EUGENICS AND PRAGMATISM: F. C. S. SCHILLER'S PHILOSOPHICAL POLITICS

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The British philosopher F. C. S. Schiller (1864–1937) was a leading pragmatist in the early twentieth century. His critiques of formal logic and his attempts to construct a humanist logic, derived from an anti-foundationalist humanism, are recognized as lasting philosophical achievements. But scholars have failed to consider that Schiller was passionately committed to the British eugenics movement. This essay explores the relationship between Schiller's pragmatism and his eugenicism. It argues that Schiller represents the broad scope of pragmatism in the early twentieth century through his involvements not only with eugenics, but also with psychical research as well. Underneath Schiller's various undertakings lies a common theme: the self, conceived in voluntaristic, historicist, and concrete terms. By tracing the trajectory of this theme in Schiller's thought, this essay demonstrates that Schiller's eugenicism was confined to the presuppositions of his pragmatist logic, which steered Schiller's eugenicism toward a distinctively nondeterministic and non-social-Darwinist kind.

INTRODUCTION: DAS F. C. S. SCHILLER PROBLEM

The British philosopher F. C. S. Schiller (1864–1937), a leading pragmatist in the interwar era,[1] occupies an uncomfortable place in the history of philosophy. On the one hand, there are scholars who hail Schiller for presaging the anti-foundationalism of, and anthropological turn in, analytical philosophy after

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[1] Stephen Solomon White, *A Comparison of the Philosophies of F. C. S. Schiller and John Dewey* (Chicago, 1940); Douglas McDermid, *The Varieties of Pragmatism: Truth, Realism, and Knowledge from James to Rorty* (London, 2006); Ahti-Veikko Pietarinen, "Remarks on the Peirce–Schiller Correspondence," in E. H. Oleksy and W. Oleksy, eds., *Transatlantic Encounters: Philosophy, Media, Politics* (Frankfurt am Main, 2011), 61–70; Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America* (New York, 2001), 350; Mark J. Porrovecchio, *F. C. S. Schiller and the Dawn of Pragmatism* (Lanham, MD, 2011).

the Second World War.[2] On the other hand, there are scholars for whom Schiller allowed his otherwise sensible philosophy to be overrun by a staunch commitment to eugenics. We can conceptualize these two incommensurable interpretations as *Das F. C. S. Schiller Problem*.[3] By *Das F. C. S. Schiller Problem* I mean the positing of Schiller the philosopher and Schiller the eugenicist, who bear no apparent relation to each other. Thus Reuben Abel, an early postwar Schiller scholar, writes, "his [Schiller's] social and political views impress a reader of his other books as a wild and irrational vagary that has no connection, either logical or psychological, with the humanist core of his work,"[4] while G. R. Searle asserts that Schiller was a "strong eugenicist"; that is, an intellectual "for whom eugenics provided a total explanation of human history and of social problems and offered the only means of escape from national collapse and decay."[5]

It is worth pointing out that Schiller—who cofounded the Eugenics Education Society in 1907 (from 1926 the Eugenics Society, and from 1980 the Galton Institute) and authored numerous writings on the subject for the *Eugenics Review*[6]—was not the only pragmatist who was committed to eugenics in the early twentieth century. Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., the prominent American legal pragmatist, was an advocate of forced sterilization of those with hereditary "insanity or imbecility." In 1927, he delivered a Supreme Court opinion on a legal case concerning the Virginia State Colony for Epileptics and Feeble Minded, legally sanctioning the eugenical ideology permeating the colony's institutional practice of "care." The opinion stated that

whenever the superintendent of certain institutions, including the above-mentioned State Colony, shall be of the opinion that it is for the best interests of the patients and the society that an inmate under his care should be sexually sterilized, he may have the operation performed upon any patient afflicted with hereditary forms of insanity, imbecility, &c.[7]

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2   Reuben Abel, *The Pragmatic Humanism of F. C. S. Schiller* (New York, 1955), 74; Hilary Putnam, *Pragmatism: An Open Question* (Oxford, 1995), 63.

3   I am modifying the nineteenth-century turn of phrase *das Adam Smith Problem*, which saw a contradiction between Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) and *The Wealth of Nations* (1776). Richard Teichgraeber III, "Rethinking *Das Adam Smith Problem*," *Journal of British Studies*, 20/2 (1981), 106–23.

4   Abel, *The Pragmatic Humanism of F. C. S. Schiller*, 147.

5   G. R. Searle, "Class and Eugenics," in Charles Webster, ed., *Biology, Medicine and Society 1840–1940* (Cambridge, 1981), 217–43, at 239.

6   G. R. Searle, *Eugenics and Politics 1900–1914* (Leiden, 1976), 117.

7   *Buck* v. *Bell*, 274 U.S., 200 (1927), US Supreme Court Center, at http://supreme.justia.com/us/274/200/case.html#207, last accessed 1 March 2014.

If it has been shown that early twentieth-century British eugenics was overdetermined by conflicting ideologies,[8] the relationship between eugenics and the philosophical traditions of the early twentieth century still remains largely unexplored territory. This uncharted territory is partially mapped in this study by a focus on pragmatism. How are we to make sense of the relationship between pragmatism and eugenics in the first half of the twentieth century? This essay offers an answer to this question by unearthing the conceptual connections between eugenics and pragmatism in Schiller, who was arguably the most famous pragmatist to systematically theorize eugenics. This exploration will require placing Schiller's pragmatism and eugenicism in a broader intellectual, political, and sociocultural context—namely the search, in the wake of the First World War, for alternative modes of thought and practices after the crises of absolute idealism, institutionalized Christianity, and political liberalism. Thus, in addition to Schiller's eugenicism and pragmatism, this essay will address the "eccentric" aspects of Schiller's philosophy, his indebtedness to "personal" idealism, his views of the British Empire and the rise of working-class movements in Britain, and his use of psychical research, since these were all elements of Schiller's project in crafting a response to the crises just mentioned.

The main argument of this essay is that a common theme binds Schiller's various and seemingly disconnected undertakings, rendering them more conceptually coherent than might appear after a first reading of his works. This theme comprises a voluntarist, historicist, and humanist version of pragmatism that centres on a conception of the human self as the radically malleable, concrete, and contingent source, context, and end of all human life, from the most abstract concepts to the most concrete social practices. It comprises, moreover, a social and moral philosophy which conceives the human self as the only means and end of human life.[9] This theme is echoed in Schiller's conception of pragmatism:

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8   Michael Freeden, "Eugenics and Progressive Thought: A Study in Ideological Affinity," *Historical Journal*, 22/3 (1979), 645–71.

9   The Italian pragmatist Giovanni Papini distilled Schiller's contribution to thought in precisely these terms. Schiller's philosophy, wrote Papini, was apposite to the "new spiritual age," since Schiller had discovered that Protagoras' famous saying—"man is the measure of all things"—alone can capture the logic underlying the radical shifts that society was undergoing in the modern era. Philosophy needed to provide a statement making sense of the fact that natural processes could be "sped up" by science, and that the natural order could be manipulated by the wills and desires of humans using scientific methods. Schiller, according to Papini, provided such a contemporary statement by revealing the "plasticity of speculative organisms," and the character of truth as "changeable, plastic, dynamic." See Giovanni Papini, "F. C. S. Schiller," in Papini, *Four and Twenty Minds: Essays by Giovanni Papini*, selected and trans. by Ernest Hatch Wilkins (New York, 1922), 82–9, at 87–8, 86, 85.

Pragmatism is the doctrine (1) that truths are logical values; (2) that the "truth" of an assertion depends on its application; (3) that the meaning of a rule lies in its application; (4) that ultimately all meaning depends on purpose; (5) that all mental life is purposive. Pragmatism is (6) a systematic protest against all ignoring of the purposiveness of actual knowing, and it is (7) a conscious application to epistemology (or logic) of a teleological [purposive] psychology, which implies, ultimately, a voluntaristic metaphysic.[10]

By unearthing the binding theme in Schiller's thought, the relationship between Schiller's pragmatism and eugenicism can be clarified: drawing on his pragmatist philosophy, Schiller ultimately *rejected* biological determinism, the belief in the ontologically fixed racial hierarchy of human beings, the belief in the biological degradation of "higher races," and the belief in eugenical practices not based on consent—all of which can be found in the more extreme social Darwinist strands of eugenics. Correspondingly, Schiller *endorsed* eugenics only insofar as it was founded on a toleration regarding the pluralism and voluntarism inherent to contingent values and truths embodied in the wills of the public.[11]

THE INTELLECTUAL CULTURE OF ECCENTRICITY AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF PERSONAL IDEALISM

During his studies at Oxford University in the late Victorian period, and under the tutorship of Benjamin Jowett at Balliol College,[12] Schiller imbibed a particular intellectual persona,[13] that of the "eccentric" intellectual. I do not mean "eccentric" in the everyday or generic sense of the term. Nor do I argue that the concept of eccentricity offers us a mono-causal explanation of the content of Schiller's thought. Rather, I invoke eccentricity as a set of stylistic

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[10]   Schiller quoted in Edwin E. Slosson, *Six Major Prophets* (Boston, 1917), 194.

[11]   My interpretation does not obviate the casting of pragmatism as a liberal-democratic political philosophy, which grew out of pragmatism's anti-foundationalism and its view of social and political life as an open-ended rational and public inquiry, but it does question the view that pragmatism is *inherently* liberal-democratic. For liberal-democratic readings of pragmatism, see Dmitri N. Shalin, *Pragmatism and Democracy: Studies in History, Social Theory, and Progressive Politics* (New Brunswick, 2011); John Dryzek, "Pragmatism and Democracy: In Search of Deliberative Publics," *Journal of Speculative Politics*, 18/1 (2004), 72–9; Jack Knight and James Johnson, *The Priority of Democracy: Political Consequences of Pragmatism* (Princeton, 2011); Richard J. Bernstein, *The Pragmatic Turn* (Cambridge, 2010); Charles W. Anderson, *Pragmatic Liberalism* (Chicago, 1994).

[12]   Noel Annan has shown that Jowett, who was one of the first dons to introduce Hegelian idealism to Britain, was a consummate eccentric. See Noel Annan, *The Dons: Mentors, Eccentrics and Geniuses* (London, 1999).

[13]   I take this concept from the work of Ian Hunter, among others. See Conal Condren, Stephen Gaukroger, and Ian Hunter, eds., *The Philosopher in Early Modern Europe: The Nature of a Contested Identity* (Cambridge, 2006).

literary–cultural conventions that Schiller *used*—consciously as well as unconsciously—in responding to particular problems of his time. Eccentricity, in other words, is an analytical concept I employ to show that it is a tradition, in addition to pragmatism and eugenics, which Schiller appropriated in order to give conceptual edges to his thought. In particular, the conventions of eccentricity enabled Schiller to lay bare the imaginative, paradoxical, and literary aspects of philosophical reasoning, thereby extending the scope of philosophy to aspects of human life excluded by traditional philosophy at the universities. It is no accident that Bertrand Russell, who was Schiller's intellectual foe, described Schiller as the "literary" wing of pragmatism (Dewey being the "scientific," and James the "religious").[14]

British literary intellectuals cultivated the eccentric persona in the late Victorian and Edwardian periods,[15] and so this persona comprises elements from both Romanticist and modernist literature and philosophy.[16] The spread of eccentricity can be seen in other prominent British intellectuals of Schiller's generation that acculturated to the conventions of the eccentric: G. K. Chesterton, H. G. Wells, Hilaire Belloc, Oscar Levy, Benjamin Jowett, and Oscar Wilde. One salient feature of many eccentrics, which is relevant for understanding Schiller's thought, is their sustained engagement with the future and in those activities of man that could propel a radical transformation or improvement of the self, which included the negative or destructive gesture of freeing the self from inert social, political, and philosophical conventions. Such an engagement arose as intellectuals who were brought up in traditional Victorian religious and literary settings sought to come to terms with exponential increases in scientific knowledge and expertise, coupled with assaults on traditional thinking and writing. This preoccupation, then, allows us to understand why eccentric intellectuals such as Schiller took a keen interest in eugenics, but also in other future-oriented modes of thought, such as psychical research, fascism, Nietzschean "aristocratic revivalism" and Futurism.[17]

The eccentric intellectual found morals, perceptions, and explanations of any order to be fragile and duplicitous constructions, erratically revolving around a

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[14] Bertrand Russell, "Dr Schiller's Analysis of *The Analysis of Mind*," *Journal of Philosophy*, 19/24 (1922), 645–51, at 651.

[15] John Timbs, *English Eccentrics and Eccentricities* (London, 1875)—this book came out in new editions until the end of the nineteenth century.

[16] Kristin Bluemel, *George Orwell and the Radical Eccentrics: Intermodernism in Literary London* (New York, 2004).

[17] Donald J. Childs, *Modernism and Eugenics: Woolf, Eliot, Yeats, and the Culture of Degeneration* (Cambridge, 2004); Rachel Potter, *Modernism and Democracy: Literary Culture 1900–1930* (Cambridge, 2006); Laura A. Winkiel, *Modernism, Race, and Manifestos* (Cambridge, 2008).

fundamentally fractured and indelibly aesthetic nature of the self, whose psychic volatility and social malleability render a vision of reality as essentially fluid. In this sense, as John Skorupski has noted, modernist eccentricity presaged aspects of postmodernism: "an important aspect of modernism was its own image as post-modern; that is, as constituting the beginning of a new epoch, succeeding that expressed in European philosophy, and described in modern European history."[18] However, there remained among some eccentrics, such as Schiller and Jowett, the belief in the reintegration of the self that modernity had fragmented. Schiller, for example, in discussing the prospect of a future life after death and contact with deceased spirits, heralded by spiritualism, argued that any examination of the afterlife must rest on rational criteria. Moreover, any knowledge of a future life, as radically different from present life as it may be, must rest on conceptual categories and methods which govern present experience, such as time, space, nature, scientific experimentation, and personality or self.[19] Any future life that is better than present life can, according to Schiller, only be better in a quantitative, as opposed to qualitative, sense, even if the quantitative transformation is radical: "philosophy may declare that if the whole world be experience, *new worlds* may be found by psychical transformation as probably and validly as by physical transportation."[20] It is in this tension between an anti-totalizing and a retotalizing, a disintegrative and a reintegrative, philosophical gesture that this article situates Schiller's thought.[21]

The features of the eccentric persona permeated Schiller's thought and can be seen in a number of literary tropes in his writings: recurring injunctions to treat philosophy as indelibly idiosyncratic and metaphysically void, thus signaling the need for a new philosophy;[22] excessive usage of rhetorical

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[18] John Skorupski quoted in Anat Matar, *Modernism and the Language of Philosophy* (London and New York, 2006), 1.

[19] F. C. S. Schiller, "Philosophy and the Scientific Investigation of a Future Life," in Schiller, *Humanism: Philosophical Essays* (London, 1912), 351–74.

[20] Ibid., 368, original emphasis.

[21] Rainer Emig, in a study on Carlyle as an eccentric, usefully suggests that the eccentric ought to be understood as on the fringes of conventional society and intellectual traditions, while never transgressing their boundaries. Rainer Emig, "Eccentricity Begins at Home: Carlyle's Centrality in Victorian Thought," *Textual Studies*, 17/2 (2003), 379–90. Eccentrics, in other words, were half-hearted in their attacks on conventions. They can thus be viewed as aspiring to save conventions by radically modifying them in light of modernity, rather than replacing them with entirely different kinds of conventions.

[22] George J. Stack has made a compelling case for the Nietzschean influence on Schiller concerning this aspect, and indeed very many other aspects, such as an emphasis on the aesthetic, social, and psychic origins of seemingly pure scientific and logical concepts. See George J. Stack, "Nietzsche's Influence on Pragmatic Humanism," *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 20/4 (1982), 369–406.

tropes in his philosophical writings; an arrogation of prophecy; involvements with psychical research; a faith in eugenics as a progressive tool to remedy the degeneration of civilization; the derision of institutionalized Christianity; idiosyncratic conservative political beliefs which were out of touch with party-political conservatism; and, finally, a hatred of the institution to which Schiller owed his very eccentricity and mode of thinking: Oxbridge academic culture.

If eccentricity was a set of cultural conventions to which Schiller subscribed, British personal idealism was the philosophical tradition that provided him, early on in his career, with the conceptual resources to critique, on the one hand, the "absolute" idealism of his teachers and colleagues at Oxford (e.g. F. H. Bradley, Edward Caird, and his tutor Jowett), and, on the other, to develop his own pragmatist philosophy. The belief in the metaphysical–religious unity of all reality that permeated absolute idealism,[23] and dominated British philosophy at the universities between the late nineteenth century and the Great War, came under fire in the first two decades of the twentieth century. One line of attack came from the "analytical" style of philosophy, heralded by philosophers such as Bertrand Russell and Susan Stebbing. Analytical philosophy sought to purge philosophy from all transcendental, moral, and religious content, and ground it either on a strong empiricism that looked to natural science as the model form of knowledge, or on a strong "apriorism" (in Schiller's words) that utilized the newest developments in formal logic. Personal idealism, headed by philosophers such as Henry Sturt, Hastings Rashdall, Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison, and George Howison, sought to reform absolute idealism while rejecting analytical philosophy.[24]

The personal idealists agreed with the absolute idealists that reality was ultimately mind, but disagreed with them regarding the analysis of mind's character. For the absolute idealists, the only real mind was a transcendental and absolute self-consciousness that they identified with the Christian God, and to which individual human minds belonged and sought to return in the course of historical development. For the personal idealists, in contradistinction, mind was nothing but the immanent, and therefore ontologically malleable, form of

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[23]   David Boucher and Andrew Vincent, *British Idealism and Political Theory* (Edinburgh, 2000), 5.

[24]   Jan-Olof Bengtsson, *The Worldview of Personalism* (Oxford, 2006); Henry Sturt, ed., *Personal Idealism: Philosophical Essays by Eight Members of the University of Oxford* (London, 1902); George H. Howison, *The Limits of Evolution: And Other Essays Illustrating the Metaphysical Theory of Evolution*, 2nd edn (London, 1904); Henry Sturt, *The Principles of Understanding: An Introduction to Logic from the Standpoint of Personal Idealism* (Cambridge, 1915).

concrete, socially and historically situated, and finite personality.[25] Indeed, many key themes of Schiller's pragmatist philosophy are laid down in a chapter that he wrote as a contribution to the collection *Personal Idealism*, entitled "Axioms as Postulates."[26] Thus it is clear that personal idealism provided Schiller with the conceptual resources to both draw on and critique personal idealism in developing a philosophy he believed was more attuned to contemporary social and political reality.

The conceptual character and political style of personal idealism seems to have developed similar characteristics as the eccentricism discussed above, for personal idealism, too, called for a new beginning in philosophy, and celebrated those creative forces inherent in man which had been domesticated by an effete metaphysical subservience to tradition and religion. In particular, both personal idealists and eccentrics were, in the words of Anat Matar, concerned to give "attention to form as expressing content" and put intellectual work toward the "transformation of traditional forms/contents."[27] It is, in other words, not far-fetched to suggest that eccentricity could be conceptually combined with personal idealism in the early twentieth century.

THE "PROBLEM OF LABOUR," IMPERIAL DECLINE, AND THE NATIONAL-EFFICIENCY QUESTION

Two major sociopolitical shifts that occurred in Britain in the last two decades of the nineteenth century stand as the sociopolitical context of Schiller's thought, and an overview of them will aid us in better understanding the particular trajectory that Schiller's social and political beliefs took. These shifts gesture to why many philosophers and intellectuals believed that the Victorian optimism and transcendentalism of absolute idealism was an inadequate philosophy for the times, and so they provide a sociopolitical background to the rise of styles of thought such as eccentricity, personal idealism, and pragmatism. First, the burgeoning labour movement achieved a decided success with the formation of the Social Democratic Federation in 1881, the first organized socialist political party in Britain, followed by offshoots and other organizations, the Fabians (1884) and the Independent Labour Party (1893) being two significant ones.[28] These

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25   Henry Sturt, *Idola Theatri: A Criticism of Oxford Thought and Thinkers from the Standpoint of Personal Idealism* (London, 1906).

26   F. C. S. Schiller, "Axioms as Postulates," in Henry Sturt, ed., *Personal Idealism: Philosophical Essays by Eight Members of the University of Oxford* (London, 1902), 47–134.

27   Matar, *Modernism*, 1.

28   For an intellectual history of British socialism see Mark Bevir, *The Making of British Socialism* (New Haven, 2011).

were social movements made possible by an increasingly sharpened political struggle between labour and capital, industrial employers and trade unions. Urban industrial workers' poor living and work conditions had prompted their intellectual and political champions to devise concepts, arguments, rhetoric, strategies, and institutions to challenge and change the unjust institutions responsible for them. Public intellectuals, or "men of letters," as they were known in the first half of the twentieth century, often categorized this state of affairs as the "labour problem."

Schiller, who accepted this categorization, went so far as to say, "The Labour Problem is the oldest and biggest of our bogies." He was, hardly surprisingly since he was a self-professed conservative, highly critical toward some of the left's political solutions, not the least of which were unemployment insurance, increased wages, improved working conditions, and overall state intervention in favour of workers.[29] These measures, Schiller believed, threatened the social and financial order of the British Isles through impoverishing and disempowering the "fit stock" through the economic burdens imposed on them by redistributive taxation and public urban expansion. In doing so, the "Labour Problem," according to Schiller, imposed a "permanent strain" that was diminishing the cohesiveness and power of the British Empire, since the empire was dependent on the generational transmission of men of good breed at home.[30] By the Edwardian era, of the British Empire's 400 million subjects, 41.5 million of those lived in Britain, while 300 million inhabited Asia, and the majority of those 300 million resided in India. This numerical fact contributed to giving Britons a sense of "racial superiority." In that sense, the labour problem was connected to what Schiller called the "Pacific Problem"; that is, the potential threat that the increase of colonized Asian populations posed, along with their increasingly louder claims for political independence.[31] These perceived social problems at home and in the colonies thus provided intellectuals with a pessimistic imaginary regarding the British Empire: "Pessimism was in fact an all-pervasive and quintessential characteristic of Ewardian thinking about the Empire."[32]

However, Schiller, along with most other British eugenicists, did not believe that the working classes, or to use a more generic term of the time, "the masses," should be a priori debarred from social or political mobility. On the whole, the victory of sociology, social welfare, and morality over biological determination

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[29]   F. C. S. Schiller, *Cassandra or the Future of the British Empire* (London, 1926), 34–5.

[30]   Ibid., 38–9.

[31]   Ibid., 65–66.

[32]   Ronald Hyam, "The British Empire in the Edwardian Era," in Judith M. Brown and W. M. Roger Louis, eds., *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol. 4, *The Twentieth Century* (Oxford, 1999), 47–64, 48

was a major human achievement, since it meant that the human species had finally overcome much of its subjection to nature's selection of the fittest, i.e. those groups of individuals in the species naturally most suited to survive and reproduce.[33] For some intellectuals, this achievement could be rendered explicitly normative: if society can help even *all* the unfit survive, it follows that it *ought to*. Many progressives and social reformers of that time, ranging from Christian philanthropists to New Liberals to socialists, followed this moral injunction.[34]

The widespread acceptance and varied reception of eugenics was the second crystallization of a growing social problem in the imaginary of British intellectual elites, one that was closely related to the labour problem. Virtually all British eugenicists agreed at the turn of the nineteenth century, regardless of the differences between their proposed solutions,[35] that there was a pressing social problem derived from a biological "fact": the differential birth rate. In brief, the differential birth rate was a purportedly scientifically objective proof that while "unfit biological stocks" were increasing their birth rate, the "fit stocks," which conceptually coincided with the "higher" social classes,[36] were decreasing theirs at an alarming rate. As Karl Pearson, a leading eugenicist and statistician, wrote, "the survival of the unfit is a marked characteristic of modern town life."[37] Schiller, in more precise wording, believed that "the over-rapid growth of the social environment" caused by the "conditions of modern life," such as increased social welfare, "diminishes the number of new births required to maintain the race and the fertility which is politically necessary."[38] If this process continued, the eugenicists believed, Britain as a civilization, nation, and empire was doomed to perish. In the long run, it threatened the whole European race, in which the

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[33] F. C. S. Schiller, *Eugenics and Politics: Essays by Ferdinand Canning Scott Schiller* (London, 1926), 13.

[34] See e.g. Michael Freeden, *Liberal Languages: Ideological Imaginations and Twentieth-Century Progressive Thought* (New Haven, 2005), especially chaps. 1 through 7.

[35] There were many differences, even on the strictly scientific level: Donald Mackenzie, "Sociobiologies in Competition: The Biometrician–Mendelian Debate," in Charles Webster, ed., *Biology, Medicine and Society 1840–1940* (Cambridge, 1981), 243–89, at 262.

[36] The "fit and unfit biological stocks" were, typically, conceptually rendered in an incoherent hierarchy comprising, from the bottom up, African, Asian, and European races. The European race, in turn, was typically divided into its own national hierarchy, where the nation to which the eugenicist who was constructing the hierarchy happened to belong came out on top: Britain if the eugenicist was British (and English if he was English), German if he was German, and so on. Within the nation, a hierarchy was constructed typically comprising, again from the bottom up, the physically "degenerate," the "feeble-minded," the urban working classes, the middle classes, and the aristocracy.

[37] Searle, *Eugenics*, 27.

[38] F. C. S Schiller, *Riddles of the Sphinx: A Study in the Philosophy of Humanism* (London, 1910), 114, see also 225.

British highest stock took the highest place, and so the whole destiny of Britons and Europeans as a race of superior-minded civilization-builders was at stake, for the non-white races, especially the African blacks, were prone to breed far too excessively.[39]

This eugenicist racial discourse called for the scientific management, what Foucault called bio-power, of whole racial "populations," and in doing so sought to appropriate events that public opinion already interpreted as national disasters. The clearest example of this strategy was the question of "national efficiency."[40] As R. Dimsdale Stocker wrote, "The supreme test of the greatness of any people must eventually depend one fact, and one fact alone: the efficiency of the generation to come."[41] The question of national efficiency arose in 1899 in relation to the Anglo-Boer War and was founded on a statistical study of soldiers enlisted in Manchester, purportedly showing that 60 percent of their numbers were deemed "unfit" (a Royal Commission would soon find this study inaccurate). This spawned a debate on the future of the "imperial race" and the British Empire in which advocates of eugenics vigorously participated. The very choice of Manchester for the study just mentioned seemed a victory for the eugenicists, for Manchester was the very symbol of British urbanization and industrialization, and the breeding ground of unfit/working-class stock. The professional middle classes—e.g. doctors, academics, journalists, and scientists—the social strata to which the eugenicists predominantly belonged, had since the 1870s been using statistics to show how this process led to physical and spiritual degeneration which neither social reform nor moral work alone could halt and reverse.

What gave political momentum to the eugenics movement was the public acceptance of problems such as national efficiency and racial deterioration as "real" and connected to each other. The Eugenics Society pressed for various schemes of "positive" eugenics (i.e. actively and systematically promoting the procreation of the higher classes) and "negative" eugenics (i.e. either eliminating entirely, or actively and systematically hindering from reproducing, the lower classes and "deviants" such as alcoholics or the "feeble-minded") as the scientific means to solve these social problems.

Eugenics drew on the theory of evolution to bolster its legitimacy, since evolution had by the late nineteenth century become a forceful resource for making sense of the social world after the crisis of Christian faith. In fact, it was the biologist Francis Galton (who was a friend of Schiller's), the cousin of Charles Darwin, who coined the word "eugenics" in 1883, thereby inaugurating a phase in

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39   Dan Stone, "Race in British Eugenics," *European Quarterly History*, 31/3 (2001), 397–425.

40   G. R. Searle, *The Quest for National Efficiency: A Study in British Politics and Political Thought, 1899–1914* (Berkeley, 1971).

41   Stocker quoted in "Review of *Social Idealism*," *Eugenics Review*, 2/4 (1911), 328.

the history of natural science where biology had come to see itself as sufficiently advanced to systematically apply science in view of racial improvement.[42] Schiller wrote, echoing these ambitions, that eugenics is the "application of biology to social life, as a sort of social hygiene on a social scale."[43] And, "In its moral aspect, therefore, eugenics is the recognition of a duty to carry on the upward urge of evolution: and what we can and ought that surely we shall do."[44]

Ultimately, eugenics had limited success in Britain, primarily because no politically influential group or society of politicians, scientists, and doctors supported it wholesale. The British eugenics movement scored its largest victory in the passing of the Mental Deficiency Act of 1913, which enabled the state to take into care those with mental deficiencies, which were divided into four categories: "idiots, imbeciles, feeble-minded and moral imbeciles." For the Act to be applicable, these deficiencies must have been incurred at birth or at an early age, and a certification needed to be issued attesting to them. However, as one writer of the *Eugenics Review* pointed out four years after the passing of the Act, the categories proved hardly distinguishable, which made it hard to issue certificates. Moreover, the heavy weight placed by the requirements of war on the local administration proved to hinder the implementation of the Act.[45] In 1929, 1930, and 1934 both Labour and Liberal MPs proposed a bill of voluntary sterilization of the "unfit," but these never progressed beyond the debates in the House of Commons.[46] Nevertheless, an ideologically heterogeneous educated public, along with a range of intellectuals covering the whole pale of politics, considered eugenics a legitimate political, scientific, and social language. Crucially, then, there was no ideology and, as I will show below, *philosophy* which necessarily excluded eugenics from its register in such a context.

HUMANIST LOGIC AND PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

We can get at the core of Schiller's pragmatism by examining his views on logic, since pragmatism, for Schiller, "is essentially a reform of Logic, which protests against a Logic that has become so formal as to abstract from meaning altogether."[47] Schiller confirmed this view of pragmatism elsewhere: "Pragmatism

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42 See the essays in Charles Webster, ed., *Biology, Medicine and Society 1840–1940* (Cambridge, 1981).

43 Schiller, *Eugenics*, 1.

44 Ibid., 207.

45 Evelyn Fox, "The Mental Deficiency Act and Its Administration," *Eugenics Review*, 10/1 (1918), 1–17.

46 Freeden, "Eugenics," 666–7.

47 F. C. S. Schiller, "Preface," in D. L. Murray, *Pragmatism* (London, 1912), vii–x, at vii–ix.

would be found to be primarily a criticism of the traditional Logic."[48] However, Schiller's logic is in need of the type of historical analysis undertaken here— connecting it to nonphilosophical practices and discourses—since it is often portrayed, from the perspective of our dominant philosophical cultures, solely as an internal, purely philosophical, response to a purely philosophical "formal logic."[49] To be sure, Schiller's logic was constructed largely as a vitriolic reaction to three types of formal logic: the logic of textbooks used in higher education, resting on logical principles such as the law of identity, the law of contradiction, and syllogistic deduction; the logic of British absolute idealism, especially that of F. H. Bradley; and the symbolic logic of a rising group of analytical philosophers, including Bertrand Russell. Schiller argued that, notwithstanding their differences, these logics shared an aloofness from engaging with concrete or actual thinking, and so their formal nature was sufficient to label them all as formal logic. For Schiller, it was the detachment from concrete thinking that characterized formal logic, propelling him to write a whole book irascibly devoted to criticizing this essential feature of formal logic.[50] A philosopher, then, may focus solely on the "purely" philosophical aspects of Schiller's logic, but it comes at the cost of judging irrelevant what Schiller and his fellow pragmatists deemed essential.

For Schiller, as well as for other pragmatists of his time, philosophical inquiry could never be, and should never aspire to be, purely philosophical. The subtitle of Schiller's book *Formal Logic* is telling as to the scope he gave to the philosophy of logic: *A Scientific and Social Problem.* Along with Schiller, many academic logicians had since the early twentieth century begun to see insoluble problems to formal logic; most of them, Schiller knew personally, such as Alfred Sidgwick and John Dewey (Schiller was a teacher of formal logic at Oxford and Cornell).[51] That every truth, every logical operation, originated in and was directed toward some social practice, conceivable or actual, was a fairly conventional presupposition in

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48   Schiller, *Humanism*, ix.

49   Abel, *The Pragmatic Humanism of F. C. S. Schiller*; McDermid, *The Varieties of Pragmatism*; Pietarinen, "Remarks"; Putnam, *Pragmatism*; John R. Shook, "F. C. S. Schiller and European Pragmatism," in John R. Shook and Joseph Margolis, eds., *A Companion to Pragmatism* (Oxford, 2006), 44–54; Richard Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism* (Minneapolis, 1982).

50   F. C. S. Schiller, *Formal Logic: A Scientific and Social Problem* (London, 1912).

51   See e.g. John Dewey, *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* (New York, 1939). For a critical exposition of Dewey's logic see H. S. Thayer, *The Logic of Pragmatism: An Examination of John Dewey's Logic* (New York, 1952).

this time. It had become a legitimate mode of dealing with dilemmas in academic philosophy.[52]

This section first accounts for how logic, for Schiller, is necessarily continuous with the sociohistorical and psychic world, which means that a proper philosophical logic therefore must be anthropological and turn an eye toward psychical research. Thus logical concepts such as "truth" and "validity" must be understood relative to concrete histories, personalities, and social practices. This discussion is followed, in the next section, by an analysis of the entanglements of Schiller's logic with his own sociohistorical world in the form of eugenics.

Understanding Schiller's logic requires embedding it in his broader philosophical project. Schiller followed the way of pragmatism to one extreme, which he called "humanism."[53] As Louis Menand has shown, James coined the word "pragmatism" to denote a new philosophical movement in the closing years of the nineteenth century. Less well known is that James later avowed that he would have preferred the label "humanism" over pragmatism, a term for which he credited Schiller, James's friend and colleague ever since Schiller's stay at Cornell University between 1893 and 1897.[54]

The philosophical core of Schiller's humanism can be found in his first book, *Riddles of the Sphinx*, first published in 1892, where Schiller posited the person or the "Self" as

the most indispensable of all postulates . . . it is the Alpha, the starting-point, and it would not be surprising if it turned out also the Omega, the goal of philosophy . . . all acts of knowledge are performed by selves, the whole of our cognitive machinery, principles, axioms, postulates and categories, are invented by and modelled upon selves.[55]

According to Schiller, the philosophical study of logic, and logical reasoning itself, must take into account everything that falls within the purview of the concrete, as opposed to abstract and transcendental, self. But because philosophical logic can only do so from the vantage point of a concrete self, it can never arrogate

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52 John Passmore, *A Hundred Years of Philosophy* (London, 1966), in particular chap. 7: "Some Critics of Formal Logic," at 156–73.

53 For different meanings attached to humanism and pragmatism, and the connections between them, see the chapter entitled "Pragmatic Humanism" in Martin Halliwell and Andy Mousley, *Critical Humanisms: Humanist/Anti-Humanist Dialogues* (Edinburgh, 2003), 139–59. The term "humanism" entered the British lexicon in the early nineteenth century. By the early twentieth century, it had taken a broad range of meanings, with ties to various belief systems. For example, there were advocates of "Christian humanism" (e.g. J. H. Oldham), "scientific humanism" (e.g. Julian Huxley), and "classical humanism" (e.g. Gilbert Murray) reaching back to ancient Greek ideals and models.

54 Menand, *The Metaphysical Club*, 350. See also Porrovecchio, *F. C. S. Schiller*.

55 Schiller, *Riddles of the Sphinx*, 142.

formal completeness and objectivity. There is no ultimate reality or ideal beyond human experience, and human experience is not in need of it: "The intellectual cosmos also neither has nor needs fixed foundations whose fixity is an illusion."[56] Schiller drew a methodological consequence with an ethical corollary from this belief, which echoes William James's doctrine of the "will to believe": "it is a *methodological necessity* to assume that the world is *wholly plastic, i.e.* to *act as though* we believed this, and will yield us what we want, if we persevere in wanting it." This assumption, in turn, had profound consequences for Schiller's analysis of the nature of "axioms," the most fundamental principles of thought that guide human thinking: "We conceive the axioms as arising out of man's needs as an agent, as prompted by his desires, as affirmed by his will, in a word, as nourished and sustained by his emotional and volitional nature."[57]

If there are no fixed and universal standards for logic, and all is grounded in volitional agency, then what is there to ensure the validity and objectivity of truth, deduction, induction, and similar procedures? What should stay, if anything, and what should go, of formal logic? One example of Schiller's method at work suffices to tease out some answers to these questions, since the argument branches out to most of his key concepts and arguments—namely Schiller's criticism of the classical syllogism: if it is true that "all men are mortal" and that "Socrates is a man," then it necessarily follows that "Socrates is mortal."[58] Both its truth and the necessity of its validity have been taken for granted for millennia according to Schiller, and so if it can be shown that it is a bad form of reasoning, an important step will have been taken toward its reform.

Schiller's first line of attack was conventional to his time—namely that the conclusion begs the question, for the truth of the major premise depends on the conclusion. In other words, for the logician to assert that "all men are mortal," he must know that Socrates is mortal prior to the proof, because it is undeniably evident that Socrates falls within the set of "all men." The best line of defence the logician can put up against this argument is to postulate that the premise is not based on empirical observations. It is rather a universal, the conclusion of which is a particular instance. But this retort does not convince Schiller, for it

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wrongly assumes that the universal is absolute, applicable to any particular, for any purpose, by anyone and in any context.

Schiller brought out the absurdity of this premise in the alternative, highly value-laden, and socially circumscribed premise "all negro slaves are men," the truth of which is undeniably relative to concrete selves, and thus serves to shape syllogistic reasoning in a way that can neither be accounted for nor regulated by formal logic. And the same applies to the Socrates premise. Thus Schiller wrote, "No one in his senses, we shall say, will argue about 'Socrates', whether a defunct philosopher or negro slave, a tomcat or a character in fiction, and without knowing what the problem is that has arisen about him."[59] Schiller's argument shows well the rationale of the pragmatist dictum that truths are species of values and judgements with practical historical origins, desires, and consequences, and that treating truths in mere propositional form is therefore nothing more than a pastime of philosophers in ivory towers. The alternative premise, moreover, gestures at a value pluralism, which Schiller explicitly spelled out elsewhere: that differences of value "seem to be ultimate and irreconcilable."[60]

This problem with the syllogism signals a systemic flaw in formal logic according to Schiller: "the abstraction from meaning was the essential trick of Formal Logic."[61] Abstraction proved fatal to formal logic because it left the meaning of its words, its "raw material," as it were, hopelessly ambiguous or indeterminate. Since every word has a wide range of potential meanings and contexts, mere "verbal" or formal meaning cannot possibly select the appropriate ones. Determination and disambiguation of meaning can only be achieved by the contextualized linguistic acts performed by selves. In Schiller's words, "real" meaning "always arises in a particular situation, and it is always *personal*; i.e. it is what men mean when they *use* words to express and convey *their* meaning."[62] And in expressing meaning persons are always communicating their experience of the world to other persons, which explains why the "the meaning of words then becomes *social*, without ceasing to be personal."[63] And of course this affects the character of truth, for truth, just like meaning, is a value continuous with the concrete self:

Like the other values also the career of a truth is profoundly influenced by man's social nature; it has not merely to commend itself to its maker for the nonce, but to continue to give him satisfaction and to continue to seem the right remark for the occasion. Now

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59 Ibid., 207.
60 F. C. S. Schiller, *Logic for Use: An Introduction to the Voluntarist Theory of Knowledge* (London, 1929), 99.
61 Ibid., 50.
62 Ibid., 54, original emphasis.
63 Ibid., 63, original emphasis.

this it will hardly do, unless it succeeds in winning recognition also from others, and is judged valuable, "good" and "true" by them. Should it fail to do so, the penalty is in every case the same, viz. condemnation as "false", rejection and supersession by a *better* "truth". Hence so long as it lasts it is being tested and, it may be, contested.[64]

Logical validity and objectivity, at bottom, stand and fall with social edifices, which in turn stand and fall depending on the interactions and communications between different selves in a shared world. Axioms, for instance, are at bottom practical postulates regimented by working social practices. If philosophy is to have any hope of accounting for the nature of thought, it must assume an anthropological attitude toward even the seemingly purely abstract instances of reasoning.

Armed with these arguments, Schiller daringly suggested a reform of the syllogism: we should treat it as a practical mode of inquiry for solving concrete problems for concrete selves. The practical use of the Socrates syllogism could, for instance, arise if it addressed a problem concerning Socrates. Schiller offered one: "a 'problematic' Socrates has turned up and there are doubts about him. He is under grave suspicion. Is he a man or a ghost?"[65] This was indeed a concrete problem for a concrete self: Schiller was a lifelong devotee to psychical research, succeeding Henri Bergson as president of the Society for Psychical Research in 1914, a society of which William James had been president prior to Bergson.[66]

As is well known, one major issue in psychical research was whether ghosts existed or not, and, if they did, what could be determined of their ontological status.[67] Indeed, questions like the one Schiller posed about Socrates preoccupied some of the most fascinating philosophers and psychologists of the early twentieth century. This question might not make sense to philosophers today, but if we understand it historically, we will find it to be yet another example of the contingency of the problems deemed legitimate by leading philosophers in the early twentieth century. Psychical research and spiritualism bear witness to the loss of the Christian faith and institutional belonging among large segments of the British middle class, including eccentrics like Schiller, and the attempt to fill the spiritual gap that this loss created in a changed social, cultural, and political

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64 Schiller, *Riddles of the Sphinx*, 132–133.
65 Schiller, "Are All Men Mortal?", 207.
66 Mark. K. Porrovecchio, "The Curious Case of F.C.S Schiller," Society for Psychical Research, at www.spr.ac.uk/main/article/curious-case-f-c-s-schiller, last accessed 8 March 2014.
67 F. C. S. Schiller, "The Progress of Psychical Research," in Schiller, *Studies in Humanism* (London, 1907), 370–91.

milieu.[68] Spiritualist practices were accepted as admissible in philosophical and psychological discussions and could be used, thus, not only to meet spiritual needs, but also in philosophical and scientific interventions. In Schiller's case, psychical research became a tool for questioning certain conceptions of logic.

Among other examples Schiller marshaled from psychical research to subvert formal logic, he pointed out the widespread practice of private gatherings called "séances," wherein certain persons, "mediums," claimed to somehow be in contact with or even temporarily become deceased people (through techniques such as trance utterance, automatic writing, or clairvoyance), thus acting as vehicles through which the spirits or ghosts of the deceased could communicate with the living. Philosophical questions to which these séances could give rise included: is it possible that this medium can somehow embody both his or her own self and that of a dead person such as Socrates, and allow the latter to communicate in the present, and if so how? What does that tell us about the nature of the self? According to Schiller, in order for these to even count as problems, the meaning of words such as "personality," "self-identity," "mortal," "truth," and "validity" must be radically different to the ones implicit in the standard form of the syllogism, or in any formal logical system. This does not mean, as we saw above, that the findings of psychical research demolished all presuppositions of human life, such as personality and rational scientific experimentation. Rather, they radically questioned the ontological scope of these presuppositions, and enabled Schiller to further critique the abstraction of formal logic.

The Society for Psychical Research, according to Schiller, was a crucial institutional–scientific step in depathologizing psychical research, wresting it from the stigma of "spiritual morbidity" inflicted by the medical sciences. The society legitimized psychical research in the discursive world of institutionalized science. In particular, the society could legitimize psychical research by means of systematic observations and the gathering of evidence regarding psychical experiences, which would render these experiences conceivable and probable.[69]

Schiller's interest in psychical research belongs to the same intellectual trajectory that finds an interest in modernist literature, personal idealism, eugenics, and Futurism. He thus lauded Frederick Myers's *Human Personality* for being versed in science as well as in technical philosophy. Psychical research was commendable, according to Schiller, because it promised to transform the

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[68] S. C. Thakur, ed., *Philosophy and Psychical Research* (London, 1976); Janet Oppenheim, *The Other World: Spiritualism and Psychical Research in England, 1850–1914* (Cambridge, 1985); William James, *Essays in Psychical Research* (Cambridge, 1986); René Haynes, *The Society for Psychical Research, 1882–1982: A History* (London, 1982); Alex Owen, *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern* (Chicago, 2004).

[69] Schiller, "The Progress of Psychical Research," 372–3, 387.

metaphysical boundaries of the self as traditionally conceived, and contributed to the "subliminal extension" of the self.[70] In particular, psychical research questioned the traditional understanding of self and the senses through showing the reality of the psychical experience.

Philosophy, for Schiller, could help psychical research by developing a concept for the new type of self that psychical experience heralded. Schiller argued that the "Subliminal Self" was such a concept, for it extends the referential domain of the self to "the labyrinth of abnormal and supernormal fact, and holds together phenomena so various as sleep, dream, memory, hypnotism, hysteria, genius, insanity ... automatisms, chromatic hearing, hallucinations, ghosts, telepathy and telergy."

Since, however, neither the philosopher nor the scientific researcher can express the irrational and both conceptually and observationally intangible aspects of the subliminal self, the "poetic seer" finds a natural place in this endeavour by being able to "evolve romance out of the disjointed data of academic science,"[71] and so "there is work for the imagination to accomplish in science no less than in poetry."[72] In his project to reconcile the rational with the irrational, the natural with the supernatural, the scientific with the imaginary, Schiller can be said to have belonged to that intellectual strand that H. Stuart Hughes called "antinomian modernity," recently rediscovered by Michael Saler in his work on the post-secular re-enchantment of the world among British literary intellectuals of the early twentieth century.[73]

There could, for Schiller, be no starker contrast to his own humanist logic than formal logic. Schiller modeled the structure of his logic on the value-pluralism of the society of his time together with his concept of the historically situated concrete self. He intended for that logic to accurately describe, on the one hand, the social function of thinking for such selves, and, on the other, to aid in refining such thinking for social uses. Formal logic, in contrast, had, or would have, devastating social effects, according to Schiller. First, since the "ideal of formal perfection is *Fixity*," formal logic postulates the existence of fixed and permanent truth, and since such a vision of truth entails imperviousness to change, formal logic conceives of change as a sign of imperfection, a symptom of falsity. The practical effect of this postulate serves "to commend Formal Logic to the blindest and most intractable sort of conservatism." Second, since the ideal proof of a formal logical operation is meant to arrive at certainty, the effect

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[70] Ibid., 376.

[71] Ibid., 376–7.

[72] Ibid., 374.

[73] H. Stuart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society* (New Brunswick, 2002); Michael Saler, *As If: Modern Enchantment and the Literary Prehistory of Virtual Reality* (New York, 2012).

of this ideal is that it debars thought that is risky, and outlaws thought that is probable. This is pernicious, according to Schiller, to the best scientific and everyday-life practices, where decisions are made, problems solved, questions answered, and leaps taken through endless series of concrete situations riddled with uncertainty or, at best, probability. Third, since the concept of truth in formal logic is absolute, it is conceived to be true regardless of any, and in every, actual and possible circumstance; a truth is *necessarily* true in formal logic. This means that "'Necessity' is as evidently the tyrant's plea in logical as in political absolutism and neither has any use for the freedom of human activity." The fourth, and final, reason why formal logic has deplorable social effects owes to the fact that formal logic not only postulates absolute truths, but *one and only one* system of thought that is able to carry that truth, and that is formal logic. For this reason, formal logic cannot abide by the plurality of views containing truth: "The absolute system of immutable Truth is *one.* Not more than one view, therefore, can be true."[74]

We need not inquire further into the other logical concepts and theories that Schiller found wanting and attempted to revise, such as the law of identity and the correspondence theory of truth. This section has already established to what extent Schiller was ready to go in analysing logic in its concreteness. It is high time to look into the relations his logic bore to eugenics.

HUMANIST LOGIC AND EUGENICS

A good place to start is to uncover yet another meaning of the word "pragmatism" in Schiller's thought, for in doing so we can immediately see that its meaning harbors elements of ideology, since, according to Schiller, "it is probably right to regard this habit of mind [pragmatism] as characteristically congenial to Anglo-Saxon life."[75] Indeed, this signals that some, but by no means all, of the crucial divergences in Anglo-American philosophy in the first half of the twentieth century can be attributed to the competing ideologies to which philosophers were committed. In debates between philosophers, philosophical concepts, methods, and movements often took on meanings that intersected with political beliefs, as well as other nonlogical forms of thought.

Bertrand Russell's response to Schiller's criticism of Russell's logic, and Max Eastman's review of Schiller's own logic, accent these dissimilarities. As we saw above, Russell, the major British leftist intellectual and logician, called Schiller the literary wing of pragmatism. Schiller was a major critic of Russell's formal

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74   Schiller, *Formal Logic*, all quotes from 397–8, original emphasis.
75   F. C. S. Schiller, "Review of *German Philosophy and Politics*," *Mind*, 25/98 (1916), 250–55, at 251.

logic, and, in one response to Schiller, Russell avowed that rhetoric rather than logic often serves to steer the nature of a debate on logic, thus partly accepting one of Schiller's main points about the nature of logic: "He [Schiller] and I are agreed, I think, that it is impossible to produce logical arguments on either side of the questions which divide us"; since they rest on "different logics," the only effective retort must therefore be "of the nature of rhetoric rather than logic."[76]

Eastman was, along with Sidney Hook, one of Dewey's pupils and in the first four decades of the twentieth century one of the most prominent Marxists in America, before turning into a staunch anticommunist.[77] It was by no accident, therefore, that Eastman inculpated Schiller on account of the conservative principle underscoring his revision of formal logic. Such a principle, according to Eastman, will render it "*impossible* for anyone to build up a logic of science and of practical life," since it acknowledges that formal logic *works* practically, and so fulfils the pragmatist criterion of truth. Instead, according to Eastman, one must take a *revolutionary*, "democratic," "system-wrecking" and transformative leap in logic.[78] True logic, for Eastman, had to be revolutionary, whereas for Schiller it must be conservative (according to Eastman). What logic was and what it was supposed to do differed between Eastman and Schiller on account of their political ideologies.[79]

Such ideological disputes in philosophy are not relative to the 1920s and the 1930s. It is important to recognize that contemporary pragmatism harbours ideological content as well. Perhaps we may learn something from the pragmatism of the interwar years in recognizing this fact: the difference between early twentieth-century pragmatism and contemporary pragmatism is that the former publicly avowed the inescapability of ideology, while the latter does not. For instance, the conservative content of Morton White's pragmatist philosophy of science is disguised, intentionally or not, as a value-neutral or formal feature of philosophy, both past and present:

According to holistic pragmatism, scientists' warpings are carried out with concern for the elegance or simplicity of the theory they adopt and with the intention to warp the

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76 Russell, "Dr Schiller's Analysis," 651.

77 John P. Diggins, "Getting Hegel out of History: Max Eastman's Quarrel with Marxism," *American Historical Review*, 79/1 (1974), 38–71.

78 Max Eastman, "Mr. Schiller's Logic," *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*, 9/17 (1912), 463–68, at 464, 465, added emphasis.

79 For another example of the way in which ideology was at stake in a debate on logic and pragmatism see Ahti-Veiko Pietarinen, "The Place of Logic in Pragmatism," *Cognitio*, 9/1 (2008), 247–60.

heritage conservatively—that is, by engaging in what James calls minimum modification of it and what Quine calls minimum mutilation of it.[80]

This may be interpreted as a purely philosophical argument, with no ideological sense attached to it, but such an interpretation would be hard to swallow for philosophers on the left who argue that ideology goes all the way down to even the most basic concepts. I do not mean to argue that White's argument is false, but I do mean to argue that it is essentially contested, and that it is essentially contested because, just like any other philosophical argument, it branches out to perspectival beliefs such as, among other things, political–ideological ones.

White and contemporary pragmatism aside, how was Schiller's logic connected to his eugenicism? According to Schiller, at the turn of the nineteenth century two working "truths" had been shown to have reverted into "truth-claims," in desperate need of new concepts, postulates, experiments, verifications, adjusted desires and changed purposes. First, the doctrine of the survival of the fittest had been seriously questioned by the success of democracy and social reform: the unfit, in short, were surviving. Second, the so-called higher races, the fit stock, which Schiller identified with the English aristocracy, were seen as degenerating, and so losing their leading role in society.[81]

"Historical" arguments also played a role as evidence of the pivotal role of race for a healthy and prosperous British society and world civilization. For instance, Schiller used conservative and nationalist historiography to argue that the British Empire was successful because of the superiority of its race over Asians and Africans, that the aristocracy had historically shown its superiority over peasants and workers by holding power and developing civilization, that the great Roman Empire perished because it intermingled with lower races within the borders of Rome herself (the plebeians), and even that the "heroes of the French Revolution are to be credited, biologically, to the *ancien regime.*"[82]

Now, in philosophical terms, according to Schiller's logic, we attain knowledge by an ongoing process of inquiry whereby "truth-claims are professed and put to testing and experiment," which at some point "verifies" the truth-claim and gains "social recognition" as a "truth," which implies the sidelining of other truth-claims as "falsities." However, it is always the case that the "truth-claim character persists into the 'truth'."[83] This fundamentally unstable foundation of truth had concretely revealed itself in early twentieth-century Britain, instilling

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[80]   Morton White, *A Philosophy of Culture: The Scope of Holistic Pragmatism* (Princeton, 2002), 2.

[81]   F. C. S. Schiller, *Tantalus or the Future of Man* (London, 1924), 47–8.

[82]   Schiller, *Eugenics*, 9.

[83]   Schiller, *Logic for Use*, 105–106.

in Jeremiah-type conservatives and eugenicists like Schiller a prophetic sense of looming crisis.

In Schiller's view, then, the truth-claims about man championed by left-wing intellectuals, politicians, and social reformers had proved themselves as possessing efficient causality, and so were becoming truths, while the truths of the aristocratic superior race were reverting into truth-claims. There had arisen a contest between these incompatible truths, in which logic was used as the forum for arbitration. Earlier, it was shown that the sciences of evolution and heredity were inseparable from social and political meanings. Now we can assert that that logic was not, and is not, immune from these meanings either. Nor was logic in the early twentieth century indifferent to biological principles. For instance, on occasion Schiller argued that heredity marked the boundaries of our thinking: "Heredity, which seems to render our moral, intellectual and physical characteristics more or less dependent on the action of our parents and ancestors, limits, if it does not destroy, our freedom and our responsibility."[84] Thus the quality of thinking, health, beauty, and strength, which nature indifferently and callously distributed across the human stocks, coincided with social strata.

What complicates this picture is Schiller's conception of thought as essentially historical and voluntary. Those commitments qualified Schiller's biological determinism in that he argued that hereditary qualities are not absolute or fixed. The very fact that biological facts and laws have meanings and truths proves that they are inescapably value-laden, and so ongoingly determined (and redetermined) by concrete selves. In the end, for Schiller, it is not some abstract eugenical principle or fact that is decisive for practice. All such principles and facts "are meant for the guidance of moral agents, with whom the decision must remain."[85] Biological truths, therefore, were no less exempt from agency, irreconcilable differences, debates, inquiries, and contests than were ideological ones.

This warps Schiller's commitment to eugenics, for it shows that Schiller's pragmatist logic supervened on his ideological views: both eugenics and conservatism were in the first place forms of social inquiry and therefore ought to be regulated by humanist logic.[86] Thus the pressing social and political issues of the day had convinced Schiller that even conservatism, the political ideology to which he felt most committed, must change.[87] Conservatism must take on a new,

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84   Schiller, *Riddles of the Sphinx*, 231–2.
85   F. C. S. Schiller, *Social Decay and Eugenical Reform* (London, 1932), 34–5.
86   Ibid., 27.
87   For a good historical argument showcasing the paradoxical variety of British conservative ideology in the twentieth century see E. H. H. Green, *Ideologies of Conservatism: Conservative Political Ideas in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford, 2002).

revived, character, radically different to the ideology of the Conservative Party and the politics of the House of Lords.[88] "How many of us, for example, really now believe that mere descent from an illiterate medieval baron attests sufficient merit to entitle a man to a hereditary seat in the House of Lords?" asked Schiller rhetorically. The same progressive attitude, attuned to the social and political realities of the contingent present, animated Schiller's advocacy of eugenics:

Hence one of the chief needs of a society which desires to reconstitute itself on eugenical principles is a thorough revision of social status. It must bring the social position of various services into closer agreement with their present value. And it must induce a greater feeling of responsibility about the popular valuations and transvaluations of functions, which are constantly exalting the position of caterers to individual pleasures above the consolidators of man's permanent welfare.[89]

According to Schiller, both conservative politics and eugenical practice, much like psychical research, must be experimental and progressive, for that is the mode in which truth-claims are applied and put to practical use.

Because every truth-claim and truth is social in nature, eugenics, too, "would have to be backed by a powerful, enthusiastic, and intelligent public sentiment."[90] And, crucially, because eugenics would be a trial-and-error experimental practice, just one out of many competing practices and world views (and not even internally coherent, according to Schiller), it "will regard the *toleration* of differences of opinion as among the cardinal principles of a sanely progressive social order."[91] Schiller was therefore in agreement with the critic of eugenics S. G. Smith who argued that "social problems *are* primarily *social* and in the last resort *psychical* problems, and that material machinery alone will not solve them, because even 'the slum is a thing of the soul'." To this criticism Schiller replied:

This view is probably true, or at any rate is a side of the truth which is often overlooked nowadays; it explains why Prof. Smith thinks it necessary to be very firm with those who

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88   This was a common theme in European aristocratic revivalism, but justified in different, sometimes radically different, ways. One of these ways was that of Oscar Levy, a Jewish German intellectual who successfully introduced Nietzsche into England. See Dan Stone, *Breeding Superman: Nietzsche, Race and Eugenics in Edwardian and Interwar Britain* (Liverpool, 2002). Others include reactionary intellectuals of *fin de siècle* Vienna, who, in the words of Carl Schorske, "utilized aristocratic style, gesture, or pretension to mobilize a mass of followers still hungry for a leadership that based its authority on something older and deeper than the power of rational argument and empirical evidence." Schorske quoted in Joseph Mali, *Mythistory: The Making of Modern Historiography* (Chicago, 2003), 17.

89   Schiller quoted in Slosson, *Six Major Prophets*, 226.

90   Schiller, *Tantalus*, 59.

91   Schiller, *Eugenics*, 60, original emphasis.

put their faith in the curative adequacy of machinery, biology, and criminology, and so weaken the indispensable belief in personal freedom and responsibility.[92]

Because of the acceptance of this criticism, Schiller did not accept another type of criticism of eugenics, put forth by the prominent leftist intellectuals J. B. S. Haldane and Bertrand Russell. They argued that in a regime governed by eugenical agendas, political dissent would eventually be labeled degenerate, and so eugenics would be perverted into an arbitrary exercise of power labeling any political opposition "degenerate," thereby legitimizing the forceful removal of that opposition. This, Schiller countered, would not happen if eugenics were wedded to humanist logic.[93] Indeed, Schiller was even ready to accept the possibility of the failure of eugenics, if the British public should decide that.

CONCLUSION

The fact that eugenics in the early twentieth century had many ideological faces and contested meanings is a well-established fact.[94] We should not fail to note, in the words of Tony Judt, that our "present discomfort with notions of race, eugenics, 'degeneration' and the like obscures the important part these played in European public thinking during the first half of the twentieth century."[95] The British case fits exceptionally well into this description, because, as Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska argues, "anxieties about physical deterioration cut across the political spectrum."[96] British advocates of both positive and negative eugenics thus included Leonard Darwin (Darwin's fourth son), J. M. Keynes, G. B. Shaw, W. B. Yeats, Sidney and Beatrice Webb,[97] T. S. Eliot, H. G. Wells, Julian and Aldous Huxley, Richard Titmuss, Catherine and William Whetham, Caleb Saaleby, Winston Churchill, William Beveridge, Harold Laski, and Arthur Balfour. These intellectuals and politicians were all, in various degrees and with various motivations, somehow involved with the Eugenics Education Society— e.g. by writing for the *Eugenics Review* or other journals and newspapers, by being members of the society, or by giving lectures organized by the society.

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92 F. C. S. Schiller, "Review of *Social Pathology*," *Eugenics Review*, 4/3 (1912), 317–19, at 317–18, original emphasis.

93 Schiller, *Eugenics*, 29.

94 Freeden, "Eugenics.'" Eugenics, moreover, was a transnational movement, but one differentiated by national and disciplinary particularities. See Edgar Schuster, "The First International Eugenics Congress," *Eugenics Review*, 4/3 (1912), 223–56.

95 Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (London, 2005), 72.

96 Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, "Building a British Superman: Physical Culture in Interwar Britain," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 41/4 (2006), 595–610, at 596.

97 Sidney Webb, "The Minority Report," *Eugenics Review*, 2/3 (1910), 233–41.

Clare Hanson has recently pointed out that British eugenics stood a chance of surviving into the second half of the twentieth century in that it provided a seriously considered means for William Beveridge, and other architects of the British welfare state, to eradicate Beveridge's five obstacles to social progress: "Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and Idleness."[98]

On account of this ideological heterogeneity, we cannot reduce the British eugenics movement to the doctrine of social Darwinism or to political ideologies on the right.[99] Clearly, the meaning of eugenics was not monolithic. It was open to appropriations from and conflicts between a wide range of ideological and philosophical perspectives, including pragmatism, as this article has shown.

There can be little doubt that Schiller was firmly committed to eugenics. Two conclusions of this essay, however, on the one hand shed new light on the nature of Schiller's commitment, and on the other offer some insights into the possibility of rehabilitating Schiller's status as a thinker today. Regarding the nature of Schiller's commitment to eugenics, the conclusion is simple and straightforward: Schiller practiced what we might call a "philosophical politics" in which his humanism and pragmatism served to steer his eugenicism into a voluntarist, pluralist, and historicist kind, which must be distinguished from the determinist and what we might call, following Isaiah Berlin, "monist" versions of eugenicism.

Whether Schiller can be rehabilitated today and how, in light of this first conclusion, is a more difficult topic. A comparison may serve to address this difficulty, for it demonstrates that Schiller can be rehabilitated, even if it in no way is intended to imply that he ought to be. If compared to the politics of other early twentieth-century thinkers often associated with the far right, such as Carl Schmitt and Martin Heidegger,[100] it is not straightforwardly evident that Schiller's politics are any more or less questionable than theirs. Still, rehabilitating Schiller today would pose the following formidable obstacle. Schiller saw philosophy, including his own, as inextricably tied to political practices and beliefs in the wider contexts of contingent practices and biological life. That, however, in itself is not a principle which warrants excluding Schiller from use today. The problem with using Schiller's *philosophy*, inclusive of but wider than this *principle*, is that it wedded itself to a politics the truths and practices of which have been

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[98]   Clare Hanson, *Eugenics, Literature, and Culture in Post-war Britain* (New York, 2013). For an account of eugenics as intimately related to European modernism, see Marius Turda, *Modernism and Eugenics* (New York, 2010).

[99]   A similar point is made by Michael Freeden, *The New Liberalism: An Ideology of Social Reform* (Oxford, 1976), 11.

[100]   See, for example, David Pettigrew and François Raffoul, eds., *French Interpretations of Heidegger: An Exceptional Reception* (Albany, 2008); and Jan-Werner Müller, *A Dangerous Mind: Carl Schmitt in Post-war European Thought* (New Haven, 2003).

thoroughly discredited as falsehoods. Schiller certainly made room in his logic for this kind of shift, and accepted that eugenics might be rejected. But since his own philosophical politics remained eugenical, and since, on Schiller's own account, we cannot accept his philosophy without accepting his politics, it is fairly safe to assume that there will be no serious rehabilitation of Schiller today. In the event a theorist should feel up to the task of rehabilitating Schiller's philosophy, he or she cannot be exempt from coming to terms with Schiller's politics.