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Freedom and Democracy in an Imperial Context

Dialogues with James Tully

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ROUTLEDGE


Accessing Tully: Political Philosophy for the Everyday and the Everyone

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“Caminando, nos preguntamos”—“Walking, we ask questions.” We’re all continually discussing and debating effective struggle, effective ways of making change, and our core principles. We don’t have fixed answers, but in struggle, in walking, we engage in a process to answer them.¹

Introduction

As we celebrate and learn from James Tully’s wise and generous public philosophizing, our conversations continue to be about how to bring these insights to the everyday struggles, fears and aspirations locally. This chapter explores some of the challenges for doing so. At the local level, we believe that finding ways for citizens to access Tully would allow them to ascribe meaning to their actions, as individuals and as groups, that go beyond the immediate and exhausting struggles, inevitable changes, divisions and even failures that occur in the everyday of life. Reframing local individual and collective struggles as “glocal”² (*PPNK II*, 243) practices of citizenship, connection, and cooperation could provide a robust source of strength and encouragement where both are sorely needed.

In his latest treatise, Tully unshackles citizenship from the standard universalizing theories and turns our minds from a grand theory of citizenship to citizenship as negotiated practices of freedom. This empowering shift in turn inspires us to reimagine and rework the practices of citizenship as an integral part of anti-imperial and decolonizing movements. While Tully de-centers statist political theory by effectively shifting the thinking about citizenship to the glocal, we read him as we continue to be invested in and engaged with the often achingly isolated local, where the unavoidable, the urgent and the dangerous take up inordinate amounts of people’s imaginations and most, if not all, of their energy. We continue to examine how we can begin to connect their everyday struggles to global struggles, to struggles “*of and for*” freedom?³ (*PPNK I*, 159). How do we convince the people at the local level to appreciate their everyday practices as practices of citizenship?

We see two particularly challenging yet important local sites of struggle and citizenship where Tully’s insights could be applied to build glocal connections. First, we question how individuals who cannot imagine themselves as citizens

in any sense, let alone the active citizen-agents that Tully describes, and whose perceptions of powerlessness are continually reinforced through their interactions, can begin to connect their actions to the practices of citizenship.⁴

Second, we examine how diverse individuals, groups and agencies at the local level, who work tirelessly with the individuals just described, can connect with others working in other localities and to contextualize the particular methods they employ to struggle against immediate and urgent local issues within broader practices of freedom. In keeping with our focus on concrete localities, we explore these questions through four brief vignettes offered here.

Four stories

At the local level, on the “rough ground” of civic struggles with and over words (*PPAK* I, 159, n. 3) and in our everyday lives, we often find ourselves confronted with, and *caring* about individuals who cannot imagine themselves as citizens at all. Their lives, often their entire lives, have been experienced at a level of powerlessness where the objective evidence continually reinforces their perception that their existence does not matter.⁵

1. Women at the shelter

They are safe now. Their children are safe for now. In this wonderful, albeit poorly funded place, they are putting their lives together, piece by painful piece. But this point of refuge is temporary. Vulnerable from the start, now shattered by trauma and betrayal, their tasks are herculean. They must eventually find a place to live, a place they can afford, which will rent to single mothers, and which will hopefully be safe. They must find a way to support themselves and their family, find full-time employment or funding for training, navigate the system of a thousand forms to access any governmental support for income assistance, training, or child-care subsidy, all in the grind of hand to mouth poverty.⁶

There is no room for mistakes. Just this, while supporting, caring for, and protecting their children. And if they stumble beneath this weight, then the additional burden of “failure to protect” or the label of “neglect” pummels their reality even more. When talking to them, it is often hard to tell if they are depressed, apathetic, confused, ashamed, or simply exhausted.

2. Youth

When conducting focus groups for an inner city youth housing project with youth who were homeless and/or street entrenched, the youth were highly skeptical. Many, if not all of them, were raised partially or completely within the child welfare system. At a certain point, once they reached the magic age

of sixteen, a social worker decided to close their child welfare file—an action that cut off any realistic hope of being placed in a stable home with adult support.

These file closures were often the last drastic response to either too many failed foster home or group home placements, or too many failures to follow through on “basic” expectations such as attending school or work. The youths’ behaviors and their mistakes, which usually involved addictions and addiction-related theft, property damage, or violence, were undeniable. Yet there they were, as of that last fateful birthday and that last discretionary decision, with no home and no adult to fall back on or turn to. They actually verbally identified themselves as “throwaways.”

3. One inmate

An inmate’s parole hearing is scheduled. He is terrified and with good reason given his past experiences before parole boards. He has never been able to present himself well under stress or before authority. Instead, he becomes inarticulate and stoic, and he involuntarily shuts down, withdrawing inside himself. Consequently, over the years, various assessors have concluded that he is antisocial, angry, unemotional, and lacking confidence. He is smart, reads books on alternative economics, social issues, and history, but at this point, he has spent about half of his life incarcerated. This is not a simple matter of a confidence crisis or poor anger management, though these are struggles. He feels the world very deeply. And he is not antisocial.

We read the stack of psychologist assessments and police reports. We look for the positive bits in the overwhelmingly depressing and damning documents. As I encourage him to think about the questions that the parole board put to him, I feel as though I am sinking into a bleak, Kafka-like nightmare of shadows. As an inmate, he has been a part of a massive, entrenched bureaucracy that, from our experience, is monstrous in its lack of accountability, humanity, intelligence, and efficiency. From his perspective, the corrections bureaucracy is ponderous, dull-witted, and suspicious. Distressingly, many of the inmates seem to unconsciously emulate their environment in their behaviors, expectations of life, and relationships. Suggestions and efforts to prepare him for the hearing are deflected by fear, denial, and perhaps an underlying hopelessness.

Despite his extensive reading, he does not have a political analysis within which he can situate himself as an indigenous man in a federal penitentiary in a neoliberal, capitalist nation-state. Without an analytical framework, everything is personal and decontextualized. The psychologist is an asshole. The boss is a shit. The guards are mean bastards although rarely and somewhat

inexplicably, they can be good guys too. He believes that any vulnerability and trust that he has ever shown to anyone in the system has been taken advantage of. And, the parole board will be out to get him.

Given the miserable and disheartening reports, he is probably right—the parole board will see him as a potential re-offender. In fact, the parole board will see and judge him on the very behaviors and skills that have enabled him to survive in prison, but they will not make that connection, and instead will judge him as a personal failure for not being properly rehabilitated. He says he sees himself as a citizen, but it is fragile and sometimes impossible to maintain in the power plays he is located in. He primarily understands himself as condemned, as not mattering in the world.

4. Missing and slain indigenous women and girls

In Canada, over the past thirty years, almost 600 indigenous women and girls have gone missing or have been slain.⁷ Between 2000 and 2008, there were 153 new cases. Most of the disappearances and deaths occurred in the western provinces in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan.⁸ The majority of these women and girls were mothers. Some were students. Almost half of these cases remain unsolved. Time and time again they are described as sex trade workers and addicts as if that designation captures them all or somehow explains them away; as if their murders and disappearances were the logical result of poor lifestyle choices.⁹ Yet how does being a sex trade worker lessen the importance and tragedy of their suffering and erasure?¹⁰

A national research group, Sisters in Spirit, found that indigenous women and girls were more likely to be killed by a stranger than other victims of deadly violence.¹¹ What is so disturbing is that their murders and disappearances seem to have become almost normalized—a part of Canada. It is discussed and dealt with as a budgetary issue. For example, this year, the federal government eliminated the funding for the Sisters in Spirit research initiative, and then allocated ten million dollars over two years to “helping solve the issue of missing and murdered aboriginal women in Canada but it hasn’t yet said exactly how the money will be used.”¹²

Each of these stories sketches the experiences of citizens who live and die within a living vortex of political power and conflicted relationships. Much of their lives are defined by and reduced to the “wicked problems” they face and embody.¹³ The stories reflect the historical and contemporary political dynamics of Canada and form its invisible and ignored underbelly. In making them visible in this discussion regarding citizenship, we explore two sites of challenge and opportunity: First, how can people who do not even see themselves as agents, imagine or recognize

themselves as citizens? Second, how can the people committed to supporting or championing this first group of citizens, connect their everyday practices with broader practices of and for freedom?

The first site: imagining/recognizing oneself as a citizen

Tully redefines public political philosophy as an “interlocutory intervention on the side of the oppressed” (*PPNK I*, 17, n. 3).¹⁴ He also persuasively argues that:

It should not be the burden of the wretched of the earth to refuse to submit and act otherwise, as in the dominant theories of resistance, but of the most powerful and privileged to refuse to comply and engage in the work of global citizenship (*PPNK II*, 305, n. 2).

But does this mean the actions of the least privileged and powerful are without purpose or effect? Tully does not call on them to simply wait for global networks of negotiation to shift the imperializing forces that have such profound and devastating effects on their lives, and that place such overwhelming limits on their space for acting freely. Instead, Tully emphasizes the agency of the governed in any governance relationship and stresses that there is always freedom to act otherwise within the existing limits—even if that is only at its most basic, in how we think. There is always intellectual space for political theorizing because political philosophy is the purview of being an engaged and thoughtful citizen (*PPNK I*, 29, n. 3).

Here we draw on Foucault to help develop our analysis of citizenship at the local level. Foucault argued against power being described as if it can be held, accumulated, possessed or found:

[P]ower is not something that is held, but is something that is exercised in relations; relations of power are not exterior to other types of relationships, but are immanent and productive of those relationships; power comes from below and is rooted in the social nexus; power relations are both intentional and non-subjective; and where there is power, there is resistance.¹⁵

In other words, both the powerless and powerful are produced by the operations of power, and power is less a capacity than a shared process.¹⁶ This is not to suggest an equality of power among all people because as the above stories demonstrate, they are not similarly situated insofar as their ability to act. However, despite the painfully obvious power differentials, all the people in these stories are agents, and the task, according to both Foucault and Tully, is to figure out the citizenry options available to them in their different locations.¹⁷

Here though, we turn to what we see as a fundamental challenge required for such a task. Can women in a temporary shelter, shattered and faced with the overwhelming tasks for basic survival, identify themselves as citizens? Is there potential for them to be critically engaged in their world and learn to see themselves

as public philosophers? What about youth who identify themselves as “throwaways?” The inmate who understands himself as “condemned?” Where do the murdered and missing indigenous women and girls fit? The deep silences regarding these people’s social experiences within law, policy circles and political theory is inexcusable but not inexplicable.

At bottom, self-descriptions as “throwaways” or “condemned” reflect what Simone Weil describes as “a state of dumb and ceaseless lamentation,” common in those who have “suffered too many blows.”¹⁸ Stephen Jay Gould writes about silences from within:

Few tragedies can be more extensive than the stunting of life, few injustices deeper than the denial of an opportunity to strive or even to hope, by a limit imposed from without, but falsely identified as lying within.¹⁹

So the woman working as a prostitute who suffers a violent sexual assault on a “bad date” does not bother to report it to the police, or worse, the woman who witnesses the actual butchery of another woman tells friends, but denies even seeing this to police upon questioning, burying that horrific sight, along with everything else, deep under her crack addiction for years afterwards.²⁰ Even those in such oppressed positions that “still have the power to cry out” tend not to do so nor do they necessarily employ coherent or relevant language.²¹ Recall the inmate’s descriptions of various authority figures as “assholes,” “mean bastards” or “shits.” Street entrenched youth sometimes use similar language to describe foster parents who beat them with coat hangers and those who simply refused to let them use drugs in their home—a distinction that obviously must be sorted out. The silencing comes from within and without.

Moving out of these silences and incoherencies is a vital aspect to recognizing agency and understanding oneself as a citizen. We turn to the research of Belenky et al. to explore this further and we extrapolate their findings drawn from empirical research involving women to the people described in our stories.²² Belenky et al. developed a theory about the necessary link between the concept of self as a knower and the construction of knowledge, which they conceptualize as five stages of knowing.²³ Basically, where women are in relation to these stages is determined by their concept of themselves as learners and creators of knowledge. Significantly, according to this theory women move from a silent, fearful, and reactionary place to that of being an integrated knower with the confidence to be able to draw from both personal experience and information outside themselves to create knowledge. It is the place of silence that is most helpful to us here:

[S]ilent women have no more confidence in their ability to learn from their own experience than they have in learning from the words that others use. Because the women have relatively underdeveloped representational thought, the ways of knowing available to them are limited to the present (not the past or the future); to the actual (not the imaginary and the metaphorical); to the

concrete (not the deduced or the induced); to the specific (not the generalized or the contextualized); and to behaviors actually enacted (not values and motives entertained).²⁴

This inability to find meaning in the words of oneself and others is reflected in relations with authorities. As with the people in the stories, silent women can be passive, reactive, and dependent, seeing "authorities as all-powerful, if not overpowering."²⁵ When talking to the police or to social workers, one withdraws or shuts down or hangs his or her head, because that is what one does in relationships with authority. As will be explained later, these actions can also be interpreted as acting otherwise and as such, they do have political meanings that can be ascribed to citizenry. But do these actions have to be understood as political and as having meaning by the citizen? Is this political consciousness a necessary part of being a citizen? And how does this local citizenry building happen? How should this work take place and how should it be conducted?

As agents, everyone can interpret and give meaning to their encounters in the world and in doing so they begin to explicitly take up their role as active citizens. All of their actions matter. But interpretation and meaning are generated within the framework of our understanding of the world with us in it. According to James Boyd White, "We are meaning-making creatures. ... This capacity is the deepest nerve of our life, and our instinct to protect it and its freedom at almost any cost is a right one."²⁶ Given this, the work of citizenship at the local level needs a larger intellectual frame with a critical political analysis of the world. This is reflected in the words of Weil, "No one can love and be just who does not understand the empire of force and know how not to respect it."²⁷ Citizens need to understand how they matter and how their actions matter.

Fundamentally, then, the shift from internal and external silences, from dumb lamentation or incoherent cries to articulations of agency, begins with the woman working as a sex worker understanding that she and the other women matter. Their suffering and their lives matter. It begins with the inmate understanding that he and all the other inmates matter. He matters and his words and actions matter. What we want for the people described in our stories is an intellectual, political interiority in which they can find inner peace, where they can understand the dynamics of the world, where they can act on their agency and responsibilities, and most importantly, where they can learn that they are not worthless and they are not powerless. We want the inmate, the women and the youth to realize their importance as human beings, and their potential and power as engaged citizens and as public philosophers. We want them to be able to reinterpret their actions of survival and resistance within a larger political framework, which both includes them as citizens and connects their work to the work of other citizens in other localities.

This work of diverse and civic citizenship must include recognizing the ways that indigenous women, inmates, youth and others are already exercising citizenship, and acting otherwise, even in politically inarticulate²⁸ ways. After all, given

the centrality of agency in this discussion and to maintain the diverse citizenship perspective, the "other" cannot be "constructed" all the way down. Tully explains:

No matter how relentlessly domineering governors try to implant and internalize these role-related abilities without the active interplay of the patients, as if they are blank tablets, in behavioural modification experiments, repetitious advertising and total institutions of colonial and post-colonial discipline (such as internment camps and residential schools), they invariably fail to "construct" the other all the way down. They cannot eliminate completely the interactive and open-ended freedom *of* and *in* the relationship or the room to appear to conform to the public script while thinking and acting otherwise, without reducing the relationship to one of complete immobilization (*PPNK* II, 278, n. 2).

Thus, while keeping one's head down in front of the social worker can come from a place of silence, it can also be reinterpreted or transformed as an action of survival and resistance. The woman at the shelter applying for income assistance or child-care subsidy may hang her head not because that is the only role she can imagine to take in relation to authority, but because, the reality is, that social worker can make her life hell, and adopting the pose may be the most strategic to achieve what is needed for survival. A youth's insistence of extending hospitality to friends or relatives with no place to stay the moment an apartment becomes accessible, can be seen as acting otherwise, as he or she being the change they want to see in the world. Likewise the actions of the inmate when he sticks up for or advises another inmate being unfairly targeted by a guard or a gang, or simply recommends a book, are everyday actions of and for freedom within the limited space for freedom he occupies. Actions of survival and resistance can be seen in the everyday conversations where similarly situated people swap observations and strategies, identify patterns, and have a good laugh about the absurdities they see or are subjected to.

Civic activity emerges when citizens turn away from the *status quo*, imperial and colonial governance relations in which they find themselves to build new diverse, civic citizen relations, ways of acting and exercising political power.²⁹ The people in our stories must believe that they matter, and recognize their existing actions as actions of and for freedom before embarking on a similar undertaking from the ground up, turning away from the local oppressive *status quo* involving the complex of sexism, racism, consumerism, and addictions. Such a turning away involves the recognition of how the complex of experienced local oppressions is directly connected to the larger imperial, colonial, capitalist systems. Such a turning away must also necessarily include recognition of how each of us is implicated in both the creation and maintenance of oppressive power relations.

We want to be absolutely clear that we are not suggesting victim blaming, but instead are applying Foucault's theory of power dynamics to the examination of local individual and collective behavior.³⁰ Recognizing the space for thinking

and acting otherwise does not, in itself, expand the limited space of freedom that people have to exercise their agency as citizens. It is worth repeating here Tully's admonition that acting otherwise should not be an additional burden on the "wretched of the earth" (*PPNKI*, 305, n. 3). The purpose of recognizing this space is to recognize and use the interactive freedom within relationships of power that does exist. The foregoing discussion leads us directly to the importance of the second local site we have identified—that of the people working directly and in relationship with this first group of citizens.

The second site: connecting between localities and cooperating between practices of freedom

Remaining with the four stories, the second site of challenge and opportunity lies in the lives and practices of the individuals and groups that are most engaged with the citizens described in these stories. Can those who work to provide safe refuge and support to the families in the shelter connect their struggles for safety and stability to global struggles? Can those who work to connect with and respond to the most urgent needs of homeless and street entrenched youth, locate their everyday actions within broader practices of freedom? Do the guards, the parole board members, the psychologists preparing reports, program facilitators, and visiting elders recognize the inmate as a citizen? Can they connect their interactions with him within global networks of acting otherwise? Can the police, social workers and others interacting with and called to respond to the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls see them as citizens rather than merely victims who made bad lifestyle choices?

Every year, across the country, there are marches and rallies and vigils about the missing and slain indigenous women and girls. The internet bristles with sites and ongoing coverage about this issue. There are some shelters, some groups, some services, and some research devoted to ending the deadly violence against indigenous women. On its face, this issue is the best example of our four stories to demonstrate cooperation and connections between localities in action. And yet, the violence against indigenous women and girls continues and they still disappear and are slain. So why is there such an appalling disconnect between these on-the-ground efforts and the continued experiences of indigenous women and girls?

Elizabeth Comack argues that our theoretical approaches not only determine how we define problems, they also determine how we approach the problem (or not as the case may be) and what we think the solutions might be.³¹ For example:

To say that [conservative] functionalists are not well-equipped to handle an analysis of power does not mean that they are unaware of social inequities. Rather, they understand inequality in a particular way, as both *natural* and *functional*. Inequalities are natural in the sense that they emerge out of inherent or innate differences between individuals and groups (like those based on race or sex).³²

From a conservative functionalist perspective, society remains unexamined while crime is considered a “lower-class phenomenon.”³³ The solution is more law and order, and more “getting tough” on crime policies because the sources of crime and instability are not located in the larger society, but rather in the personal failures of individuals. The problem is the “risks that particular individuals pose to social security” and the solution is “the corresponding call for the state to take action to maintain law and order.”³⁴

Taking this a step further, how might the conservative functionalist approach consider the missing and slain indigenous women and girls? Likely, this issue would be understood as the result of a collective pathological weakness inherent in indigenous societies,³⁵ and a corresponding pathological weakness on the part of individual indigenous women and girls. The standard conservative response is to call for more law and order as was recently exemplified by the Honorable Rona Ambrose, federal Minister for the Status of Women, when she made the following comment:

One of the things I hear a lot across the country from women is that they want to feel safe in their communities and homes. That is why I’m proud that our government has done more than any other government in the history of our country to keep women safe. We have introduced new laws to ensure we keep rapists and murderers off the streets and to ensure we protect children from sexual predators. That is what women want.³⁶

Indeed. We feel so much safer already.

According to Comack, a standard liberal response would also fail to consider structural inequity and the solutions would likely focus on poor lifestyle choices and the need for more jobs and training.³⁷ And despite the tough on crime strategies or the various social services approaches over the years, indigenous women and girls are still the target of deadly violence. The hard question is, to what extent do the on-the-ground efforts across the country replicate the standard conservative and liberal approaches by failing to contextualize the local work within a larger political frame and analysis? Arguably, this is often the case. So given this, we must ask a further difficult question, do indigenous women and girls need another rally, march, vigil, or social service?

If we take this approach to the missing and slain indigenous women, then the focus expands beyond confirming the horror and articulating rights,³⁸ to investigating the creation of political, economic, and legal conditions in which indigenous women and girls are rendered vulnerable and disposable for sexualized and racialized anger and hatred.

Viewed in this light, the situation can seem overwhelming and hopeless, but Tully’s work encourages us to see that relations of power and relations of governance are actions that act on “free agents: individuals or groups who always have a limited field of possible ways of thinking and acting in response” (*PPNK*I, 23, n. 3). The way these free agents act on their possibilities are “practices of freedom”

(*PPNK I*, 23, n. 3). We have already discussed the importance we see in being able to access Tully's insights to encourage people to imagine and recognize themselves as citizens—as political philosophers within their limited fields. Now we turn to the importance of Tully's insight that there is a “diverse field of potential ways of thinking and acting in response” (*PPNK I*, 23, n. 3).

In particular, Tully describes three general types of cases where people act on their possibilities. First, individuals and groups may engage in practices of freedom by “‘acting otherwise’ within the rules of the game” (*PPNK I*, 23, n. 3). Second, individuals and groups may challenge a relation of governance on the ground or raise a problem with a practice by entering into “the available procedures of negotiation, deliberation, problem-solving, and reform with the aim of modifying the practice” (*PPNK I*, 24). Finally, where the procedures for problem-solving and reform are unavailable or fail because those exercising power bypass or subvert the processes, individuals and groups may refuse to be governed, and resist, escape or confront those who exercise power (*PPNK I*, 24). Tully argues that these three complex practices of freedom are always available, even in “the most settled structures of domination” and it is these practices that give human governance “freedom and indeterminacy” (*PPNK I*, 24). Implicit in the complexity and ongoing existence of these practices of freedom through the history of human governance is the possibility to act cooperatively with others exercising diverse practices of freedom.

Human service organizations and practitioners serving marginalized populations also operate themselves within limited fields of freedom. Many, if not most, practitioners have more in common with the people in the four stories than with the elite, primarily affluent and primarily male, decision-makers who create the laws and policies that restrict the ambit of their actions and interventions.³⁹ The work of care is feminized, chronically undervalued and denigrated as something less than “real work.”⁴⁰ The majority of human service practitioners are women, as are the majority of service-users.⁴¹ Susan McGrath points out that there “has not only been a feminization of poverty, but a feminization of social problems more generally.”⁴² Human services practitioners themselves often struggle in a demoralizing poverty or quasi-poverty, and all that goes along with that. While police officers and prison guards typically make a living wage, the youth workers and shelter workers may be living well below the poverty line themselves; the grinding hardship and lack of respect experienced in their day-to-day lives not so removed from that experienced by those they are supporting.

The “knowledge and experience gap between those who make [laws and] policy and those who must live with the consequences is enormous.”⁴³ This yawning chasm means the realities of law and policy often restrict both common sense and empathetic responses of human services practitioners to the human issues before them. Human services are increasingly subject to a “corporate style of management” that divides practitioners and their immediate supervisors from senior managers and policy-makers. Practitioners are “stripped from their professional judgment and discretion and expected to conform to a highly routinized

work environment.”⁴⁴ This bureaucratization has been shown to significantly denigrate and threaten care-work⁴⁵ and can create conceptual barriers for care-workers that prevent them from recognizing and acting on the citizenship of the people who access or are dependent on the services and care they provide. As Brian Wharf and Brad McKenzie explain:

[H]uman services professionals are employed by organizations that not only exclude those who receive services from participation but also transform them from “citizens” to “clients.” In a very real way, public sector human services agencies, organized in a hierarchal fashion and enmeshed by rules and regulations, are part of the problem.⁴⁶

Thus a particular challenge for many human services practitioners is being both uncomfortably close to, and at the same time part of, the larger problem affecting the transformation of certain people into *de facto* “second-class citizens.”⁴⁷ In our opinion, this transformation from “citizen” to “client” is also implicitly perpetuated within academia when it is suggested that there are bright lines between “political theory” and “social work.” We emphatically reject the notion that some citizens’ lived realities somehow sink below what should be addressed within the field of political theory.

A probation officer, a prison guard, a social worker, the director of the women’s shelter, a youth outreach worker, the police who investigate the murder cases of Aboriginal women and girls, all act, at least in their official capacities, within the “rules of the game.” As outlined above, these rules are increasingly bureaucratized and constrictive. They also are those of our society at our meanest, actually reinforcing the reasonableness of certain citizens’ perceptions of themselves as worthless, “condemned” or “throwaways.” As Wharf and McKenzie explain:

The feeling of loss of citizenship is experienced most acutely by those who are unemployed and who are dependent for a living. This is no wonder, since as a society, we are at our meanest when it comes to dealing with the long term unemployed, with street youth, with single mothers, and with those with addictions.⁴⁸

Yet according to Tully, all of this is not a complete barrier to their engaging in practices of freedom. Rather, their “ongoing conversation and conduct” has the potential to modify practices “in often unnoticed and significant ways” (*PPNK* I, 23, n. 3). The fields of and for freedom for practitioners or allies are not so different from those people in the center of the four stories.

As in the first site, practitioners need to know they and their actions matter, to recognize their current actions as actions of and for freedom, and to critically interrogate their own complicity in power structures that maintain an oppressive *status quo*. What we want for care-workers is to be able to recognize that they and their work matters, despite the chronic practical and rhetorical denigration

of their work. We want them to realize their importance as human beings, and their potential and power as engaged citizens and as public philosophers. We want them to understand that their words and actions matter, and to recognize the work of care as a vital, even central, aspect of the citizenship relationship. We want them to be able to reinterpret their actions of care and advocacy within a larger political framework, which includes both them and their service-users as citizens, and connects both with broader practices of freedom across other localities.

Iris Marion Young's work is helpful here to combat traditional conservative and liberal ideologies that so clearly do not touch on the conditions that leave so many citizens so abandoned and desperately vulnerable within our society. In her criticism of the increasing securitization in modern states, she explains and expands on recent feminist arguments "against a model of citizenship that requires each citizen to be independent and self-sufficient in order to be equal and autonomous."⁴⁹ These arguments "reject the assumption behind self-sufficient citizenship that a need for social support or care is more exceptional than normal."⁵⁰ On this view, the work of social support or care needed by inmates, street youth, or women is normalized and considered an aspect of their citizenship. Young continues:

People who need care and support ought not to be forced into a position of subordination and obedience in relation to those who provide care and support; not only should they retain the rights of full citizens to choose their own way of life and hold authorities accountable but also they ought to be able to criticize the way in which support comes to them.⁵¹

If youth workers and shelter workers can reject the prevalent view that their work is an unfortunate necessity due to the inherent weaknesses of individual youth and families, and instead see the support needed and offered as fulfillment of ordinary needs, their work actually becomes central, rather than functionally detrimental, to citizenship.

These arguments lead Young to maintain that proper security measures can be seen as part of the duties of government in a citizenship regime. She argues that "[t]he organization of reasonable measures to protect people from harm and to make people confident that they can move and act relatively safely" can be seen as one of the forms of "generalized care and support" that in modern societies, "ought to be organized and guaranteed through state institutions."⁵² This has particular resonance when one considers the plight of inmates within institutions, where violence is notorious, or for the erasure of vulnerable indigenous women. If prison guards or the police in the Vancouver downtown eastside can see their duties as part of a continuum of care and support owed to the citizens, and themselves accountable to these citizens, their everyday actions can be seen as meaningful acts of creation and maintenance of citizenship.

Human service practitioners also have a unique opportunity to continually

interrogate their own implication in power structures if they deliberately “think otherwise” from the *de facto* second-class citizenship described above, and view their service-users as full citizens, who retain the right to choose their own way of life and who can provide useful criticism for the services they provide. Again, this is not about heaping further responsibility on people’s shoulders that already are often over-burdened. Rather, it is about developing a broader frame of meaning that enables them to connect their everyday practices to other practices of freedom within a larger political project of citizenship. It is this broader frame of meaning that is imperative to generating new possibilities when cooperating between practices of freedom, either with others also working within the rules, or with those engaged in processes of negotiation and reform, or grassroots or political activism.

Conclusion

We began this chapter with the desire to make Tully’s work accessible to the struggles at the local level where being a citizen is problematic, and the concept of citizenship is shadowy at best and oppressive at worst (i.e. in the categorization and treatment of the marginalized). We have drawn on Tully to argue that even people who are at the margins have the space to act otherwise as forms of resistance, and that our challenge is to learn to recognize these disparate practices of citizenship in the behaviours and actions of people at the local level. We have also argued that local work must be conceptually and practically connected to a larger political frame to transform local work into the glocal. Finally, we have argued that those in relative positions of power in relation to the marginalized also have the intellectual and practice space to act otherwise in their treatment of oppressed people.

We have reached two other conclusions about citizenship at the local everyday of life. First, implicit acts of resistance must be made explicit in order to contextualize their interpretation and meaning-making. Second, we must critically interrogate and examine the ways that we work, whether through social services, direct political action, or in other capacities, in order to ensure that we are not simply perpetuating the *status quo* systems of oppression. In other words, more of the same (e.g. programs, research, groups, etc.) is not going to make a difference to anyone. The heart of civic citizenship is about transforming citizen/governance relationships (*PPNK* II, 281, n. 2)—and, we argue, transforming all our other power relationships.

Postscript

In his generous response to an early draft of this chapter, James Tully observed that the question of how a person moves from being a passive subject of unjust relations to being an active agent of change in and over that relationship is necessarily case specific (*PPNK* II, 2, n. 4). However, he wisely argues that there is a

general response that can be made wherein a person becomes an active agent by being drawn into ethical cooperative work and by participating in three types of activities; ethical practices of the self, practices of negotiation, and cooperative enterprises. According to Tully, ethical cooperative work requires fundamentally decolonizing the colonial relationships so that, “If we want equal relationships then we must treat each other equally in working on unequal relationships” and “If we want democratic relationships, then we must change them by being democratic” (*PPNK* II, 1). Furthermore, for the work to be substantively “ethical,” it must be “grounded in ethical practices of the self on the self” (*PPNK* II, 1). In other words, we have to “change ourselves in the course of unjust or oppressive or destructive or unequal relations” (*PPNK* II, 1).

We believe that Tully’s suggestions for the development of ethical cooperative working relationships are useful and potentially transformative for all the people in the stories we have shared here. We also believe that the very action of turning one’s mind to the questions raised in this chapter, and thoughtfully responding to them, is, in itself, useful and potentially transformative. It is part of re-imagining a different world and ourselves.

Notes

- 1 Pasha Malla, “The Question Remains,” *The Walrus* 7(10), 2010, 37 at p. 39.
- 2 James Tully, *Public Philosophy in a New Key: Volume I, Democracy and Civic Freedom* and *Public Philosophy in a New Key: Volume II, Imperialism and Civic Freedom*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, hereafter referred to as *PPNK*. Tully weaves together diverse strands of citizenship constructs to combine the local with the global, hence “glocal” citizenship.
- 3 Tully describes the “free activities of the citizens engaged in [the changes in citizenship and democracy], as struggles *of* and *for* more democratic forms and practices of participation in the games in which we are governed. And these struggles can be seen in turn as manifestations of an impatience for what Arendt and many other citizens call freedom” (*PPNK* I, 159).
- 4 James Tully, “The Work of Decolonizing Relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous People,” paper presented at the University of Alberta, 4 November 2010 [unpublished, archived with the author]. Emphasis in original [Tully, “Decolonizing Relationships.”] Tully describes the resulting ethos thus: “The relationships between natives and newcomers are in general not only colonial or imperial, but also *unequal* along almost all social and economic indicators, as we know. Moreover, growing up in these relationships can often generate and internalize attitudes and behavior of inferiority and superiority: *inferiority-superiority* complexes that have perverse effects and are difficult to change”.
- 5 We draw on the work of Ron Kraybill who has argued that “people experience powerlessness at various levels, each more debilitating than the previous.” These five levels of powerlessness are: (1) outcome—when one is overruled and does not get his or her way, (2) process—when one is not seriously consulted and the processes are unfair, (3) social esteem—one is excluded from fair decision-making and is not valued or respected as a person, (4) self-esteem—when one feels worthless regardless of other opinions, and (5) existential—when one’s existence is inconsequential and does not matter in the universe, when there is a profound loss of meaning and connection. Ron Kraybill

- (Summer 1987), "MCS Conciliation Quarterly at 10", reprinted in Jim Stutzman and Carolyn Schrock-Shenk, *Mediation and Facilitation Training Manual: Foundations and Skills for Constructive Conflict Transformation*, 3rd edn, Akron, PA: Mennonite Central Committee, 1995, pp. 96–7.
- 6 According to Conservative Senator Hugh Segal, it is harder to get welfare today than it was during the great depression and a person on social assistance in Canada has to comply with over 800 rules in order to keep getting their social assistance payments. Interview by Michael Enright, CBC Sunday Edition (19 December 2010) at <http://www.cbc.ca/video/news/audioplayer.html>. Senator Hugh Segal co-chaired the Senate Committee that authored the 2009 senate report entitled *In From the Margins: Poverty, Housing and Homelessness*. This 300-page report contains over 70 recommendations and has been virtually ignored by the federal government since its release. According to Enright, the report "was sweeping and it was swept right under the carpet."
 - 7 Native Women's Association of Canada, *What Their Stories Tell Us: Research Findings from the Sisters in Spirit Initiative* (2010), <http://www.nwac-hq.org/>. Over 150 of these women are still missing and over half the total cases remain unsolved (*Sisters in Spirit*).
 - 8 Also see Christine Welsh's important documentary, *Finding Dawn* (2006), National Film Board, and Amnesty International, *Stolen Sisters: A Human Rights Response to Discrimination and Violence Against Indigenous Women in Canada* (2004), <http://www.amnesty.ca/stolen SISTERS>. For an international perspective on missing and murdered women and girls, see the *Backyard (El traspatio)*, a movie based on real life events in a Mexico–US border town.
 - 9 There are no national statistics about the number of aboriginal women in the sex trade, but in the prairie provinces, the number of aboriginal women working as prostitutes is disproportionately high. *Sisters in Spirit*, p. 13.
 - 10 We know there are male sex trade workers also working in dangerous and often violent situations, but with this chapter, we are focusing on the missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls.
 - 11 Anne Dempsey, "Native women's group hopes for share of money Ottawa budgeted for cause," (21 April 2010), *Globe and Mail*, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/>.
 - 12 Harris McLeod (12 April 2010) ADMIN, <http://hilltimes.com/page/view/aboriginal-women-04-12-2010>. More recently, the federal government announced the approval of funding to "78 projects directly supporting more than 24,000 Canadian women ... This includes 34 groups that have received funding for the first time." Status of Women News Release (6 May 2010), <http://swc-cfc.gc.ca/med/news-nouvelles/2010/0506-eng.html>.
 - 13 See the discussion of "wicked problems" in Brad McKenzie and Brian Wharf, *Connecting Policy to Practice in the Human Services*, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 41. "Wicked Problems" are social problems with a number of features: they defy easy definitions, they are essentially unique, and are symptoms of another problem. These wicked problems "have no stopping rule." Rather, they must be "resolved over and over again." At the same time, solutions occur in contexts where there is no room for trial and error, because each solution has an immediate significant impact.
 - 14 We also draw on an earlier draft of this article, James Tully, "Two Meanings of Global Citizenship: Modern and Diverse," 2005, presented at the Meanings of Global Citizenship Conference held at UBC (Tully, Early Draft).
 - 15 Rebecca Johnson, *Taxing Choices: The Intersection of Class, Gender, Parenthood, and the Law*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002, p. 8.
 - 16 Ibid.
 - 17 Ibid.
 - 18 Simone Weil, "Human Personality," in *The Simone Weil Reader*, ed. George A. Panichase,

- Mt. Kisco, N.Y.: Moyer Bell, 1977, pp. 315–17, as reproduced in James Boyd White, *Living Speech: Resisting the Empire of Force*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006, pp. 224–6.
- 19 Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 1996, p. 50.
- 20 Robert Matas, “Week 21: Witness says she saw Pickton butchering woman,” *Globe & Mail*, 30 November 2007, <http://v1.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20071130.wpicktonweek21/BNSStory/specialPickton/home>.
- 21 Weil, “Human Personality,” pp. 224–6.
- 22 Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger and Jill Mattuck Tarule, *Women’s Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind*, HarperCollins Publishers, 1986. Despite a range of criticisms over the years, this has been a fairly enduring book in the social science field especially in adult education and feminist theories. The criticisms are mainly concerned with the limited extent to which the methodology can be replicated, the assumptions about race and racialization, and the hierarchy they organize their five stages of knowing into. Despite the criticisms, the theory resulting from this research can be usefully adapted to other groups of people to explore the cognitive experiences of powerlessness. Furthermore, the stages of knowing or construction of knowledge can be reconceptualized as cyclical and simultaneous rather than sequential and hierarchical (Belenky et al.).
- 23 Briefly, these are (1) silent knowing: basic survival of external authorities, (2) received knowing: only knowledge outside oneself is trusted, (3) subjective knowing: knowledge is only personal, private, and intuited, (4) procedural knowing: thinking is within systems and objective procedures, and (5) constructing knowing: integration of internal and external information to create knowledge.
- 24 *Ibid.*, pp. 26–7.
- 25 *Ibid.*, p. 27.
- 26 James Boyd White, *Living Speech: Resisting the Empire of Force*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006, p. 41.
- 27 Simone Weil, “L’Iliade, ou le poème de la force,” in *The Simone Weil Reader*, ed. George A. Panichase, Mt. Kisco, NY.: Moyer Bell, 1977 at 153; cited in James Boyd White, *Living Speech*, at 1.
- 28 Arguably, the people described in the vignette are very articulate. Calling oneself a “throwaway” is an exquisitely articulate act—if one is listening and able to hear. However, the messages contained in these kinds of statements are usually not understood very far beyond the speaker and so they remain incoherent to the larger world.
- 29 *Ibid.*, p. 280.
- 30 Johnson, *Taxing Choices*, p. 8.
- 31 Elizabeth Comack, “Theoretical Approaches in the Sociology of Law,” in Elizabeth Comack, ed. *Locating Law: Race, Class, Gender, Sexuality, Connections*, 2nd edn, Black Point, NS: Fernwood Publishing, 2006, p. 26.
- 32 *Ibid.*
- 33 *Ibid.*, p. 28.
- 34 *Ibid.* Comack also provides similar thumbnail critiques of other major political theories such as liberalism, Marxism and various feminisms.
- 35 Often these conservative perspectives are described in evolutionary terms whereby indigenous societies had not yet evolved to European levels of civilization, or are lacking the western rule of law. Arguably, the work of Tom Flanagan and Francis Widdowson fit this bill. See Tom Flanagan, *First Nations, Second Thoughts*, Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2000, and Francis Widdowson and Albert Howard, *Disrobing the Aboriginal Industry*, Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2008.
- 36 Carol Goar, “This is ‘what women want’? Highly unlikely” (14 May 2010) *The Star*, <http://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorialopinion/article/809069--goar-this-is->

- what-women-want.
- 37 Comack, "Theoretical Approaches in the Sociology of Law," p. 32.
 - 38 According to Tully, "Rights are neither necessary nor sufficient conditions of citizenship" (*PPAK* II, 371, n. 2).
 - 39 Brad McKenzie and Brian Wharf, *Connecting Police to Practice in the Human Services*, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 5. Policy-makers, legislators and senior bureaucrats who develop laws and policies regarding human services delivery are predominately male, middle-aged, and have usually comfortably lived most of their lives in middle to upper socio-economic brackets. On the other hand, both human services practitioners and those who receive services are predominately female, many living in poverty or quasi-poverty.
 - 40 Deborah Stone, "For Love Nor Money: The Commodification of Care," in *Rethinking Commodification*, Martha M. Ertman and Joan C. Williams, eds, New York: New York University Press, 2005, p. 281.
 - 41 Wharf and McKenzie, *Connecting Police to Practice in the Human Services*, p. 5.
 - 42 Susan McGrath, "Child Poverty Advocacy and the Politics of Influence," in Jane Pulkingham and Gordon Ternowetsky, eds, *Child and Family Policies: Struggles, Strategies and Options*, Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1997, p. 81.
 - 43 Wharf and McKenzie, *Connecting Police to Practice in the Human Services*, p. 5.
 - 44 Ibid.
 - 45 Stone, p. 286.
 - 46 Wharf and McKenzie, *Connecting Police to Practice in the Human Services*, p. 6.
 - 47 Ibid.
 - 48 Ibid., p. 7.
 - 49 Iris Marion Young, "The Logic of Masculinist Protection: Reflections on the Current Security State," *Signs* 29, 2003, pp. 1-25 at p. 21.
 - 50 Ibid.
 - 51 Ibid.
 - 52 Ibid.