Social Transformation and Moral Critique:
Comments on Jaeggi's *Progress and Regression*[1]

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1. Background commitments

One reason why the question of progress is fraught is, of course, because what one counts as progress depends on background values. Sometimes values are built into the practice, e.g., I make progress in being a teacher, if I gain new skills in communicating knowledge. I make progress in knitting a sweater, if I finish more rows according to the pattern. Sometimes the values are more personal, e.g., I make progress in achieving my "look," if my appearance better captures how I want to present myself; this may involve *not* following the knitting pattern but creating something quirky and original instead. And sometimes the values are moral or political, e.g., I make progress in promoting democracy by offering elderly voters rides to their polling place (before mail-in ballots were available). I hope such judgments of progress are plausible, if not obvious.

So if it is this straightforward to talk about progress, what is the problem? In her book, *Progress and Regression*, Jaeggi is responding to an historical understanding of progress that is now widely rejected, and with good reason. She describes it in these terms[2]:

> I will broadly outline four characteristic features of the narrative of progress – four distillations of its problems and possibilities that will guide my attempt to reconstruct the concept. They are the *unbreakable chain of progress*, its *irresistibility,* progress as a *developmental process*, and progress as a l*oss-free enrichment or accumulation*. (3)

To make clear, the progress at issue is broad societal progress, not progress in a particular activity. Jaeggi rejects such a *narrative* of progress, and aims, instead, to reconstruct a *concept* of progress that is essential to Critical Theory (and critical theories more generally).[3] Jaeggi points to several considerations that count against the narrative[4]:

> (i) It is overly *totalizing:* it suggests that there is a "unbreakable chain" connecting "technological, social, moral, legal, and political progress" (6). She points out that there are interdependencies between these domains, but they are not as tightly woven together as presumed in the original narrative (12, 14). The focus, more recently, has been on whether there is broad moral/political progress (7, 12).

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[2] In what follows, page numbers in the English translation of Jaeggi (2025) will be provided in parentheses.

[3] See (Jaeggi, 14). I will follow the convention of using 'Critical Theory' in upper case for Frankfurt School critical theory and 'critical theory' in lower case for the many interdisciplinary critical projects such as feminist theory, critical race theory, queer theory, disability studies, social stratification theory, and the like.

[4] It is surprising to me that this conception of progress is worthy of extended discussion, for it seems to be highly implausible and not broadly endorsed. But sometimes exploration of a discarded view brings new things to light. I take it that this is Jaeggi's motivation for her study.

(ii) It presumes a *transpersonal agent of history* that is "quasi-automatic" and "irresistible" (11, 7). But "progress, we believe today, results from the actions of agents. It must be fought for and doesn't happen by itself." (7)

(iii) It "lends itself to an untenable hierarchization of developmental stages" (7). This has, historically, provided "a dubious pretext for various forms of ethnocentrism and imperialism" (8).

(iv) It can become an "epistemic obstacle" (9). It prevents us from seeing the more problematic side-effects and long-term dysfunctions of our form of life, from acknowledging the loss of skills, and leads to a general forgetting of the value of existing (and past) practices.

Jaeggi argues that these problems with the original narrative stand alongside a need for an alternative notion of progress to do justice to the project of critical theory. So why, on her view, does critical theory need a concept of progress? Technological and material improvements in our lives are not, themselves, sufficient to say that there is moral or social progress, however, she suggests that there are links between such improvements and "our ways of communicating and our practical living and working arrangements" more generally (11). For example, the availability of vaccines is relevant to our collective well-being and a better form of life.[5] Further, as critical theorists, we call for social transformation, but not just any social transformation will do. Some are better than others (12-13, 111). But how do we decide which are the better ones? Importantly, what seems especially important to Jaeggi is *how* social transformation occurs. "the question of progress is not primarily or exclusively normative, but above all social-theoretical and social-philosophical. It concerns not only the criteria for what is good or desirable; it also deals with how a society functions and how the conditions for changing it should be understood" (13, also 11-12).

Overall, Jaeggi's book argues that to avoid the original narrative of progress and gain the benefits of the concept, we should opt for a *processual* understanding of social transformation (15). To put it briefly, "Social change arises as a reaction to crises and contradictions – that is, to mounting pressure from an unresolved problem" and this occurs "in the complex, reciprocal interaction of variously connected ensembles of practices" (14). Such change counts as progress not because it arrives "at a specific predetermined state or in realizing a specific pre-determinable good." Rather "progress is a self-enriching experiential learning process for finding solutions to problems that are subject to systemic blockages under conditions of regression" (15, also xii, Ch. 1, esp. 31-33).

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[5] Jaeggi's position on the evaluation of events or changes is a bit unclear to me. Although she acknowledges that changes to our material conditions matter, and that change and its consequences are contingent, not inevitable (7, 110), she also says, "There are good reasons for maintaining that the discovery of penicillin, the invention of the washing machine, or the rise of the printing press did not, or *at least not inherently*, lead to any improvement in social or moral conditions" (8, my italics). Seriously? The discovery of penicillin didn't lead to *any* improvement in social or moral conditions? It is estimated that penicillin has saved at least 500 million lives. (https://www.path.ox.ac.uk/centenary/our-history/) She seems to be saying that it didn't lead to any improvement (in fact) because it didn't do so *inherently*. Is the "inherently" supposed to suggest that in order for an action or event to be judged good, it must be *necessarily good*, no matter what the circumstances, or good *in itself*? That strikes me as a bizarre condition to place on the evaluation of something as good or bad. If this (or something equally focused on *inherent goodness*) is a background assumption of the discussion, in my opinion, it couldn't be more morally loaded (with a Kantian conception of the moral?) or more controversial.

Thus, it seems that Jaeggi is primarily interested in developing a theory of social transformation. As she puts it, as critical theorists, we need a theory of how society functions and how it can be changed. Secondarily, we need a normative basis for saying that some change counts as progress. But we must provide this without relying on substantive moral principles. Why do we need to avoid relying on substantive moral principles? This is less obvious from her text, but it seems that she is mainly concerned about (a) paternalism (8, 166-168) and "triumphalist Whig history" (16), and about (b) relying on values and norms that do not arise from and through the attitudes of individuals in practice (taking successful psychotherapy as a model of both personal and social change). (See Ch. 6, esp. 163-66, 205n1).

Jaeggi's book is a powerful and timely discussion of progress. I am sympathetic with much of what Jaeggi says about the flaws in the historical narrative of progress and with her thoughtful account of how forms of life can respond to crisis well. I am based in the United States, and it is clear that structures supporting the rule of law and basic human rights such as due process, freedom of speech, universal franchise, as well as rights to healthcare and education, are collapsing all around us. These existing structures were far from perfect, but they did provide a framework within which progress seemed possible. How could it fall apart so easily? Her discussion is, as always, extremely illuminating.

However, I am concerned about two things. First, it is striking to me that Jaeggi is offering a theory of social transformation but seems to provide little empirical backing. There is an enormous amount of work in history, sociology, and political science on social change and social movements that seems to play little role in her discussion. For example, it is a strong empirical claim that social change, or more specifically, social transformation, occurs as a response to crisis and contradiction.[6] Of course this often happens, but is it necessary? Is it even true in all actual cases? I don't see much empirical evidence for this claim offered in the book. I worry that she is proposing an a priori delimitation of what counts as progress. But such a priori delimitations of a domain of inquiry block fruitful inquiry (Putnam 1975/1962). Moreover, there is definitely a risk of paternalism in evaluating social formations, but Jaeggi doesn't defend the claim that paternalism is inevitable if we engage in substantive moral critique. Mainstream international development has faced criticism for decades now, and new methods have emerged that are responsive to the problems Jaeggi mentions (e.g., Kabeer 1994; Agarwal 1994; Sen 1999; Escobar 2011, 2018; Kabeer et al 2013). Why isn't Critical Theory engaged with these new forms of international collaboration rather than focusing on the old (and admittedly still too common) colonial efforts? Although there is much to say about empirical background for Jaeggi's discussion and the motivation for her approach, I won't develop this line of thought further in these comments. Strict limits on space require that I focus my discussion more narrowly.

Second, Jaeggi provides an account of the normative basis for distinguishing better or worse forms of social transformation that focuses primarily on epistemic blockages rather than moral considerations in

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[6] She doesn't say, for example, that social change *sometimes* occurs as a response to change and contradiction, but in fact, seems to suggest that this is a defining feature of social change. This is worrisome because it would seem to decide in advance of empirical and historical research the conditions for social change and transformation. This deflects attention from cases worthy of consideration. Streeck and Thelen (2005), for example, argue against the suggestion that ruptures are necessary and develop a powerful account of incremental change. Wright (2010) argues that there are three different kinds of social change, not all of which are prompted by crisis. Tilly & Tarrow (2015) argues over many works that social change occurs through routine political contention and typically occurs incrementally. See also Tilly (2002), Tarrow (2011).

order to avoid commitment to substantive moral claims. I agree that epistemic blockages can be a problem, but calling out epistemic failures can be as paternalistic and damaging as calling our moral failures, so it still exposes the view to moral risk. Work on epistemic injustice is relevant here, for critics who claim to identify "blockages" and seek to change local epistemic practices may themselves be relying on an epistemology of ignorance (Mills 2007, 2022). In short, claims of epistemic superiority can be as arrogant, demeaning, and misguided, as claims of moral superiority. My suspicion, in fact, is that the epistemic and moral issues are linked, for often a "blockage" is identified by reference to a purported normative claim that is assumed to be true. (We will return to this point.)

The anxiety about substantive moral critique seems to be a distinctive feature of recent Frankfurt School Critical Theory and is not one that grips most critical theorists. Feminist theorists, for example, are full-throated in their moral condemnation of sexist and androcentric practices. Jaeggi refers to an oft-quoted passage in Marx on the nature of critical theory as "the self-clarification (critical theory) to be gained by the present time of its struggles and desires" (2018, 355n on Epigraph). But interpreting this quote is challenging. Drawing on this same quote (differently translated), Nancy Fraser suggests that "A critical social theory frames its research program and conceptual framework with an eye to the aims and activities of those oppositional social movements with which it has a partisan, though not uncritical identification" (Fraser 1989, 113). As a critical theorist, I am allied with multiple overlapping and intersectional social movements, all of which take a moral stand on the wrongness of oppression. This is a substantive moral commitment and one that I refuse to set aside in my theorizing. Following Young (1990), I hold that oppression takes many forms, including (but not limited to) exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and systemic violence; all of these are morally wrong and a culture that perpetuates them is rightly subject to moral critique. The basis for the wrongness of oppression is not "contradictions," and, to my mind, to seek an underlying contradiction is not necessary to promote and often delays justice. I will develop this second concern about substantive moral critique in §2.

2. Moral critique

I agree with Jaeggi that the social critic who relies on substantive moral principles faces moral and epistemic risks. For the purposes of the discussion, let's distinguish a critic who is part of a local social movement in a particular social context, and a critic who is not and, instead, is merely an observer of the local practices. Of course there is a kind of continuum between these extremes and there are also other relevant factors about the situatedness of a critic, but focusing on this distinction for the moment will be helpful.[7]

A mere observer of a set of social practices may be quite clueless about what's really going on and why people are doing what they do. They may also fail to understand the costs of doing things differently. So there are severe epistemic risks in critique. Critique depends on descriptive claims, and misperceiving the

[7] This might be considered parallel to the Critical Theorist's distinction between internal and external critique, both of which are rejected in the option to engage in immanent critique. As I understand it, however, immanent critique typically moves to a meta-level to provide epistemic critique. Because I am defending an alternative basis for substantive critique, I am focusing, for now, on what might seem to be internal and external forms. My view is that this is a false choice and most social movements are neither purely internal nor external. In short, the standard Critical Theory representation of the issue is misguided because it fails to recognize the kinds of collaboration and solidarity that social movements create.

situation may undermine the validity of critique (Khader 2019). The outsider may also bring to the situation a parochial set of normative assumptions that don't apply in the case at hand. For example, a simple normative mistake may rest on a descriptive error. Suppose an outsider thinks that the apt way to show moral respect for others is to shake hands when meeting them; those who refuse to shake hands, they claim, are being disrespectful, which is morally problematic. But in the culture in question, touching of any sort is thought to be disrespectful except in kinds of relationship that take time to establish, but other gestures of respect are shown to strangers or new acquaintances. Obviously, one should not judge that the community is morally deficient for failing to show respect to strangers simply because they lack the norm of shaking hands. This is a simplistic case, but more generally, criticizing a culture one doesn't understand, i.e., critique "from the outside," is both epistemically and morally risky. In cases where critique rests on false descriptive or normative presuppositions, the critique is unwarranted.

The situation is different if one is embedded in a social movement in the context. Critique still brings with it epistemic and moral risks, but they are lower. Those involved in a social movement with those embedded in a culture have first-person or testimonial familiarity with the practices they are critiquing and are relying on a set of values shared by those in the movement. Both the description of the target practices and the values motivating critique may be controversial, but the mere fact that there is controversy does not show that the critique is unwarranted. Societies are not monolithic. Of course there remains a risk that the critique is unwarranted and relies on false presuppositions, but because the movement is an effort by locals and their allies to change the local practices, it would be odd to call the critique paternalistic or imperialist. If, as I read Marx, critical theory should be deeply allied with a social movement, then critical theorists must be careful, but this does not require abstaining from substantive moral or epistemic claims that emerge in a movement; in fact, it may require commitment to them.

It is also important to note that critical theory faces further epistemic and moral risks arise because it is oriented towards action. It is one thing to have a justified critique of a social formation, and another to intervene. Navigating the moral terrain of intervention adds further challenges. A justified critique can go wrong if the recommendations for social change are simply imposed on others. The moral wrong does not lie in the theory, but in the application of it.

It might be helpful to start with a case of an individual. Suppose a woman, let's call her Norah, goes out at night dressed in a short tight skirt, a tank top, and high heels and she is raped by a stranger on the street. Given the dominant narrative, Norah may come to believe that she "asked for it" and it is her fault. She may not see that the man's actions as wrong or blameworthy because she believes she is guilty for failing to signal her "unavailability" properly. Due to her shame, she may not report it. In such a case, what the man did was morally wrong, regardless of her refusal to accept that.[8] It may be that the woman cannot see this due to "epistemic blockages" of ideology. Of course, those who act from a critical feminist perspective must careful and respectful as we encourage her to report the rape: we may need to defer to her sense of what is right for her, or what makes sense in the context of her culture. We may even back up her lies when we go with her to the hospital and she tells a different story at intake about her injuries. However, we may also accompany her to a support group for survivors or connect her with other feminist

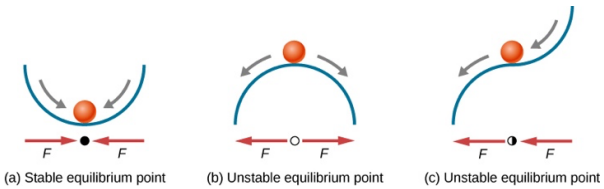
[8] Of course, there are many cases in which it isn't obvious whether something is a case of rape or not. And social understandings of rape have evolved over time. I am not questioning that. I'm using what may seem to be a stereotypical example of stranger rape because there are clear cases, and I want this to be one.

organizations who specialize in such support. But one of the reasons we know that there are epistemic blockages that need to be addressed is that she doesn't recognize *that the rape is a moral wrong.* Note that this is an example, of the kind suggested above, where we determine that there are epistemic blockages because the conditions prevent moral knowledge. Focusing on epistemic blockages does not cleanse the theory substantive of moral commitments.

Scale this up to a community so broad social critique is at issue. Suppose that in a community women never go out at night without a male partner and even then, are very careful about what they wear and where they go, out of fear of sexual violence. Perhaps they are not even *allowed* to go out at night by fathers, brothers, husbands, and take this to be a reasonable restriction of their activities. The gendered structure of this community clearly appears to be oppressive. It uses systemic violence to render women relatively powerless, in Young's sense (1990). But just as we saw in the case of Norah, it is a very complicated question how to understand and address this problem. There is a, however, a justified feminist critique of such a social structure. I would suggest that even if one has a fully justified account of the wrongfulness of these practices (no false presuppositions, either epistemic or moral), one should not attempt to intervene without joining or allying oneself with a local movement to change the structure. Just as joining a local movement mitigates the epistemic and moral risks, theoretically; it also mitigates the epistemic and moral risks in acting. The risks of backlash remain, but there is no way to avoid risk entirely. But as Rebecca Solnit says, "to live is to risk" (Solnit 2016, 5).

One might wonder, however, whether such a change – one that transformed the social conditions to allow women greater self-determination – counts as social transformation. I admit that to judge this we must consider the change over a period of time. If the change is temporary or is only sustained through constant pressure by activists, then it wouldn't count as transformation. Why? Societies are complex dynamic systems that maintain an evolving equilibrium (Heydari Fard 2022). (I think of it as a spiral rather than a circle). Social change is constant. Social transformation, however, requires more than mere change. Consider a marble at the bottom of a bowl. The bowl can tip, and the marble will move, but will return to the bottom. Changes happen, but it isn't transformation. If the sides of the ball are high enough, the marble will continue to return to the bottom, even if the bowl's motions are quite extreme. To transform the system, the ball would need to move to a new equilibrium. This happens if the system reaches a tipping point. (See figure 1.[9])

Figure 1



(a) Stable equilibrium point (b) Unstable equilibrium point (c) Unstable equilibrium point

In (a), the system is stable. In (b), it has reached a tipping point but could go either way. In (c), probability of change at the tipping point favors the ball falling to the left. What we are looking for in social transformation that counts as progress is a movement to a new (dynamic) equilibrium that is more just. I've argued elsewhere that transformation can happen in a variety of ways, e.g., through change in

[9] Image from https://pressbooks.bccampus.ca/universityphysicssandbox/chapter/energy-in-simple-harmonic-motion/

the system dynamics that are realized through social norms/meanings, material conditions, institutions, and such; these happen most effectively through social movements (Haslanger 2023; Heydari Fard 2024). But the change that produces transformation may be incremental and need not be intentional. On my view, to understand how such transformation occurs requires empirical and historical analysis.

3. Praxis

I argued in §2 that the moral risk of critique lies primarily in practice, i.e., in intervention into a social formation. As I understand critique, it combines theory and practice. Vanessa Wills interprets Marx this way:

> As Marx famously put it, "The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it." But the rub is that we cannot do one except by also doing the other. This is the core of what it means to do theory from the point of view of labor. How does the world appear while transformed by our own hands? What light does our own collective power of creation cast upon us as we join our hands and set good things into motion? (Wills 2024, 243)

Marx, of course, was quite suspicious of philosophical theory not grounded in practice (Marx 1845). There are several reasons to be suspicious. One is that theory tends to reify its objects and view them as static, whereas practice changes the world and makes new truths. Another is that theoretical knowledge (epistemē) is limited in its grasp of the world without practical knowledge (know-how, or technē). We come to understand how the world works, and also understand ourselves, our capacities, our frustrations, and our sense of meaning, through action. Reflection can take this practical understanding further, but reflection without action is shallow, at best.[10] And further, by gaining and exercising know-how together, the possibility arises to shape new practices, and collective reflection deepens our understanding. Again, consider Wills' description:

> Human beings, through socially mediated labor, intervene consciously and purposively into their environments in order to satisfy their natural needs. In so doing, they transform both their environments and themselves, produce new forms of social interaction, and develop new powers and in turn, new social, historically arisen needs. They produce themselves not merely as natural, but also as social beings. In unalienated labor, human beings recognize this continual process of satisfying social, historically arisen needs and developing new powers as an end in itself and as the realization of human beings' essential nature as natural and social beings who satisfy their needs through labor. (Wills 2024, 81-2)

As I understand the critical project, the theorist's efforts must arise from and in response to the point of view of labor, or more generally practice. Fraser suggests (in the quote above) that the critical theorist must frame its research program "with an eye to" the oppositional social movements it is allied with. I would go further. Critical theory is a form of praxis that is embedded in a social movement. As Paulo Freire says, "[those whose] task it is to struggle for their liberation together with those who show true solidarity, must acquire a critical awareness of oppression through the praxis of this struggle…

[10] I take this to be true in the natural sciences as well. Experimentation, fieldwork, empirical research undertaken in community, is necessary. A priori science is not credible.

[Overcoming oppression] can be done only by means of the praxis: reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it." (Friere (1970/2005, 51).

Given this, I take critical theory to happen as part of a movement, not simply in a seminar room or lecture hall. It requires situated knowledge of the conditions that give rise to the movement and is part of a collective response to those conditions.

However, one of the traditional understandings of Critical Theory requires that the theory *itself* emancipatory (Geuss 1981, 2). As I understand it, agents who "hold" the Critical Theories are freed from self-imposed coercion and "self-frustration of conscious human action" (Geuss 1981, 2). In this way, the agents are emancipated. How does this happen? As I interpret it, insofar as we are interpellated or disciplined as social subjects under conditions of oppression, we actively participate as agents in reproducing the system. If we are ideologically oppressed by that system, we participate in our own oppression. Critical Theory enables us to learn, theoretically, how the system recruits our agency, so we come to understand our "true interests" and are "freed" from self-imposed coercion. This "produces" enlightenment and emancipation. But critique arises in practice – specifically in the practice of acting collectively to change the current (unjust) conditions – then have we met this condition? Is theory *itself* emancipatory?

This sounds implausible to me. Theory can be enlightening, and enlightenment, under the right conditions (organizing effectively with others who are similarly enlightened) produces emancipation. I'm doubtful even of this role for theory. Perhaps because I grew up as a feminist in the United States, I think of feminist knowledge in terms of "consciousness raising" and consciousness raising is an activity one does with others (MacKinnon 1989; Mansbridge & Morris 2001). It may involve reading books or studying, but consciousness raising is open-ended, collective, and responsive to the context. Consciousness raising is a new practice that reshapes practices and even creates them. I also believe that feminist scholars have been able to produce theory because they were in some way engaged in raising and studied others who had done something similar.

So, on my view, theorizing, itself, is not emancipatory, and critical theory is best understood as praxis. Through a combination of action and reflection, one gains knowledge of where the barriers to social change are and how they become entrenched; one also develops relations of solidarity with others around shared values that are identified and articulated together; and as a group with this knowledge and solidarity, new transformative practices can not only be envisioned, but materialized in action.

Does this work rest on substantive moral claims? A methodology of this sort – relying on praxis to change social practices – may not prompt emancipatory social change or social justice, for there is no guarantee that the analysis of the structure or the values around which solidarity is built are epistemically or morally sound. For example, in the United States, the MAGA (Make America Great Again) movement has been built around analyses and values that distort our current predicament and push for change that is morally objectionable. This is where substantive epistemic and moral commitments become essential. The methodology of praxis generates emancipatory social change only if it rests on sound epistemic methods and moral principles (Haslanger 2021). If praxis is guided by theorizing that is not empirically adequate or justifiable on epistemic grounds, or if it is guided by mistaken or distorted values, then it is unwarranted.

How, you might wonder, are we to judge the adequacy of value judgments? Philosophers have engaged this issue for millennia, and although consensus has not been reached about method, any attempt to develop a moral epistemology begins with some core cases and builds from there. These core cases reveal indeterminate values that are broadly shared, and may even be considered essential for human cooperation, which is, in turn, essential for human survival (Sterelny 2012, Anderson 2014). I follow Balkin (1998) in thinking of value as path-dependent articulations of such broad and indeterminate values.

> We concretize our indeterminate value of justice by creating human institutions and practices that attempt to enforce it and exemplify it, even (and especially) if we recognize that all of these institutions are imperfectly just. Of course, because justice is an indeterminate standard, there is no necessary way to exemplify it. The value of justice does not tell us, for example, whether a democratic legislature should have one, two, or three houses. Hence the institutions that people construct to exemplify justice may be different in different eras and different lands. (1998, 30)

I take it that Balkin's point is not just that there may be different ways of exemplifying well-defined abstract rules or procedures (be they aesthetic or political), but that our ultimate values are indeterminate and any attempt to render them determinate will be specific to cultural and material conditions, so may not be transposable to other conditions. (See also Khader 2019.) Our practices embody an evolving specification of our "inchoate and indeterminate" drive to evaluate in response to our material (biological, geographical, economic) conditions. Those transformations that conflict with our indeterminate values, or rest on false presuppositions, do not achieve progress.

The point here is not just that we are fallible, i.e., that there is a truth about the nature of justice (for all times, all conditions) out there waiting to be found and we have only fallible access to it. The claim is that what is just or unjust does not float free of our sensibilities and our practices, and the relevant practices are revisable, open-ended, and depend on our collective and critical efforts to go on, together, from here. This is why praxis, not just theory, is essential to promote social justice. As I understand it, this also leads Jaeggi to think that a processual conception of progress is required. So, perhaps, we come to similar conclusions from different starting points. Where we differ, however, is our relationship to the movements that are fighting for social transformation. As a critical theorist, I am embedded in the movement and am engaged in the process of social transformation, and my moral knowledge comes from that work.

4. Conclusion

Jaeggi's discussion of social progress is a valuable intervention in an ongoing discussion of social transformation. I am sympathetic with much of what she says, including her critique of the historical conception of progress and her processual alternative. I'm also sympathetic with her attention to epistemic blockages and the self-perpetuating nature of unjust systems. Change is not enough. Transformation is necessary.

I find, however, that the Critical Theory dialectic of contrasting internal, external, and immanent critique distorts our understanding of social movements. Social movements provide opportunities for creating new perspectives on social reality through practices of sharing and reframing experience across social positions and networks These practices themselves can be disruptive, but, more importantly, they can also provide

a basis for collective action. Collective action, guided by epistemically sound inquiry and a commitment to shared indeterminate values, is not guaranteed to achieve progress, but it is, I think, our best chance of achieving social justice.

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