

G. A. Cohen's Historical Materialism: A Feminist Critique
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Abstract: Forty years later, G. A. Cohen's reconstruction and defence of Marx's theory of history is still widely, and justifiably, considered the best of its kind, and it remains unsurpassed in clarity, argumentation and textual support. This paper presents an under-explored critique of the theory that arises once we recognise that it is meant to apply to the circumstances of women as well as men. The paper argues that, when extended to women, the reconstructed theory's predictions fail to materialise, its characterisations of historical stages fall apart, and its functional explanations appear implausible. In addition, although the theory claims to be able to explain the emergence and diffusion of different ideologies by their effects on productive development, it cannot plausibly explain the presence of sexist ideologies despite their pervasive and profound impact across history. The paper concludes by showing that these flaws highlight the many respects in which Cohen's orthodox version of Marxism is a conservative ideology, and one that egalitarians in particular should view with suspicion. Once we analyse the different components of the theory, the idea of a right-wing Marxism no longer seems as odd as it sounds.

Key words: G. A. Cohen, historical materialism, feminism, sexism, functional explanation, conservative Marxism.

Introduction

G. A. Cohen (1943-2009) was an extremely engaging, fertile and influential political philosopher. His first book, *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence* (1978), widely considered the best analytical reconstruction and defence of historical materialism, was awarded the Isaac Deutscher Memorial Prize and gave rise to the school of Analytical Marxism. This current of thought included authors like Pranab Bardham, Bob Brenner, Jon Elster, Adam Przeworski, John Roemer, Philippe Van Parijs and Erik Olin Wright, who also became members of the September Group that Cohen and Elster co-founded. This group is acknowledged in Cohen's second book, *History, Labour and Freedom* (1988), for its contribution to his reflections on Marx.

This paper focuses on Cohen's reconstruction of historical materialism rather than on all the (often inconsistent) beliefs ever attributed to Marx, or all the theorists who describe themselves as Marxist or materialists and may, or may not, be vulnerable to similar

criticisms. It does so because Cohen's reconstruction is not only unsurpassed but also likely to remain so, both because of the meticulousness with which Cohen gathered extensive textual evidence for his claims, and because it offers a clear, consistent, complete theory that aims to meet the standards of rigour, verifiability and refutability of the best contemporary social science. Cohen did not regret having thereby made the theory easier to criticise: he preferred to have reconstructed a serious contender that empirical investigation showed not to fit the facts than an unfalsifiable doctrine.¹ Whilst Cohen's reconstruction overcomes many objections, including feminist objections, raised against historical materialism² other versions of historical materialism may not be refuted by the same counterexamples, and some cannot be refuted by any counterexamples at all.

The paper argues that Cohen's reconstruction and defence, their virtues notwithstanding, are seriously marred by a lack of gender awareness. This flaw is particularly notable when bearing in mind that, having completed his work on Marx, Cohen drew on feminist ideology to criticise the work of John Rawls.³ Emphasising the causal efficaciousness of a sexist ideology—which his own account of historical materialism ignores or denies—Cohen even went on to criticise leading feminist philosophers, like Susan Okin, for being excessively charitable towards Rawls.⁴ For, unlike Okin and other feminists, Cohen found Rawls (in a widely held interpretation), but not Marx (in his own interpretation) unamenable to feminist reform.

The paper proceeds as follows. The first section reviews a debate Cohen provoked on whether improvements in women's position in society were the accidental effect of economic forces and technical innovations, or rather the intentional result of ideological changes brought about, for example, by writers adopting the form 'he or she'. The second section briefly sums up Cohen's historical materialism. The third section then explains how Cohen's early lack of gender awareness produced a classification of historical periods that falls apart

when gender is taken into account. A fourth section discusses the reasons why a sexist ideology poses a more formidable explanatory challenge for historical *materialism* than religious phenomena like Calvinism, since female relations of production cannot be functionally explained as optimally enhancing productivity. Finally, the fifth section raises the question of whether Cohen's historical materialism should still be considered a left-wing ideology, and connects the discussion to Cohen's distributive egalitarianism.

I. 'He or She'

In 1992, during his transition to working mainly on distributive justice, Cohen published a review of Thomas Nagel's *Equality and Partiality* in the *London Review of Books*.⁵ This review provoked a debate in which nobody mentioned anything even remotely connected to Nagel's important book, nor to Cohen's splendid critical article. Instead, the whole debate revolved around the fact that Cohen had employed—for his first time—the expression 'he or she'. The first response to Cohen's critique of Nagel was a letter signed by E. J. Mishan, which reads as follows:

Much as I enjoyed Professor Cohen's review ... (*LRB*, 14 May) it was hardly possible to avoid noticing his recourse to 'she' and 'her'... Is this departure from grammatical convention a bid to establish enlightened credentials, or is it part of his private campaign to add the weight of his authority to the promotion of peripheral women's lib desiderata? The traditional usage of 'he' as an alternative to 'one' goes back centuries and—notwithstanding the exigencies of fashion—is wholly unambiguous. In contrast, the self-conscious departure from common usage in this respect invariably imparts something of a mental jolt to the reader.

Perhaps the editors will agree that occasional recourse to this practice does nothing to realise the goals of the women's liberation movement. These goals, in any case, are being realised chiefly through economic forces: with the growth of

mass affluence in the West, affordable domestic labour-saving innovations have made housewives all but expendable. And while such innovations push women out of the home, so do other innovations facilitate their employment in industry and commerce.

There is really no call, then, for our hyper-conscientious progressives to subscribe to the more eccentric tactics of those ‘conscious-raising’ zealots scattered along the fringes of the feminist movement.⁶

Cohen, who remained the leading advocate of what is often termed a ‘technological determinist’ interpretation of historical materialism, replied:

I do not agree that the new use of ‘she’ *invariably* imparts something of a mental jolt to *the* reader’ (emphases added). That depends on the reader, and, unless she has made a survey, E. J. Mishan (*Letters*, 25 June) should speak for herself. I think, too, that, to the extent that jolts occur, that is because the new use is not sufficiently entrenched. In much US academese, ‘she’ is no longer arresting, and that is how it should be.

Do ‘potent economic forces’ make the new use of ‘she’ unnecessary? I very much favour potent economic forces, but sometimes the superstructure needs a separate push or jolt.⁷

Claiming that ‘sometimes the superstructure needs a separate push’ goes against Cohen’s own version of historical materialism. So, either there is something special about sexism, or he was already distancing himself from his earlier position, or perhaps both. It is nevertheless amusing that Cohen should have to clarify that he favours ‘potent economic forces’, despite having devoted almost three decades to demonstrating how potent economic forces shaped

history and ideology according to Marx. The reader who Cohen asked to ‘speak for herself’ was the distinguished economist Ezra Joshua (a.k.a. Edward) Mishan, and the debate was joined by authors such as Robert Allen, who challenged Mishan’s historical assumptions, noting that writers including Shakespeare, Chaucer, Swift, Austen and Thackeray avoided referring to women with masculine pronouns by using the plural, until Robert Lowth banned the practice in America in 1762 and Lindley Murray banned it in Britain in 1795. None of the contributors to this debate mentioned Nagel. Nor did they note how the use of ‘he or she’ often helps to avoid false generalisations. Cohen’s early work, which the next section sums up, helps to illustrate this function.

II. Technological Determinism

According to the traditional version of the doctrine Cohen endorsed, ‘history is fundamentally the growth of human productive power, and forms of society rise and fall according as they enable or impede that growth’.⁸ Elaborating on this succinct statement, he clarifies that *productive power* is measured by the working time required to satisfy the basic needs of the producers, while the existing ‘productive forces’ are used optimally.⁹ The *productive forces*, in turn, are supposed to include whatever can intentionally be used to make products, and are said to be able to functionally explain the relations of production that form an economic structure.

Cohen illustrates a functional explanation of a social structure with the example of an army that was previously equipped with rifles. The army then adopts superior machine guns that each need to be manned by three soldiers. As a result, the army is reorganised into trios, with one soldier in each trio being appointed corporal and thereby being given a position of power and authority over the other two.¹⁰ Of course, the army could also imprudently attempt to move each machine gun with two soldiers, or inefficiently employ four soldiers per machine gun, which is why Cohen refers not simply to the ‘use’, but to the ‘optimal use’ of

the resources.¹¹ This, together with various other examples he provides on the same pages, suggests that by ‘optimal use’ Cohen means something like *rational* or *sensible* use, rather than a merely possible, but not actual use of all the aggregate knowledge or as-yet unearthed resources of a society. For perhaps such a society already has scattered information that, if gathered, could result in the invention of even more powerful but heavier cannons to be manned by five men each. And perhaps there are enough resources in the subsoil to build them. Such an understanding of ‘optimal use of existing means’, however, could not support a functional explanation. Only if such cannons were actually produced in sufficiently large numbers and adopted by the army, could they explain the army’s replacement of trios with quintets. The *potential* use could not functionally explain *actual* relations of effective control, because something that is merely potential has no effects that could ground an explanation based on its beneficial effects.

Cohen stresses that what productive power explains is *de facto*, not *de jure* ownership. Legal and ideological superstructures are also explicable, albeit by their stabilising effects on the relations of effective control. Cohen stresses that these relations of production are relations of *effective control* of the means of production, rather than of legal ownership. This makes his appeal to functional explanations more plausible.¹² For the army would not organise itself into trios if it did not effectively control the machine guns. It would, by contrast, still organise itself into trios if it effectively controlled the weapons, even if there was a piece of paper somewhere that said that the legal owner of the weapons is an enemy irreversibly defeated long ago.

Cohen’s army example offers a clear picture but is also somewhat misleading, given that, unlike others, like Mishan, Cohen does not focus on particular technologies, but rather on the aggregate productive (or destructive) power that the sum of the available technologies allows: his focus is the *quantitative*, rather than *qualitative* development of the forces.¹³

This is a second difference between Cohen and Mishan, in addition to the disagreement noted earlier regarding the importance of attempting ideological changes directly rather than regarding them as inevitable side-effects of technological innovations. This second difference means that Cohen's explanation could still succeed, even if Mishan's did not. And Mishan's claims regarding women's employment are questionable. First, housewives of a certain upbringing can still work all day regardless of the number of kitchen appliances at their disposal. The most efficient device in a house is the washing-machine, and yet, not washing one's clothes regularly, which is what people used to do, saves much more time than mechanically washing them daily as people do now. And having children performing the tasks, which is also what people used to do, saves more time still. And as a matter of fact, women were already employed in factories in Marx's time, well before the dishwasher. Before working in factories, moreover, women worked in agriculture. In fact, according to the archaeological evidence, women did so well before men.¹⁴ Mishan's claim that it was kitchen appliances that 'pushed women out of the home' exaggerates the importance of such appliances in the history of female labour, and neglects other well-documented factors operating at the time, such as the ideological and economic changes brought about by the war, and the ensuing shortage of men. Mishan then mechanically applies the same explanation to female involvement in commerce, which is neither new nor something plausibly linked to any innovation. Mishan's explanations would make sense with technologies like cranes, which have made men's muscles redundant. Interestingly, however, women continue not to 'man' the cranes. Whatever problems Mishan's view faces, however, Cohen's different, and more elaborate, technological determinism could still work.

A classical illustration of the quantitative version of technological determinism is the view, widely held among Marxists, that society became stratified only when the productive forces developed to a point where it became possible to produce a 'surplus' which could

‘sustain a non-toiling class’.¹⁵ On this view, what matters is the size of the surplus and not the specific technology with which it is obtained. The generation of a surplus allegedly destroys the egalitarian stage of ‘primitive communism’, and replaces it by three successive types of class society, respectively characterised by the employment of slaves, serfs and proletarians, until quantitative productive growth reaches a level of abundance at which all class-conflict ceases. Then, history closes full circle and humanity returns to communism, but this time in a state of abundance rather than scarcity. The next section examines Cohen’s discussion of these subsequent stages, and how taking women into account makes his classification collapse.

III. Social Structure

Cohen names six developmental stages for humanity, defined by their prevailing economic structures: (i) *primitive communism*, characterised by equality, (ii) *antiquity*, characterised by the employment of slaves, (iii) *feudalism*, characterised by the replacement of slaves by serfs, (iv) *capitalism*, characterised by the replacement of serfs by proletarians, (v) *socialism*, and finally (vi) *communism*, when history ends.

As with Marx, Cohen’s discussion focuses on the first four stages—or what he called ‘the four-stage story’—though all six are supposed to be explicable by the *level* of productive development to which they correspond.¹⁶ Each is characterised by a dominant type of producer (independents, slaves, serfs and proletarians) which is, in turn, defined by individuals’ ownership of *none, some* or *all* of their labour power, and *none, some* or *all* of their means of production, as follows:

Type 1 (slave)	owns none	of his labour,	none	of his means
Type 2 (serf)	owns part	of his labour,	part	of his means
Type 3 (proletarian)	owns all	of his labour,	none	of his means

Type 4 (independent)	owns all	of his labour,	all	of his means
Type 5	owns none	of his labour,	all	of his means
Type 6	owns part	of his labour,	all	of his means
Type 7	owns none	of his labour,	part	of his means
Type 8	owns part	of his labour,	none	of his means
Type 9	owns all	of his labour,	part	of his means

Figure 1

The chart lists all the possibilities, but Cohen, perhaps blinded by his own ideology, discards the last five as incoherent, historically irrelevant or uninteresting.¹⁷

Female Equals, Slaves, Serfs and Proletarians

Consider, first, primitive communism. As Marshall Sahlins famously argued, pre-agricultural societies like those of the Kalahari Bushmen were the ‘original affluent societies’, working only three to four hours a day.¹⁸ Since Cohen measures productivity by the time producers need to work to stay alive, he could not deny that although the Bushmen enjoy much leisure, they do not enjoy many material possessions. One reason in support of Cohen’s criterion is that since wants may be satisfied either by producing much or by desiring little,¹⁹ only survival and the time required to secure it can hope to produce an objective, non-arbitrary measure. Even ‘survival’ or ‘subsistence’, however, involve extremely malleable thresholds, with some societies having adapted to, for example, long fasting periods. Moreover, there is no productive level, in particular, at which societies become stratified.²⁰ In fact, there is no general correlation between necessary working time and equality.²¹

When a society is so poor that all its members can survive only if resources are shared equally, sometimes all resources are shared *roughly* equally, and other times they are not, and women, for example, dwindle in numbers through a combination of female infanticide, selective neglect of girls and denial of resources.²² People may die whilst resources are

wasted on offerings to kings or gods. Moreover, different cultures may respond to scarcity in different ways, such as demographic control, invasion and even cannibalism.²³ Transforming the ownership practices surrounding existing tools is just one possible response. Moreover, societies which barely scratch a living, like the Lele society in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, studied by Mary Douglas, can still be not only gender unequal, but generally very hierarchical and stratified, while their somewhat wealthier neighbours the Bushong are less so, and their less oppressed women produce more.²⁴

Cohen started to pay explicit attention to gender only in the 1990s, when he began to employ the debated disjunctive. In his previous books, gender does not even figure among what forms a person's identity,²⁵ and Cohen uses 'man', despite describing it as the 'standard sexist Marxist language'.²⁶ A consequence of this practice is that when we read his description of each type of producer we tend to think of men. If we do so, the idea that slaves, serfs or proletarians existed in substantial numbers only in some specific period of history seems far more plausible than if we read about 'her labour power' and so think of women as well. Let me elaborate.

Cohen defines slaves as individuals who do not own any means of production and are housed and fed by somebody who provides for their subsistence in exchange for the use of their labour-time.²⁷ Cohen notes that sometimes slaves had a small plot of land or other means of production with which they could work part-time to buy their own manumission.²⁸ Otherwise, they were unfree to decide what to do with their time and could not travel offering their labour to whoever they wanted. Instead, they had to work for the individual who chose them, claimed them, and then housed and effectively controlled them. Women fitting such a description exist in large numbers in all historical periods and continue to exist today. And many of them do not even have any means of production that belongs exclusively to them, nor any plot of land where they can work part-time to buy their freedom. Cohen speculates

that, in societies developed enough to have computers, slaves could not exist, because culturally developed individuals will organise against their oppressors.²⁹ He seems to think there could not be Taliban-run societies combining hacking skills with low female literacy, and seems to imagine that slaves work together, rather than remaining isolated and hence easily overpowered by force, regardless of their cultural sophistication.

Regarding serfs, the number of women who only partly own their labour power or their means of production is also so large that, had he taken this into account, Cohen could never have associated such relations of effective control merely with feudalism. This is particularly clear since he notes that ‘this characterization applies not only to serfs traditionally so called but to all non-slave producers burdened with duties towards exploiters which do not result from a labour contract’.³⁰ In addition, he insists that subordinated economic positions were able to be maintained without visible coercion, through ideology, fear and simply the way society was organised, with some monopolising economic power, and others having no option but to become their subordinates.³¹ He even remarks that subordination was compatible with a relationship involving positive features, such as reciprocity or fairness, and with subordinates choosing who to subordinate themselves to.³²

Now, for most of history, and most of the world, women were neither *de jure* nor *de facto* owners of the means of production. In some countries, like Nepal, they have only won this legal right in recent years after a decade-long war and millennia of uninterrupted male ownership. Even in some of the most gender-egalitarian countries, like the Netherlands or Germany, women still own less than ten per cent of the land and in developing countries women often have no rights at all over the land they cultivate.³³ Moreover, until recently, women could not sell their labour power to whoever they wanted because female travel was dangerous, prohibited by Sharia or other laws and because husbands, fathers and brothers ‘effectively controlled’, to use Cohen’s term, women’s labour power. Employers were also

opposed to accepting women in most professions. Finally, historically, husbands' legal rights over the body, energy and time of their wives have also been very extensive.

The combined effect of these factors is a major miscalculation of the portion of the population which fitted Cohen's definitions of slave or serf. Much the same applies to the category 'proletarian', given that the means of production have generally remained under male control. Women owned few means of production and so those that did not marry could only survive by offering services. According to Cohen, these women were proletarians, which means that proletarians existed in every period of history. In Europe, women of means who did not marry often entered convents, where they lived with other women often called 'serfs' or 'slaves' (of Christ). Women in convents normally lived and even worked without privately owning any means of production, and so Cohen would also count them as actual, rather than just metaphorical, serfs or slaves.

Cohen gives a detailed taxonomy of any possible form of subordination, including being a slave for one day, or fully owning your labour-power part-time, or partly owning it full-time.³⁴ And yet, he never considers more common relationships of effective control, such as marriage, and more generally, patriarchy. Had Cohen taken into account women's subordination, he would have found that his figures for producers in each category were greatly altered, with an unexpected expansion in the population of slaves, serfs and proletarians in all sorts of periods and places. It would have become rather obvious that individuals fitting the various descriptions he offers did not enter the historical scene all at once, leaving in an orderly way at the end of each period, as his theory maintains. Instead, they could exist in any epoch. Since each epoch is defined by the type of producers that existed in it, Cohen's classification becomes blurred, and his vision of history in four stages falls apart. For we are not here talking about a localised anomalous phenomenon like the proto-proletarianisation in the Roman republican army that Marx observed, but about radically

redrawing the picture of all the social structures everywhere and in all the periods that Cohen discusses.

Historical Irrelevance

Had Cohen thought about women, he would not have been so quick to declare that there were only four epochs and four types of producer, as all other options in the chart were historically irrelevant, incoherent or uninteresting. For example, Cohen fails to see how a person who owns some means of production could lack control over her labour-power, and so judges this option to be logically possible but historically uninteresting.³⁵ It is indeed strange to think of a *man* who owns land, or some other means of production, becoming subordinated to a man who does not. By contrast, it is normal for *women* with means of production to become subordinated to men who do not have them, and gradually lose control of their dowry or inheritance.

It is remarkable that neither Cohen nor any of the commentators he acknowledges noticed these problems in the almost three decades he devoted to historical materialism. One may argue that whilst Susan Okin exerted a deep influence on Cohen other feminists did not do so because they were working within the Continental or psychoanalytic traditions that Cohen, and other analytical Marxists, were distancing themselves from. However, there are various reasons to deny this is the sole explanation of a failure to discuss gender. First, whilst it can explain a disregard for some prominent feminists, like Gayle Rubin and Nancy Chodorow, feminists from many schools of thought were discussing the position of women in the economic structure of different societies.³⁶ Second, Okin herself had written critically about functionalism and it would not have been difficult for Cohen to extract some lessons.³⁷ Third, feminist like Maxine Molineux, Christine Delphy, Michele Barret and the contributors to Lydia Sargent's *Women and Revolution* were explicitly engaging with historical materialism from an Anglo-Saxon, materialist, empirically informed, social-scientific

position.³⁸ Finally, it was not necessary to study feminism, but only to take women into account to recognize gender-based inequality as a major challenge to Cohen's historical materialism. Like many in those days, however, Cohen thought it best to focus on devising sound general theories, whether of history or justice, in order to answer every question without any need for specific theories, like feminism, focusing on the circumstances of particular groups.³⁹ With this preoccupation with generality, Cohen did not realize that the position of women through history contradicts his theory's core predictions, such as the claim that slaves, serfs and proletarians could not co-exist, except in very small numbers, for only one of these types of productive relation could be functional at any single stage of development.

The economic positions of women also contradict the core historical materialist assumption that the presence of any type of producer is to be explained by the level of productive power. Cohen could reply to this last objection (i) that men's position in the economic structure could be explained by its being optimal for development, whilst women's position had a different explanation, or (ii) that keeping wealth in men's hands and women in poverty and slavery was also optimal for development. Neither seems plausible, and I shall give some reasons for this. I should first note, however, that it now falls on advocates of Cohen's theory to offer at least some credible story about how either option could be true. For critics are not obliged to entirely reinvent the theory to which they object, to the extent that even very remote relatives of the original view are also explicitly shown to be implausible. Whatever theory one may come up with to avoid these objections would not be the one Cohen defended, with his four-stage story, his reduction of the nine types of producer to four, his claims about the non-coexistence of different types and, particularly, his claim that people's positions can be explained functionally. Cohen could drop some of these claims, but dropping them all, or even just the last one, would amount to abandoning the theory.

If one takes option (i), it would then be necessary to explain why only men's positions had a materialist explanation. Women are just as numerous as men and so they could not be tucked away as a small anomaly. Women's relatively lowly position everywhere in the world would then require an explanation that can account for its universality. If such an explanation was the existence of a sexist ideology that prevents them from occupying, alongside men, the functionally optimal positions, then it would not be true that whatever is functionally optimal will tend to take place.⁴⁰ Thus, defending technological determinism commits Cohen to holding, much like Mishan, that women's oppression was necessary for progress. For technological determinists cannot admit that an ideology like sexism could explain work relations, because they maintain that an ideology can only lack effects or have positive effects on productive progress, which in turn explains the ideology's existence. In fact, as Cohen explains, only what he terms 'restricted historical materialism', but not the standard 'inclusive historical materialism', allows for the possibility that an ideology may not be explicable by its tendency to promote productive progress, providing it does not fetter it either.⁴¹ Sexism, then, would have to be explained as necessary for human progress to take place. The next section explains why such an explanation fails.

IV. Functional Ideologies

Cohen devoted considerable attention to explaining that although the protestant ethic was an economically influential *cultural* phenomenon, it was not counterevidence to *material* causality because its influence was positive. Individuals required by God to work and save ended up accumulating capital, which turned out to be very useful during the stage Marxists term 'primitive accumulation'. The protestant superstructure could then be functionally explained, Cohen proposes, by its beneficial effects on the early capitalist structure.⁴²

Sexism poses a more formidable challenge to Marxism because, unlike Calvinism, it is not consequential only in a particular period and area, but rather throughout history and

everywhere. In addition, it is plausible that Calvinism contributed to the capitalist prosperity of those who embraced it, which in turn contributed to the spread of both Calvinism and capitalist prosperity around the world. But it is far less plausible to offer any such explanation of sexism. Sexism cannot be explained by its beneficial effects when in fact it is collectively self-defeating. J. S. Mill begins *The Subjection of Women* (1869) describing this subjection as ‘one of the chief hindrances to human improvement’ noting, *inter alia*, that disposing of the brains of half the population was clearly a very bad method of maximising innovation and production.

The Sexist Ideology

Marxism posits a tendency towards progress on the premise that intelligent, rational creatures will seek better means to satisfy their needs. Presumably, this would also be females’ natural propensity, as in other species. Structures and superstructures that fetter this propensity would be counterevidence to the doctrine. And yet, this is what we find: structures that discourage female innovation, denying women useful means like cars, trousers, axes, machetes,⁴³ shoes,⁴⁴ bicycles⁴⁵ and means of production generally; and ideologies chastising women’s curiosity, e.g. Eve’s testing of the tree of knowledge causes the downfall of humanity, Sarah turns into a pillar of salt for turning to see God in action, and Delilah proves how disastrous it is for a man to share his secrets with a woman. Turning to Greece, Pandora’s curiosity brings plagues and evils to the world, and like Bluebeard’s wife, Psyche unleashes tragedy by trying to discover the truth about her husband. Such myths are found in the remotest cultures. For the Patagonian Selk’nam, for example, the Moon is a curious woman who had to flee after spying on male secrets and is forever chased by the Man-Sun.⁴⁶

In other intelligent species, it is mainly females we observe using tools, innovating and teaching tool use to others. This is unsurprising given their lesser strength, smaller teeth and greater nutritional needs imposed by pregnancy, lactation and infant-feeding. Sometimes,

moreover, females have additional reasons to innovate. Among chimpanzees, for example, it is females that develop tools for nut-cracking and termite extraction to obtain protein as, unlike males, they tend to avoid killing monkeys. It is also female gorillas who use sticks, for example, to measure the depths of rivers before crossing them with infants, and it is female dolphins who master bubble-making and use sponges for protection while feeding.⁴⁷ Among humans, however, females are *not* the technological innovators. Something holds them back. Some argue that at the stage at which chimpanzees are, i.e. the Stone Age, women were still inventing, and discovered no less than cooking, agriculture, weaving and pottery.⁴⁸ According to Richard Wrangham, for example, women started like female chimpanzees: cracking, milling, mixing and warming food for their offspring, and probably, by gathering on burnt grasslands, they accidentally discovered cooked food, which is ideal for babies, requiring no maternal pre-chewing to be warm and tender.⁴⁹ Food preparation also increases food's caloric content, allowing weight gain whilst gathering less, and cooking kills bacteria that could kill human offspring. By cooking, females then transformed humanity anatomically, causing the loss of the big belly and teeth of the other apes.⁵⁰ This also transformed humanity socially: while chimpanzees can only hunt briefly and opportunistically, as they have to chew raw vegetable matter constantly, men could eat in minutes enough prepared food to go hunting for days.⁵¹ However, since others would steal what women had prepared, women paid for protection with food, which is how, Wrangham argues, monogamy emerged.⁵² If correct, this will be an explanation of a social relation that emerges to make the most of an innovation, much as in Cohen's army example. However, since monogamy is associated with reduced inequality between and within each sex, Wrangham does not offer an explanation of 'unfreedom, exploitation and indignity as the price the mass of humanity must pay for the part they play in creating the material wherewithal of human liberation'.⁵³ In fact, instead of explaining inequality by its

contribution to productive increases, his argument is precisely that if women were denied the time they had saved or the surplus they had produced, they would have also been deprived of any incentive to remain productive. Thus, inequality and oppression would have produced a decline rather than an increase in productivity.

One could now argue that, by curtailing female productiveness, structures and superstructures promoted an even more important production factor: reproduction. For decades, scholars have debated whether the practice of agriculture, which, as noted earlier, appears to have previously been a predominantly female activity,⁵⁴ explained the Neolithic population explosion, or if it was rather demographic pressure that forced humans to resort to farming. Advocates of the doctrine would have to prove (i) that female oppression was necessary for the population explosion, (ii) that the explosion was necessary for the invention of farming, rather than the other way round, and (iii) that farming reduced our toil. Apart from the fact that such convoluted causal chains make functional explanations less plausible, the key element in this chain also fails. For with lower population densities, humans could feed themselves in a few hours, by gathering in food-rich areas and using the most fertile, naturally irrigated land.⁵⁵ By contrast, with high population densities they had to work much harder to obtain a smaller per capita yield. Human remains show that farming was accompanied by a marked decline in human health. Human bodies also became much smaller in response to scarcity.⁵⁶ Increased population density set us back, and by the time Marx and Malthus were writing, it was already taking us to the ecological crisis. Cohen himself admits that the magnitude of the current ecological crises refutes Marx's doctrine.⁵⁷ For, as Cohen notes, productive forces are being destroyed irreversibly and at an alarming rate, but no structural change or sufficiently large ideological transformation is taking place to overcome it. Moreover, sexism involves not just property rules but countless practices like neck-elongations, foot-binding, genital mutilation and uncomfortable outfits which tend to increase

rather than reduce the time and effort required for survival.

A Rational, Inevitable Process

Cohen considered two possible ways in which the alleged maximisation could be achieved. According to what he termed the Rational Adaptive Strategies or RAP version of historical materialism, rational agents, free from any ideology and living in a situation of scarcity, strive to use and develop productive forces which in turn give rise to different economic relations.⁵⁸ By contrast, according to the Choice of Relations or COR version of the doctrine, the rational search-and-selection process operates directly on the choice of relations which in turn develop the productive forces. Either way, the theory encounters difficulties in the face of a sexist ideology. It is implausible to explain this ideology either as the accidental outcome of purely rational attempts to develop productive forces or as the most rational form of organisation to achieve the greatest development of productive forces. Cohen defends his use of functional explanation by appealing to the extensive use of such explanation in biology, for example, to explain giraffes' neck elongation. For giraffes, however, being able to reach the leaves of higher branches has immediately beneficial, survival-enhancing effects, which could explain why their necks became longer. We do not have similarly simple explanations of sexist practices, including the neck elongation of women. We can come up with just-so stories, but functional explanations lose their plausibility when they involve convoluted causal chains, and large costs maintained for long periods.

Suppose there is a social form associated with high female productivity. If high productivity is the effect which grounds historical materialism's functional explanations, we would expect any such social form to spread. If it does not, we have seen an unobjectionable hypothesis refuted. But if we then come up with a story about how the decline of female productivity and its associated social form causes something else, which through some convoluted route ends up favouring male productivity, which always conveniently happens to

outweigh any loss of female productivity, we avoid the initial refutation but at the price of replacing our original unobjectionable hypothesis with a suspiciously ad hoc and complicated one.

Consider some well-known real-life examples. High female productivity is associated with matrilocality (married couples settle in the bride's area). Unfortunately, high female productivity is also found to lead to polygyny, which leads to patrilocality (settlement in the bridegroom's area).⁵⁹ For whilst a man may not be able to afford more than one unproductive wife, productive women make polygamy more attractive and profitable for men, which causes it to spread. Then polygamy leads to patrilocality, as the man does not move to the birthplace of any one wife. Instead, the wives are uprooted from their social networks, becoming easier to dominate in a harem, where they are not only less protected by blood relatives but also less productive than in their birthplace. The man compensates for this loss of productivity per wife by having more of them. Patrilocality, in turn, can cause a strong boy preference, as in China. Rational individuals prefer not to have a daughter who will move to another part of China, perhaps never to be seen again, when they can have a boy who will bring a wife who will look after her in-laws in the absence of her own parents. This boy preference sometimes causes overpopulation, as people keep on having children until they have a boy. At other times, it leads to female infanticide and/or the selective neglect of girls, with an associated loss of health and fertility. A boy preference tends to cause female scarcity, as in various parts of Asia, which can lead to bride-kidnapping raids. Raids and wars, in turn, may increase a boy preference and/or reduce the population. One could go on. But the point here is that what these familiar trends illustrate is not a 'rational search' for humanity's welfare, but rather the short-sighted interests of those who hold power. These practices in turn have consequences on the ownership of resources and on the development of deeply sexist ideologies. But there is no 'iron necessity'⁶⁰ and no rational selection of the

relations that are optimal for productive progress.

Let me conclude by returning to a counterexample mentioned at the start, that of the Congolese Lele. Despite their poverty, the Lele still find many ways to be unequal (for example, while some older men can claim for themselves several young wives, other men share a woman with the men of a whole village). And also despite their poverty, they display no inclination whatsoever to improve their condition. Their tools are extremely rudimentary, while their clothes, devoid of embellishments, are unsophisticated and torn. They have the possibility of learning and adopting a variety of solutions employed by their neighbours, but they do not. They simply show no tendency to progress at all. The Lele are not only counterevidence to historical materialism because of their resistance to change. They also contradict the idea that inequality promotes progress. In fact, the cause of their poverty and total stagnation is precisely their inequality. As anthropologist Mary Douglas discovered, the key to their stagnation lies in their social stratification both by gender and age. The men who work are those in an age-group which is too small to overpower the others, and which is also kept in line by the incentive of moving on to the next age-group which holds the highest status and power and can boss others around and take several young wives. The social structure is such that no coalition of interest can form to change society. Those with the power to change the rules (males in the older age group) are precisely those who no longer have any incentives to do so, having finally ascended to the stratum which reaps the benefits of the arrangement. Both polygamy and age stratification are common in Africa, and so some of the problems of the Lele are visible elsewhere. The fact that those with the power to change the world tend to coincide with those less interested in doing so is also a general phenomenon. The Lele just present a particularly clear case of how inequality, far from being functionally optimal for progress, can be the cause of persistent stagnation and misery. The Lele's neighbours, the Bushong, for example, live in a similar environment, and share some

of the Lele's traits, but they are less unequal, and their less oppressed women have developed a prosperous pottery and basket industry.⁶¹

We may thus conclude that when gender is taken into account, neither dividing history into periods corresponding to the existence of certain kinds of productive relations, nor the functional explanation of those relations and associated ideologies by their beneficial effects on progress appears plausible. I end by questioning whether this result is something egalitarians should regret.

V. Is Cohen's Marxism Left-wing?

Historical materialism is a secular theodicy that, like so many conservative and religious ideologies, portrays inequality, exploitation and indignity as inevitable, as well as necessary to conquer nature and bring about progress. Justifying injustice in terms of the greater good, speculating about its long-term, and thus uncertain, beneficial effects on the productive forces is a conservative idea. In fact, functional explanations like those suggested by Cohen, came to support conservative functionalism. The same is true of the rhetoric of egg-breaking and omelette-making.⁶²

A second conservative feature is the portrayal of nature as the enemy to be conquered. As in conservative religious doctrines, all other species are creatures that exist only to satisfy human wants. A third conservative trait is the understanding of progress in material terms, as the growth of technology and productive power. A fourth feature, characteristic of the extreme right, is the Marxist attitude to morality. While progressive movements, both today and in Marx's time, have stressed the importance of education for promoting the right virtues and moral values, and saw morality as the best ally of justice, Marx described it as mere rhetoric, class ideology and disguised self-interest, and Cohen did not focus on normative philosophy until he ceased to defend Marx. Fifth, as in right-wing politics, here the emphasis is on increasing productivity, so that eventually such abundance is reached that social conflict

disappears. The progressive view is to insist on attaining a fairer distribution without delay, as an end in itself and as a pre-condition for obtaining the right type of development.

Cohen's Marxism, then, is not a theory for environmentalists, feminists or egalitarian activists more generally. It looks more like a theory progressive social movements would oppose, rather than reflecting the views and values they advocate. For their emphasis is precisely on how much suffering and destruction is both unnecessary and pointless, how many social evils stem from extreme inequality and how important it is to consider redistribution rather than growth. On the whole, deeming traditional historical materialism a left-wing doctrine is at least questionable. It is true that many egalitarians still maintain an emotional attachment to the doctrine. This, however, is no evidence of its progressive character, but could instead explain why an insufficiently justified label is maintained.

Cohen himself explained his attachment to the doctrine on emotional grounds,⁶³ and though he did not question Marxism's progressive credentials, he became increasingly critical and detached from it. He came to think that defending it was not in any way beneficial to advancing egalitarianism, and he regretted the way the Marxist emphasis on major structural changes and historical necessity left no room for individual agency or a personal ethos. For example, he rejected what he called the Marxist 'obstetric motif', which reduced the role of individuals to awaiting the inevitable birth of socialism and then assisting only in the reduction of the birth-pangs.⁶⁴ Engaging in social reform could involve unwittingly delaying the death of capitalism, or worse still, could provoke socialism's disastrously premature birth. As a result, all individuals could do was await the inevitable birth. Cohen criticised this obstetric motif not only as false, but as something which 'has done a great deal of damage'.⁶⁵

Even for somebody like Mishan, who criticised growth,⁶⁶ technological determinism was a view that discouraged activism, including the very mild activism of employing female pronouns. As for Cohen, having recognised that the superstructure required 'a separate push

or jolt', he not only stopped defending historical materialism, but engaged in a feminism-inspired campaign to promote an egalitarian ideology which could provoke the required 'jolt'. In doing so, he saw himself as adopting a position that fell at the opposite end to the Marxist view he had previously defended. For his later, and more inspiring contribution to political philosophy, was not only explicitly inspired by Susan Okin and the feminist slogan 'the personal is political', but also centred on the importance of ethos. Thus, he ended up, as he put it: 'at the opposite end to the Marxist view with which I began. That is so because my emphasis on ethos is at the centre of my present view, and the Marxist view has [even] less time for ethos than ... the liberal one does'.⁶⁷

Now, one may ask, as one reviewer did, whether reflecting on these matters should have made Cohen less centred on distributive egalitarianism, and ownership of resources, and more open to the claims of relational egalitarians who emphasise relations of subordination or exploitation. Three caveats are called for here. First, distributive egalitarianism is a normative, rather than an explanatory doctrine. Second, his self-description notwithstanding, Cohen was a relational egalitarian in many ways, as is apparent from his emphasis on community, the interpersonal test, the egalitarian ethos, and his inclusion of the elimination of exploitation as part of the egalitarian ideal.⁶⁸ Finally, though Cohen failed to functionally explain resource maldistribution, and his Marxism made it hard for him to condemn it, he could still hold that ending female subordination and exploitation requires equal access to the means of production. This paper rejects *one* version of Marxism but not all materialist explanations. For example, causal, rather than functional, explanations may survive. And Cohen's residual materialism may help to explain why, whilst sensitive to relational egalitarian concerns, he also remained a firm advocate of distributive equality.

Conclusion

Historical materialism, at least in Cohen's unsurpassed reconstruction, is flawed by a lack of

gender awareness. When gender is taken into account, core claims made in the theory, such as that there were only four types of producers and different types could not co-exist in large numbers, or that their existence could be explained by their optimal functionality for promoting progress, appear implausible. Moreover, given the pervasiveness of sexism throughout history and its impact on relations of production, the theory ought to have been able to explain any sexist ideology by its contribution to material advancement. But such an explanation is missing. These flaws, moreover, do not seem to be incidental, but rather part and parcel of a general mode of thinking, which gives us reason to question whether, as an ideology, it has not been inappropriately located on the political spectrum.

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¹ G. A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence* (London: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. ix; J. Roemer, 'Introduction', in John Roemer (Ed.) *Analytical Marxism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 3–8; N. Vrousalis and P. Van Parijs, 'Analytical Marxism', in James D. Wright (Ed.) *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, 2nd edn. (Oxford: Elsevier, 2015), pp. 665–667.

² Consider, for example, Gayle Rubin, who appeals to the fact that female subordination pre-existed capitalism to criticise Marx for attributing female subordination to modern capitalism. Cohen's historical materialism withstands Rubin's critique because it can grant subordination preceded capitalism provided there is also a *functional explanation* of, for example, feudal female subordination. See Rubin, 'The Traffic in Women', Rayna R. Reiter (ed.), *Toward an Anthropology of Women*. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), pp. 157–210.

³ G. A. Cohen, *If You're An Egalitarian, How Come You're So Rich?* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000); G. A. Cohen, *Rescuing Justice and Equality* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

⁴ Cohen, *Rescuing*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 2, p. 117.

⁵ G. A. Cohen, 'Mind the Gap', *London Review of Books*, 14 (1992), pp. 15–17.

⁶ E. J. Mishan, 'Letters', *London Review of Books*, 14 (1992, June 25).

⁷ G. A. Cohen, 'Letters', *London Review of Books*, 14 (1992, July 9).

⁸ Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 1, p. x.

⁹ Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 1, p. 56; G. A. Cohen, *History, Labour, and Freedom. Themes from Marx* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 5.

¹⁰ Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 1, p. 166.

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- ¹¹ Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 1, p. 56; Cohen, *History*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 8, p. 5.
- ¹² Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 1, pp. 48, 71, 217; Cohen, *History*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 8, pp. 5, 31.
- ¹³ Cohen, *History*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 8.
- ¹⁴ M. Ogilvie and C. E. Hilton, 'Cross-sectional Geometry in the Humeri of Foragers and Farmers from the Prehispanic American Southwest: Exploring Patterns in the Sexual Division of Labor', *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, 144 (2011), pp. 11–21.
- ¹⁵ Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 1, p. 198.
- ¹⁶ Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 1, p. 197ff; Cohen, *History*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 8, p. 155ff.
- ¹⁷ Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 1, p. 64; Cohen, *History*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 8, p. 6.
- ¹⁸ M. Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1972).
- ¹⁹ Sahlins, *ibid.*, p. 2.
- ²⁰ F. Cancian, 'Maximization as Norm, Strategy, and Theory: A Comment on Programmatic Statements in Economic Anthropology', *American Anthropologist*, 68 (1966), pp. 465–470.
- ²¹ Cancian, *ibid.*
- ²² M. Harris, *Cows, Pigs, Wars and Witches: The Riddles of Culture* (London: Vintage, [1974] 1989); A. Sen, 'More Than 100 Million Women Are Missing', *The New York Review of Books*, (1990, December 20); R. Rappaport, *Pigs for the Ancestors: Ritual in the Ecology of a New Guinea People*, 2nd edn. (Long Grove: Waveland Press, 2000).
- ²³ M. Harris, *Cannibals and Kings* (New York: Vintage, [1977] 1991).
- ²⁴ M. Douglas, *The Lele of the Kasai*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963).
- ²⁵ Cohen, *History*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 8, p. 141
- ²⁶ Cohen, *ibid.*, p. 136.
- ²⁷ Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 1, p. 67.
- ²⁸ Cohen, *ibid.*, p. 68.
- ²⁹ Cohen, *ibid.*, p. 158.
- ³⁰ Cohen, *ibid.*, p. 65.
- ³¹ Cohen, *ibid.*, p. 69ff.
- ³² Cohen, *ibid.*
- ³³ Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), *Percentage of Agricultural Holdings Headed by Women. 1996–2007*. <http://www.fao.org/economic/es-policybriefs/multimedia0/female-land-ownership/en/> (accessed 15 November 2016)
- ³⁴ Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 1, p. 197ff; Cohen, *History*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 8, p. 155ff.
- ³⁵ Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 1, p. 67.
- ³⁶ See, for example, A. Ferguson, R. Hennessy, and M. Nagel, 'Feminist Perspectives on Class and Work', in E. N. Zalta (Ed.) *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2018), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2018/entries/feminism-class>, and A. Allen, 'Feminist Perspectives on Power', in E. N. Zalta (Ed.) *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2016), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2016/entries/feminist-power>, and M. Rosaldo

and L. Lampere (Eds.) *Women, Culture and Society*, (Redwood: Stanford University Press, 1974)

³⁷ See Okin, *Women in Western Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978). Incidentally, Cohen was aware of Chodorow's work, at least through Okin, and was also married to a psychotherapist while writing *Karl Marx's Theory of History, and History, Labour and Freedom*.

³⁸ See *Women and Revolution. A Discussion of the Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism* (Boston: South End Press, 1981). The book takes its title from H. Hartman's famous 'The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union', *Capital & Class* 3 (1979), pp. 1-33. See also H. Brown, 'Marx on Gender and the Family', *Monthly Review* 66 (2014).

³⁹ Personal communication from June, 1992.

⁴⁰ Cohen, *History, op. cit.*, Ref. 8. One reviewer asked if race or sexual orientation are *similarly* problematic for Marxism. Race often affects access to the means of production, and perhaps sexual orientation (when known) does too. Since a functional explanation seems unlikely here, both are potential counterexamples, but each will require its own investigation. The female counterexample, however, seems *more* damaging because it visibly and ubiquitously involves half the population.

⁴¹ Cohen, *ibid.*

⁴² Cohen, *History, op. cit.*, Ref. 8, p. 160ff.

⁴³ C. Dallos, *From Equality to Inequality* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), p. 134.

⁴⁴ In Chiapas, for example, only indigenous men, but not women, use footwear, hence the *Zapatista sin zapatos* (shoes), a practice Marcos tries to eradicate (source omitted for anonymity).

⁴⁵ Since some African grains are too hard for women to hand-mill, the UK Charity *Practical Action* designed a 'leg-mill' made from discarded bicycles. It was rejected because of a taboo against women cycling and another against men handling the grain (source omitted for anonymity).

⁴⁶ A. Chapman, *Hain* (Las Lajas: Zagier y Urruty, 2008).

⁴⁷ V. Morell, 'Why Dolphins Wear Sponges', [Sciencemag.org](http://www.sciencemag.org).

<http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2011/07/why-dolphins-wear-sponges> (accessed 15 November 2016)

⁴⁸ P. Rice, 'Women and Prehistoric Pottery Production', in Dale Walde and Noreen Willows (Ed.) *The Archaeology of Gender: Proceedings of the 22nd Annual Chacmool Conference*. (Calgary: Archaeological Association of the University of Calgary, 1990), pp. 436-443.

⁴⁹ R. Wrangham, *Catching Fire. How Cooking Made us Human*. (London: Profile Books, 2009).

⁵⁰ Wrangham, *ibid.*, pp. 37-55.

⁵¹ Wrangham, *ibid.*, pp. 129-146.

⁵² Wrangham, *ibid.*, pp. 147-179.

⁵³ Cohen, *History, op. cit.*, Ref. 8, p. vii.

⁵⁴ Ogilvie and Hilton, 'Cross-sectional Geometry', *op. cit.*, Ref. 13, pp. 11-21.

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- ⁵⁵ E. Boserup, *The Conditions of Agricultural Growth: The Economics of Agrarian Change Under Population Pressure* (Chicago: Aldine Transaction, 1965); M. Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1972).
- ⁵⁶ M. Hermanussen, 'Stature of Early Europeans', *Hormones*, 2 (2003), pp. 175–178.
- ⁵⁷ G. A. Cohen, *Self-Ownership, Freedom and Equality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 9ff; Cohen, *If You're An Egalitarian*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 2, p. 113.
- ⁵⁸ Cohen, *History*, *op. cit.* Ref. 8, p. 87–91.
- ⁵⁹ A. Korotayev, 'Division of Labor by Gender and Postmarital Residence in Cross-Cultural Perspective: A Reconsideration', *Cross-Cultural Research*, 37 (2003), pp. 335–372.
- ⁶⁰ K. Marx, 'Preface to the First German Edition', in Frederick Engels (Ed.) *Capital*. Trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling. (Moscow: Progress Publishers, (1867 [2015])).
- ⁶¹ Douglas, *The Lele of the Kasai*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 23; M. Douglas, 'The Lele: Resistance to Change', in Paul J. Bohannan and John Dalton (Eds.) *Markets in Africa*. (New York: Natural History Press, 1965), pp. 211–233.
- ⁶² J. Elster, 'If Marx or Freud had never lived?', in Axel Gosseries and Philippe Vanderborght (Ed.) *Arguing About Justice*. (Louvain: UCL Presses Universitaires, 2011), p. 222.
- ⁶³ Cohen, *History*, *op. cit.* Ref. 8, p. x; Cohen, *If You're An Egalitarian*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 2, pp. 180–181.
- ⁶⁴ Cohen, *History*, *op. cit.* Ref. 8.; Cohen, *If You're An Egalitarian*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 2, pp. 43, 50–57, 63–80, 102–115, 192–193.
- ⁶⁵ Cohen, *If You're An Egalitarian*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 2, p. 76.
- ⁶⁶ E. J. Mishan, *The Costs of Economic Growth* (London: Staples Press, 1964).
- ⁶⁷ Cohen, *If You're An Egalitarian*, *op. cit.*, Ref. 2, p. 3.
- ⁶⁸ See G. A. Cohen, 'On the Currency of Egalitarian Justice', *Ethics*, 99 (1989), pp. 906–944; and K. Lippert Rasmussen, *Relational Egalitarianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018) Ch. 4.