally exploitative (so structured as to perpetuate labour exploitation) (see Miller, 1989: 175-99). A puzzle arises, however, because Miller has failed to do the same with the basic mechanism of the global capitalist system. If his points concerning social capitalism are correct, one can reasonably apply them to global capitalism too (as both have similar capitalist features). In short, Miller's argument concerning global justice, which is based upon the presupposition that global capitalism is not structurally unjust, seems inconsistent with his earlier critique of social capitalism. Miller

4 More extensive explanations about all these points are available in Iwaki (2021).

could have developed a more consistent line of argument if he had applied the same analytical attitude to both social and global capitalisms – for example, by drawing upon such critical studies as highlighted above.

On Disentanglement and Coordination: Deriving an Argument for Cosmopolitan Democracy from a Nationalist's Remark

As the discussion so far shows, the relational remedial theory of global justice commended in this paper draws upon this empirical point: the one that the affluent are contributing to and benefiting from the global system so structured as to perpetuate the dual global problem. The affluent should be held responsible for taking immediate remedial action because they have the capacity to assume and fulfil this responsibility, but the said point offers an additional reason for holding them responsible. However, as noted in the introduction, this theory encounters two significant problems – namely, the disentanglement problem and the coordination problem. The former refers to the difficulty of identifying how and how much each affluent agent has contributed to or benefited from the global system. This difficulty causes a serious complication if we make a proportionality assumption, which is that a fair way of distributing remedial responsibilities among the affluent would be doing so in proportion to the degree of each one's contribution or benefiting. The latter refers to the difficulty of taking remedial action in collaboration with others. Miller seems aware of these problems. With regard to the coordination problem, he argues that 'having formal mechanisms for assigning responsibility [is] so vital' because, otherwise, 'everyone can find a plausible reason for shifting the burden of responsibility elsewhere' (Miller, 2007: 107). With regard to the disentanglement problem, disputes may occur as to how to distribute responsibilities among relevant agents, but Miller argues that 'there is no algorithm that could resolve such disputes' (Miller, 2007: 107).

So, how can we solve these problems? One might argue that we could solve the disentanglement problem by simply disregarding it – that is, by distributing responsibilities based upon capacity. However, even if we do so, the proportionality issue remains. A fair way of distributing responsibilities in this case would be doing so in proportion to each agent's capacity. But how can we evaluate their relative capacities? Also, how can we facilitate their collaborative actions? As Miller argues, we need some formal mechanism for this. But what kind of mechanism would serve this purpose?

I suggest that the two problems under consideration could be solved if we established a 'cosmopolitan democracy.' Simon Caney, a defender of this political framework, defines it as 'a multi-level global order, including global political

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institutions, states, and sub-state political authorities' (Caney, 2005: 19). Caney's view seems to presuppose a representative form of democracy. However, in this Internet age, it also seems possible to create forums for direct global dialogues. (I consider this forum to which I am right now contributing this paper – *The Global Justice Network* – to be exactly one of such cosmopolitan forums.) The importance of 'dialogue' has been admitted by Miller as well (see Miller, 1989: 252-75). According to him, it is a process in which people exchange their arguments with reasonable grounds, to find conceptions of justice upon which a general consensus would emerge and effective policies that would help realise those conceptions (see Miller, 1989: 268-69). Miller, a nationalist philosopher, does not seem to advocate a *global dialogue*. However, his point about the need for formal mechanisms for assigning responsibility can be construed as indicating it.

Such global democratic forums can be employed to discuss various issues, including how to distribute responsibilities among the affluent. Therefore, the disentanglement problem, and the issue of evaluating relative degrees of causal contribution, benefiting, or capacity, could be sorted out democratically. Even if there is no reliable algorithm for this evaluation, the affluent (together with all other stakeholders including the poor) can find a reasonable way of distributing responsibilities that they could agree upon, by means of global dialogues. Also, the affluent (again, with all other stakeholders) can employ such global forums to discuss how they would collaborate in remedial projects – for example, what institutions or incentive mechanisms they would need to establish to encourage active participation and minimise non-compliance. So, cosmopolitan democracy would make global collective actions much easier.

Moreover, there is another key issue that must be discussed and agreed upon through such forums: namely, what exactly is to be done, or, in other words, what remedial projects we should carry out. Answering this question is vital because, otherwise, no meaningful collaboration would begin. In the absence of an answer to this question, the affluent cannot know what they ought to collaborate on in the first place.

Philosophers have tried to provide answers to this. For example, effective altruists have demanded that the affluent ought to donate money to such NGOs (non-governmental organisations) that have done well in alleviating poverty (see Singer, 1972). Thomas Pogge has defended what he calls a 'global resources dividend' (see Pogge, 2008: 202-21). This is a redistributive scheme based upon a global tax levied on the use of economically productive natural resources. Both these are designed to address the issue of economic misery. However,

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there is also the issue of ecological unsustainability.

With regard to this issue, Shue proposes a hybrid scheme that would drive up the cost of using carbon energy and reduce the cost of using renewable energy simultaneously (see Shue, 2014: 319-39). This scheme combines a carbon tax (which would serve the first purpose) and what Shue calls a 'Global Green New Deal' (which would serve the second). The latter refers to the creation of a global fund that can be invested in the instalment of clean technologies in poor countries (as well as affluent ones). So, Shue's scheme would facilitate sustainable development in poor parts of the world, giving them the opportunity to lift themselves out of poverty using sustainable technologies. However, as Shue himself admits, what is also required is mitigation (material contraction) in affluent parts. But it is unclear whether Shue's scheme could serve this purpose, since there is no guarantee that affluent societies would not use clean technologies to pursue further growth. Neither is there any guarantee that poor societies would stop material expansion after they had reached an adequate level of economic growth. The critical strand of empirical research highlighted in the previous section seems to imply that both affluent and poor societies are more likely to pursue material expansion even if clean technologies are installed, unless they transcend capitalism.

So, it seems reasonable to consider socialist proposals as well. These include extremely radical ones and less radical ones. For example, John O'Neill argues in favour of a rather radical project, which he describes as an 'associational socialism' (see O'Neill, 1998: 176-77). This demands the establishment of such a system in which markets are abolished altogether, but economic activities are not centrally planned, and workers' free associations are the sole productive units. In contrast, Miller defends a 'market socialism' (see Miller, 1989). This refers to a system in which economic activities are not centrally planned, and workers' free associations are the sole productive units, but markets are retained within strict boundaries. According to Miller, this system can solve the issue of economic misery within society. However, as David Schweickart argues, such a system could also serve to eradicate (or at least alleviate) economic misery and ecological unsustainability beyond society (see Schweickart, 2002).[5] A crucial question that cannot be answered here but that must be answered is which one among these – non-market or market – is more effective and viable than the others.

5 For more on how a market-socialist system could serve this global remedial purpose, see Iwaki (2023: 19-22).

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To sum up, global citizens must answer all the following questions (among many others): how we would distribute responsibilities among us, how we would coordinate our collective actions, and which remedial projects we would carry out. And cosmopolitan democratic forums (such as this one) would facilitate meaningful dialogues about all these.

Finally, I wish to note two points to indicate that even nationalist philosophers such as Miller may possibly accept this cosmopolitan framework. The first point has been already discussed. Although Miller is a nationalist philosopher, he does not seem to deny the remedial responsibility of the global affluent. He also argues that there is no reliable algorithm for identifying their relative responsibilities, and admits the need for establishing a certain formal mechanism that could overcome this issue. Cosmopolitan democracy could be seen as such a mechanism. Second, this framework does not exclude the value of national community. As Miller has long tried to establish, the nation is important. However, this is not the only value that people take seriously. There are many other values such as rights and dignity as a human being. Therefore, all such values must be weighed against each other. Cosmopolitan democracy could provide us with the opportunity to discuss and confirm relative weights of such values. My guess is that many would consider rights and dignity as a human being far more important than nationality. But cosmopolitan democracy would give those who hold the contrary view a fair opportunity for persuasion.

Concluding Remarks

This paper has assessed Miller's non-relational remedial theory of global justice. In the process, it has derived two arguments – one for a relational remedial theory of global justice, and the other for cosmopolitan democracy. This paper has argued that the commended relational theory encounters two significant problems (concerning disentanglement and coordination), but that cosmopolitan democracy would pave a possible way round these. My claim is not that the relational argument in this paper is compelling enough to prompt actual remedial action by the global affluent. For actual action to be prompted, theories (moral arguments) may for example need to be pressed by those who have a direct and serious stake in such action – namely, the poor and those vulnerable to ecological harms.[6] However, the following weaker point can be made: that the

6 This agrees with Elizabeth Anderson's pragmatist view (see Anderson, 2014; 2015). One of her main points is that a moral argument is often ineffective unless it is actually pressed in contentious politics (discourses and acts of resistance) by those who have a real, serious, and direct stake in remedy. She demonstrates this point with two historical analyses: one concerning anti-slavery movements in Britain and the other concerning those in America.

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theory advanced here is at least more compelling than Miller's because it is a relational one. An additional note to make is that the relational argument in this paper is a conditional one. It holds good on the following two conditions: first, if relational theories are more compelling than non-relational ones, and second, if critical economic studies (such as those highlighted in this paper) exhibit a correct understanding about global capitalism.[7]

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