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DOCUMENT A

LEAR

No, I will weep no more. In such a night
 To shut me out! Pour on, I will endure.
 In such a night as this? O Regan, Goneril,
 Your old, kind father, whose frank heart gave you all, —
 5 O, that way madness lies; let me shun that;
 No more of that.

KENT Good my lord, enter here.

LEAR Prithee, go in thyself: seek thine own ease:
 This tempest will not give me leave to ponder
 10 On things would hurt me more. But I'll go in;
 [*to the Fool*] In, boy; go first. You houseless poverty, —
 Nay, get thee in. I'll pray, and then I'll sleep.

Exit [Fool].

[*Kneels.*] Poor naked wretches, whereso'er you are,
 15 That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
 How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
 Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you
 From seasons such as these? O, I have ta'en
 Too little care of this! Take physic, pomp;
 20 Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
 That thou mayst shake the superflux to them,
 And show the heavens more just.

[*Enter Fool, as from the hovel*]

EDGAR [*within*] Fathom and half, fathom and half! Poor Tom!

25 FOOL Come not in here, nuncle, here's a spirit. Help me, help me!

KENT Give me thy hand. Who's there?

FOOL A spirit, a spirit: he says his name's poor Tom.

KENT What art thou that dost grumble there i' the straw? Come forth.

Enter EDGAR [disguised as Poor Tom]

30 EDGAR Away! the foul fiend follows me! Through the sharp hawthorn blows the cold
 wind. Humh, go to thy cold bed, and warm thee.

LEAR Didst thou give all to thy two daughters? And art thou come to this?

EDGAR Who gives any thing to poor Tom? whom the foul fiend hath led through fire and
 through flame, and through ford and whirlpool, o'er bog and quagmire; that hath laid

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35 knives under his pillow and halters in his pew; set ratsbane by his porridge, made him proud of heart, to ride on a bay trotting-horse over four-inched bridges, to course his own shadow for a traitor. Bless thy five wits! Tom's a-cold. O, do, de, do, de, do, de: bless thee from whirlwinds, star-blasting, and taking. Do Poor Tom some charity, whom the foul fiend vexes. There could I have him now, and there, and there again, and there.

40 [Storm still]

LEAR Have his daughters brought him to this pass?

Couldst thou save nothing? Wouldst thou give 'em all?

FOOL Nay, he reserved a blanket, else we had been all shamed.

LEAR [to Edgar] Now, all the plagues that in the pendulous air

45 Hang fated o'er men's faults light on thy daughters.

KENT He hath no daughters, sir.

LEAR

Death, traitor! Nothing could have subdued nature

To such a lowness but his unkind daughters.

Is it the fashion, that discarded fathers

50 Should have thus little mercy on their flesh?

Judicious punishment! 'twas this flesh begot

Those pelican daughters.

EDGAR Pillicock sat on Pillicock-hill,

Alow, alow, loo, loo!

55 FOOL This cold night will turn us all to fools and madmen.

EDGAR Take heed o' the foul fiend: obey thy parents, keep thy word justly, swear not, commit not with man's sworn spouse; set not thy sweet heart on proud array. Tom's a-cold.

LEAR What hast thou been?

EDGAR A serving-man, proud in heart and mind, that curled my hair, wore gloves in my cap, served the lust of my mistress' heart, and did the act of darkness with her; swore as many oaths as I spake words, and broke them in the sweet face of heaven. One that slept in the contriving of lust and waked to do it. Wine loved I deeply, dice dearly; and in woman, out-paramoured the Turk: false of heart, light of ear, bloody of hand; hog in sloth, fox in stealth, wolf in greediness, dog in madness, lion in prey. Let not the creaking of shoes nor the rustling of silks betray thy poor heart to woman. Keep thy foot out of brothels, thy hand out of plackets, thy pen from lenders' books, and defy the foul fiend. Still through the hawthorn blows the cold wind, says suum, mun, nonny, Dauphin my boy, my boy, *cessez!*
Let him trot by. [Storm still]

70 LEAR Why, thou wert better in thy grave than to answer with thy uncovered body this extremity of the skies. Is man no more than this? Consider him well. Thou ow'st the worm no silk, the beast no hide, the sheep no wool, the cat no perfume. Ha? Here's three on's us are sophisticated; thou art the thing itself. Unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor bare, forked animal as thou art. Off, off, you lendings: come unbutton here. [Tearing at his clothes, he is restrained by Kent and the Fool.]

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DOCUMENT B

For all the apparent relativism of liberal society – our interminable debate about what the good in politics consists in – in practice a shared good is administered in our name by the welfare bureaucracies of the modern state. From birth, our needs for health and welfare, education and employment are defined for us by doctors, social workers, lawyers, public health inspectors, school principals – experts in the administration of needs.

The paradox is that this continuous intrusion into the logic of our own choosing has been legitimized by our public commitment to freedom of choice. It has been in order to equalize everyone's chances at a free life that the state now meets needs for food, shelter, clothing, education, transport and health care (at least in some countries). It is in the name of freedom that experts in need now pronounce on the needs of strangers. Apparently, societies that seek to give everyone the same chance at freedom can only do so at some cost to freedom itself.

This is not the only irony. One might have expected that the enactment of a vision of the shared good in the welfare state would have brought us closer together. The welfare state has tried to enact fraternity by giving each individual a claim of right to common resources. Yet meeting everyone's basic needs does not necessarily meet their needs for social solidarity. Equalized social provision does not seem to reduce competition: it redoubles the scramble for scarce status goods.

In the welfare state, old divisions of class have been expressed as divisions between those dependent on the state, and those free to satisfy their needs in the market-place. Welfare dependency is still scarred with stigma. Up to a point, a welfare society can reduce these divisions by trying to guarantee that public goods are as attractive as private ones, and by limiting the rights of the wealthy to opt out of public provision in such fields as education and health care. It is not clear that abolishing the right of the wealthy to opt out will end the debate between the claims of liberty and the claims of equality. In any society we can imagine, these goods are in conflict, and the cost of conflict is necessarily measured in solidarity and fraternity.

It is a recurring temptation in political argument to suppose that these conflicts can be resolved in principle, to believe that we can rank human needs in an order of priority which will avoid dispute. Yet who really knows whether we need freedom more than we need solidarity, or fraternity more than equality? Modern secular humanism is empty if it supposes that the human good is without internal contradiction. These contradictions cannot be resolved in principle, only in practice.

A language of needs cannot reconcile our contradictory goods; it can only help us to say what they are. The problem is that our language is not necessarily adequate to our needs. Language which has ceased to express felt needs is empty rhetoric. Much of our language carries a heavy legacy of past attachments and commitments: it is always an open question whether we genuinely share these commitments or are simply mouthing the platitudes which are their sign.

Needs which lack a language adequate to their expression do not simply pass out of speech: they may cease to be felt. The generations that have grown up without ever hearing the language of religion may not feel the slightest glimmer of a religious need. If our needs are historical, they can have a beginning and an end, and their end arrives when the words for their expression begin to ring hollow in our ears.

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45 Of all the needs I have mentioned the one which raises the problem of the adequacy of
language in its acutest form is the need for fraternity, social solidarity, for civic belonging.
Needs can only live when the language which expresses them is adequate for the times.
Words like fraternity, belonging and community are so soaked with nostalgia and utopianism
that they are nearly useless as guides to the real possibilities of solidarity in modern society.
50 Modern life has changed the possibilities of civic solidarity, and our language stumbles
behind like an overburdened porter with a mountain of old cases.

Right up to the First World War, the very idea of being a citizen, of belonging to a
society or a nation would have seemed a distant abstraction to the peasants who made up the
majority of the European population. Such belonging as a peasant felt was bounded by the
55 distances his legs could walk and his cart could roll. Until 1914, most European peasants
spoke in regional dialects; national languages were apparatuses of state rather than the living
speech of those they administered. It was only as the school, the medical officer and the
census taker – the institutions of the national state – began to permeate the village world that
the nation became a living entity and national belonging became a felt need of millions. With
60 the mass mobilization of the European peasantry in August 1914, modern nationalism found
its voice and the need for belonging finally spoke in the cries for war which resounded around
Europe. In those cries, the other possible belonging – the internationale of working men of all
nations – was swept aside like a pile of leaflets in the wind.

A century of total war has taught us where belonging can take us when its object is the
65 nation. Out of that experience, it is just possible that our need is taking a new form, finding a
new object: the fragile green and blue earth itself, the floating disk we are the first generation
to see from space. No generation has ever understood the common nature of our fate more
deeply, and out of that understanding may be born a real identification, not with this country
or that, but with the earth itself.

Michael Ignatieff, *The Needs of Strangers*, New York: Penguin, 1985 (first published
1984), p.136-139

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DOCUMENT C



George Tooker, *The Waiting Room*, egg tempera on wood, 61 x 76.2 cm, Smithsonian American Art Museum, 1959