

THE MEANING OF PROPERTY

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I think I could turn and live awhile with the animals....they are so placid and self-contained,

... Not one is dissatisfied....not one is demented with the mania of owning things.

Walt Whitman

*The less you **are** and the less you express of your life - the more you **have** and the greater is your alienated life.*

Karl Marx

Introduction

The background to this discussion was a consideration of Nozick's libertarian view, that freedom and liberties should be maximised, and his assumption that an essential part of freedom is entitlement to property; the freedom to exclusive ownership. My original intuition was that a defence of property ownership, on libertarian grounds, is problematic because property ownership in actual fact restricts freedom in some fundamental way. It is through engagement with an inquiry on the meaning of property, and the implications of this meaning, that we can discover some support for this original intuition. I discerned in the work of Rousseau, in particular, a contention that property ownership initiates and maintains ties of dependence. Although there is no explicit reference to Nozick in this essay, these considerations formed the context within which the essay was written, and this essay can be seen, therefore, as an implicit reply to assumptions that freedom and property ownership are synonymous.

Since the 1960's the West has been described as 'The Affluent Society'. This is not to say that there is no inequality, indeed statistics often reveal that the gap between rich and poor is increasing. Nevertheless, ensuring day to day subsistence minimum for people is no longer a problem for economists, who now seem more concerned with measuring the growth of material prosperity. Television sets and washing machines are owned in even the poorer sections of society, and as the demands for property rise, so do expectations. Want is translated as need and any relationship between property and economic subsistence has long since been abandoned.

The starting point of this essay is that, at least in the Western world, the meaning of property has little to do with day to day economic subsistence. Indeed, historical attempts to justify the institution of property are so plentiful, that it is hard to reconcile them with an institution that is simply responding to the needs for survival. After all, there is little need to justify a basic desire to survive. Moreover, if the meaning of property was to be found in the satisfaction of economic need it would fail to explain the huge discrepancies in wealth and inequality.

Indeed the economist Hirsch points out that as material prosperity increases, consumption becomes socially or publicly significant, that consumption is not a purely private matter,

As the level of average consumption rises...the satisfaction that individuals derive from goods and services depends in increasing measure not only on their own consumption but on consumption by others as well.

(Hirsch, 1977, p.2)

The purpose of this essay is to explore what the social significance of property is; to excavate a meaning, or range of meanings that property ownership has for us. The first chapter will examine this question, using the work of Rousseau and Veblen. Both argue that property and inequality are bound together, and that inequality is the key to understanding the meaning of property. This is to be understood as rooted in the psychological traits of man in social engagement.

In the second chapter we will examine the implications for us, for our relationships with others, and for our world. We will be asking whether, considering what property means, and the implications for us that this entails, it is viable or desirable. The aim is not to provide a

critique on moral grounds; to assess desirability within an ethical framework, but simply to show that the meaning of property we have discerned is wholly self-defeating.

The third chapter will examine whether, considering the conclusions of the second chapter, the situation is inevitable, or whether there are alternatives open to us. We will explore the materialist solution to the problems raised, and using the work of Heidegger as a springboard, speculate on an aesthetic solution to the problems. This will have implications for the institution of property itself, for to tackle the meaning of property, is to make property meaningless.

Chapter One

In order to excogitate the meaning of property we will initially examine the work of Rousseau, who presents an interesting social/psychological analysis of property ownership. Following on from this, the work of Veblen provides both support and comparison to Rousseau, thus illuminating and deepening our understanding of the meaning of property.

1.1: Rousseau

All the inequality which now prevails owes its strength and growth to the development of our faculties and the advance of the human mind, and becomes at last permanent and legitimate by the establishment of property and laws.

(Rousseau, 1755, p105).

This sentence appears at the end of the Discourse on the Origins of Inequality, and concludes the twofold analysis of property that Rousseau has followed through Part Two. On the one hand Rousseau is interested in the growth of economic inequality, and in tracing its development through a hypothetical historical genesis, where the growth of civil society and property ownership are intrinsically and inevitably bound together. He argues that economic inequality is unjust; "... The privileged few... gorge themselves with superfluities, while the starving multitude are in want of the bare necessities of life." (Ibid. p105). On the other hand, there is a more interesting aspect to property ownership for Rousseau, for which we need not

examine the hypothetical genesis for flaws, but into which we need only enquire analytically. The second aspect of the analysis is that 'amour-propre' is mediated through property; that is property has a *social significance*, resting on the psychological traits of man in social engagement, and it is this aspect of acquisition that is interesting in our inquiry as to the meaning of property.

Rousseau characterises natural, or pre-social man, as being guided by 'amour-de-soi'. Basically this is a desire for self-preservation (physically). 'Amour-propre', on the other hand, arises in society and; "Leads each individual to make more of himself than of any other". (Ibid, p66 notes). Although there is much discussion amongst commentators as to the difference and subtleties of each concept, we can generalise that 'amour-propre' arises as man engages in social relationships and begins to compare himself with others;

They acquired imperceptibly the ideas of beauty and merit, which soon gave rise to feelings of preference...From these first distinctions arose on the one side vanity and contempt and on the other shame and envy.

(Ibid, p81)

Although Rousseau's genesis story suggests that it was sexual jealousy that was the catalyst for these changes; women thus becoming the first property (which is defined as having exclusive ownership over), he never really explains why this should have been the case. Nevertheless genesis aside, the phenomenology of social relationships today is, he argues, characterised by vanity, comparison, contempt, shame etc., amongst other things.

Social relationships bring dependency. On the one hand we are economically dependent upon each other; I need to sell my labour to someone, in order that I have money to buy food. On the other hand, we are socially dependent upon each other; comparison and judgement

mean that my own self-worth is dependent upon others' opinions and judgement, upon external regard rather than internal regard. Thus, as I judge, so I will be judged. The psychological traits, "The development of faculties and the advance of the human mind" (Ibid, p105) in social engagement, are characterised as competitive, aggressive, vengeful, and corrupt as the, "Universal desire for reputation" (Ibid, p101), honours and status becomes the primary motivator. "Society offers to us only an assembly of artificial men and factitious passions." (Ibid, p104).

If we recall our opening quotation from Rousseau, we can now see that inequality owes its strength to the psychological structure of 'amour-propre'. Economic inequality is motivated by an aggressive, competitive desire for honours and status, and for social inequality, "The rich would cease to be happy the moment the people ceased to be wretched." (Ibid, p101). Property and wealth have meaning in terms of the status they accord because some have more than others, "As riches tend most immediately to the property of individuals, and are easiest to communicate, they are used to purchase every other distinction." (Ibid, p101). Property is the successful, visible expression of 'amour-propre', of competition and distinction, and in the Western world of plenty it is, perhaps, the dominant meaning of property. Men purchase distinction in an expensive car, house, watch, and of course 'wife', and what is important is not the expense in absolute terms, it is the relative expense, the comparison to the man down the road, who has less.

1.2: Veblen

Veblen emphasises the status, role or meaning, of property, and he also attempts a genetic account to anchor his claims about the leisure class, citing their evolution from earlier barbarian or predatory times. That aside, however, the idea of the "leisure class" can be understood as a set of attitudes or psychological traits apparent in the world of today, which reveal themselves in the principle that, "The leisure class canon demands strict and comprehensive futility." (Veblen, 1899, p172). There is conspicuous waste, both in goods and in effort, and this wasteful and futile principle is fuelled by the attitude of invidious comparison and distinction, which "Inculcates the self-regarding attitude." (Ibid, p234). Thus industry produces little of real use, but contents itself with the production of expensive decorations. Decorations are purchased for invidious distinction and status, and are discarded when fashion decrees.

The archaic traits of the leisure class are those of self-seeking, competitive, and aggressive attitudes, and emulation. Indeed, Veblen argues that,

The motive that lies at the root of ownership is emulation; and the same motive of emulation continues active in the further development of the institution to which it has given rise...The possession of wealth confers honour.

(Ibid, p35)

Although he concedes that among the poorer members of a community the motive may well be subsistence, as far as regards those who are involved in accumulation of wealth, the motive is invidious distinction. Property is regarded as honourable and becomes a basis for "That complacency which we call self-respect." (Ibid, p38).

Moreover, the desire for property is never sated; as fast as a person acquires new things they want new things, they want a more favourable comparison between themselves and others. As emulation is the motivation for property, so emulation selects which objects are desirable, and thus fashions are created. The anecdotal tales of life in the booming Japan of the 1980's, tells how the skips in Tokyo were full of electrical equipment in good working order but discarded after three months when the new model of each was brought out. The meaning of property is not its usefulness for subsistence or even comfort, but its role in conferring honour and self-regard in comparison with others, and this demands wasteful consumerism.

1.3: A Non-Invidious Comparison

Although we have given only a brief exposition of both Rousseau's, and Veblen's arguments concerning the social meaning of property, it seems immediately apparent that they have much in common. In this section we will examine these similarities in more detail, in order to extract the central themes and issues useful in our discussion of the meaning of property. Furthermore, we will highlight where there are differences of emphasis or concern in the two theories as this will provide for a more complex interpretation of the meaning of property.

Interestingly, in both accounts of the genesis of society, the initiation of property as an institution is accorded to the ownership of women. Veblen remarks that, "Likewise the earliest form of ownership is an ownership of the women by the able-bodied men." (Veblen, 1899, p33) Women are useful as trophies. As noted earlier, Rousseau cites sexual jealousy as a catalyst for the change from nature to society, or from 'amour-de-soi' to 'amour-propre', to put it crudely. (Rousseau, 1755, p81). Sexual jealousy can only be accounted for if we are making

some comparisons between our own position and that of another, and therefore the idea of exclusive ownership is articulated. Indeed this supports the contention of this discussion; that the meaning of property has more to do with its social significance than with economic subsistence.

That ownership of women has little to do with the demands of economics and more to do with status is contentious. For example, Engels in "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State" makes a convincing argument that the reverse is the case. Nevertheless, Simone De Beauvoir remarks in response to Engels that,

If the human consciousness had not included the original category of the Other and an original aspiration to dominate the Other, the invention of the bronze tool could not have caused the oppression of women.

(De Beauvoir, 1949, p89)

The psychological traits of dominance and competition arising in social relationships meant that there was/is a desire to dominate the Other. Thus women are acquired not only to increase status in the group, but because that status is based on the fact that in regard to the woman, the Other has been dominated, and is a trophy to that effect. Thus we have the beginnings of the Master/slave relationship, where a woman or man is owned as a trophy of the masters dominance, and aggressive competitiveness over the slave, as well as in relation to the rest of the group.

Rousseau, and Veblen are both attacking bourgeois attitudes and ways of life. They rail against the complacency, and self-regarding attitudes dominant in 'fashionable life'. Rousseau argues that leisure time, used to furnish us with conveniences was the 'first yoke'. The washing machine, for example, not only weakens us physically, but it also doesn't satisfy us, it merely

initiates further desires. Nevertheless, if it were to be taken away from us we would be unhappy and feel unable to cope with the thought of handwashing. It fosters dependency, without yielding happiness or fulfilment. Veblen echoes this sentiment in his blistering attack on bourgeois attitudes, and the leisure class, articulated in terms of 'conspicuous consumption' where useless items are bought for the sake of prestige, but bring nothing but a spiritual emptiness. As noted above, consumerism is successful because the desire for property is never sated as our status is dependent on having more than others, or at least as much. Because we are dependent, we need new things, it is constant competition, without rest. We never reflect that we managed to live successfully without the new item, because consumerism is socially significant and has little to do with subsistence.

Both Rousseau, and Veblen emphasise that property ownership is motivated by comparison, or emulation which is based on self-regard. The crucial point is that the desire for honour and public esteem is intrinsically relational and demands that there are others worse off. It is the necessity of the relational aspect which leads us to the characterisation of the master/slave relationship, as noted above. The demand that there are others worse off means that public esteem is parasitic on psychological traits of aggression, competition, and domination, or, that these psychological traits are sublimated in property ownership. Therefore, the meaning of property is also bound up with these psychological traits. Obviously, ownership of a car is not a subjection of the car to a master/slave relationship, nevertheless it still functions as a trophy with which to dominate the rest of the social group. Wealth purchases invidious distinction.

Although Rousseau and Veblen agree on the fundamental motivations for ownership of property they do have different concerns. Rousseau, it seems, is concerned with dependency and autonomy; Veblen with wastefulness and futility. An elaboration of these differences in

concern will be useful in our discussion on the meaning of property, and particularly in the next chapter, in our discussion on the implications of this.

Rousseau states that,

As the bonds of servitude are formed merely by the mutual dependence of men on one another...it is impossible to make any man a slave, unless he first be reduced to a situation in which he cannot do without the help of others.

(Rousseau, 1755, p74)

The master/slave relationship is the extreme co-dependent relationship, and this is facilitated in modern society by making autonomy extremely difficult. Crudely, we buy food in shops, with money, and in order to get money we have to sell our labour to another for wages. "How could he exact obedience, and what ties of dependence could there be among men without possessions." (Ibid, p73). Here we see that Rousseau is making explicit the connection between property and dependency. This dependency is economic dependency, but again it has social significance.

As we have seen property has meaning as status, in terms of recognition in social relationships. Indeed, Fukuyama notes Hegel's argument that man derives satisfaction from property because of the recognition that it brings. (Fukuyama, 1992, p195). This is not, of itself, a moral judgement, and it could be argued that this is a useful basis for civil society for all sorts of reasons. However, Rousseau is arguing that the status meaning of property is problematic because it is based on social (and economic) dependency. Instead of looking inward for self-worth, we are dependent upon external regard for self-worth. The slave is dependent on the master for subsistence, and the master is dependent on the slave to remain a slave, for the status and esteem that that brings.

Rousseau understands very well that the master is as bonded as the slave. Property only gives the illusion of freedom. The drive for acquisition initiates a set of inter-dependent relations with others, both economic and social. Moreover property ownership, does not increase liberty, but rather maintains those ties of dependence.

This dependency on external regard, fosters paranoia and fear of harm from others. Rousseau states that, "There can be no injury where there is no property." (Rousseau, 1755, p82). As property has meaning as public esteem, from which we derive our self-worth, then an attack on property is an attack on our very selves. Rousseau exclaims that, "The rich have feelings, if I may so express myself, in every part of their possessions." (Ibid, p91). Therefore, the dependent relations as expressed in property are psychologically harmful. We will not explore this further until chapter two, when we will look at the implications of this meaning of property.

For Veblen, the concern seems to be the wastefulness and futility of 'conspicuous consumption'. Industry is concerned with producing little of use, "This expenditure does not serve life, or human well-being on the whole." (Veblen, 1899, p78). He argues that fashions rely on this wasteful principle, and that status and honour accrue the more wasteful and futile the object or activity is. The more expensive, and pointless an object is, the more it proves that the owner is someone with wealth enough to spend on such a thing, and therefore, the more they are honoured. Perversely then, waste and futility are honoured at the expense of usefulness. At an extreme, "The requirements of financial reputability tend... to leave but a scanty subsistence minimum available for other than conspicuous consumption." (Ibid, p141). There are people who buy houses too large and expensive for their needs, mortgage themselves into debt, leaving little resource for food and the necessities of life; the 'plight' of the present day aristocracy may be evidence of this.

In summary; property: (1) Has social significance, in terms of status.

Therefore, (2) there must be a demand for inequality.

(3) As such, property is invidious distinction.

However, this is parasitic on psychological traits which fuel the desire for inequality, and invidious distinction, but also give a meaning to property.

The stronger claim is that: (1) Property is the expression of invidious distinction.

(2) Invidious distinction relies upon competition and

comparison, and the aggressive desire to dominate others.

Therefore, (3) Property signifies dominance over others.

What makes status so demanding on us is the aggressive, combative relationships that we have with others. Aggressive, and dominating traits are sublimated in property ownership. Property is sublimated aggression.

It is these themes that we will pursue in the second chapter, where we will look at the implications of the meaning of property. We will also explore the principle of wastefulness, and dependency, as discussed, which are ultimately self-defeating in that they actually undermine self-preservation.

Chapter Two

In order to examine the implications of the meaning of property as articulated above, this chapter will be divided into three sections. The first will explore the implications of this view for the self. The second will explore ramifications for relationships with others, and the last will examine environmental concerns. The aim of this chapter is not to show that property is, in some sense, morally wrong because it is sublimated aggression. Instead we shall be exploring the idea that because the significance of property is domination, it ends up being self-defeating, in that it holds us in servitude, and ultimately ends up threatening our very preservation and survival. In other words, 'amour propre' as mediated in property ends up contradicting 'amour-de-soi'.

2.1: Alienation of Self in Property

"Society offers to us only an assembly of artificial men and factitious passions." (Rousseau, 1755, p104). It is at the end of the Discourse that Rousseau offers this description of man in society, as artificial, by which he means that their desires have no foundation in nature (Ibid, p104). Man is no longer the autonomous, free individual, dependent upon only himself; instead man has become dependent upon others. His self-worth, and social standing rely on external regard, rather than internal regard. For Rousseau this actually changes the desires of man, and desiring to 'make more of himself than any other', his passions turn to acquisition.

Implicit in this account is the view that man's nature has been changed or altered from its natural course, that man's relationship with his very self has changed. It is this changed relationship with self that is expressed in property. The self is no longer driven by its own forces, but is driven by forces outside of the self; driven by the judgements of others and the desire for domination which is sublimated in property. Incongruity arises as the self is moulded to fit in with other's judgements, and we adopt tastes and manners based upon these, rather than relying on our own self.

A man who relates to himself in such a way attempts to objectify and quantify his self in his property. Not only do others judge his social significance through his property, but inevitably he does as well. He becomes quantifiable to himself, standing in relation to those around him, for better or worse. He becomes blind to the aesthetic qualities of the things that surround him, concerned only with the status they accord. Thus he is alienated from his aesthetic 'nature' (for want of a better word), or from aesthetic possibilities. Moreover, by objectifying and quantifying himself in his property, man limits his own possibilities, he limits his freedom. He becomes for himself only that which he can see in his property, and the final decision upon the success of his life is drawn up by a lawyer in his will.

Nevertheless, this is not a static situation. To dominate others man must, "At every point order his own life with a view to his continuing to have command over others." (Dent, 1988, p31). Therefore the self can never rest in acquisition, and everything is subsumed under this quest. Actions become dominated by relational demands, boring jobs are tolerated for the pecuniary rewards they bring, and spiritual emptiness dominates. Moreover, as Veblen argues, acquisition in itself does not make us happy because it is the purchasing of invidious distinction. We always want more, because we must continue to dominate others.

What this amounts to is that because property signifies status, aggression and dominance over others, the self is inevitably alienated in its property. Property limits the self and holds it captive, and ends up by dominating, not only others, but the self itself. Therefore I am judged by my property, in terms of status, and I assess my own self-worth using the same measurement. Thus I am objectified, and quantified, by others and by myself, and held captive by it. I am no longer self-reliant, but dependent, and therefore controlled in taste, and manners by others discriminations. My self as infinite possibility is limited in my property, because it is quantifiable, and indeed real possibilities are limited as all actions are determined by the aggressive desire to dominate others in the acquisition of property. The dictates of acquisition dominate me and my actions. I am cut off from myself, which is naturally free and autonomous, and am summed up and dominated by my property. I am an 'artificial man with factitious passions.'

2.2: Alienation of Others

We have already characterised relationships with others as competitive and aggressive, based on distinctions from which arise, "On the one side vanity and contempt and on the other shame and envy." (Rousseau, 1755, p81). Much of this competitive game is played through property ownership, as we have discussed. However, it can be argued that competitive relationships do not of themselves mean that we are alienated from others, that in fact to view another as a worthy competitor is to offer respect. Indeed this may or may not be the case, but for the purpose of this essay we will be concentrating on invidious distinctions in property which are wholly alienating of the self from others.

The most shocking aspect of this meaning of property, as it dictates relationships with others is stated by Rousseau thus,

...If we have a few rich and powerful men on the pinnacle of fortune and grandeur, while the crowd grovels in want and obscurity, it is because the former prize what they enjoy only in so far as others are destitute of it; and...would cease to be happy the moment the people ceased to be wretched.

(Ibid, p101)

In other words we actually want the worst for others, the continued existence of poverty is desired for others, in order for what we have to have any meaning for us at all. Of itself this does not seem conducive to good relationships with others, wishing the worst for people is not a satisfactory situation, and it leads to two types of alienated relationships; the paranoid, and the commodification of others.

The problem with wishing the worst for others, is that it allows for the fact that others also wish the worst for you. In other words it induces paranoia. Everyone is a potential threat, and is viewed and related to as such. The acquisition of property is the purchasing of invidious distinction, but it is vulnerable to theft and attack, and knowing that everyone is a potential threat, the protection of property becomes a primary motivator, because it is protection of status. Therefore paranoid relationships with others become their most intense in matters of property. You may want to show off your new Porsche, but you have to keep it locked in the garage for fear of theft. Thus, the meaning of property has been defeated by the paranoid relationships with others that the purchasing of invidious distinction brings.

The second type of relationship that wanting the worst for others brings, we have called the commodification of others. Put simply wanting the worst in material terms for others means

that others are always quantified and measured by their property, and valued as such. People are related to as objects of status, which you are better or worse than, rather than as free and autonomous individuals, with depths and possibilities.

Both types of relationships lie in direct contradiction to the 'natural' relationship we have with others which is characterised as compassion by Rousseau, "which by moderating the activity of love of self in each individual, contributes to the preservation of the whole species." (Rousseau, 1755, p68). Therefore, not only are these types of relationships alienated, but they seem to put at risk the survival of the species as a whole. 'Amour-propre' as mediated in property threatens 'amour-de-soi', it is self-defeating.

The other aspect of relationships with others, one that we have already touched upon, is dependency. However, the social relationship of dependence has implications not only for the self, but also for our being-for-others. In particular it fosters a relationship with others that we have characterised as master-slave. Thus, the slave is dependent on the master for economic subsistence, and the master is dependent on the slave to remain a slave, for the social esteem and status that it brings. As Dent argues, "The casting of someone in that role (as slave) is inherent to the constitution of one's personal construction of what one is and what one amounts to." (Dent, 1988, p61).

These relationships are those of domination. On the one hand this means that we relate to others as objects to be dominated, rather than autonomous individuals. Therefore, other people are related to as things amongst other things and are de-humanised. On the other hand the dominator is trapped because he is dependent on the slave remaining the slave, and therefore, domination requires manipulation or coercion in order for the status quo to be maintained. What this means, in terms of property and relationships with others, is a particular form of manipulation called fashion. In order to maintain his property domination, he needs to

persuade others that his property is somehow better than others, and if he can claim fashionability, and others believe him, then he is probably most of the way there. This is a dishonest relationship with others, "It now became the interest of men to appear what they really were not. To be and to seem became two totally different things." (Rousseau, 1755, p86). Therefore, not only is domination alienating of others because it relates to them as things, but it also demands dishonesty, and trickery in relationships with others.

It seems that relationships with others are characterised as dependent, paranoid, manipulative, dishonest, and dehumanising. The demand that others must be worse off for property to have any social significance, for property is invidious distinction, distorts and corrupts our relationships with others. Indeed these relationships are reciprocal; thus, as I dominate, so I am dominated; as I lie, so I am lied to; and everything ends in self-defeat. This is a far cry from the non-attached yet compassionate 'natural' man articulated by Rousseau. Moreover, not only is the social significance of property destructive psychologically for the self and for relationships, but it actually poses a threat to the survival of the human race in general.

2.3: Environmental Concerns

It appears that the utility of both [conspicuous leisure and consumption]...lies in the element of waste that is common to both. In one case it is a waste of time and effort, in the other it is a waste of goods. Both are methods of demonstrating the possession of wealth.

(Veblen, 1899, p71)

Conspicuous consumption is an unremitting demonstration of how well off you are, and consequently of your worth. However, conspicuous consumption also relies upon a high turnover of goods, and an extravagant squandering of resources. It demands that there is always something new, and better to consume. Both fashion and planned obsolescence are responses to the demands of conspicuous consumption, whilst quality, and workmanship are antagonistic to it.

Industries produce goods that people don't need, and everything is sold as new and improved, and our self-esteem demands that we consume more and more. On the one hand this is a futile waste of time and expense, for it is never ending, and is ultimately dissatisfying. It ends up by dominating us. On the other hand it can actually endanger subsistence, as we spend more on purchasing items for distinction, than on dietary requirements for example. Indeed, an example of this is narcotics, where addiction to a 'status' drug like cocaine can lead not only to health problems, but in extreme cases to the neglecting of food and shelter requirements.

Moreover, conspicuous consumption is a wasteful principle, and this has dire implications for the environment. As more goods are produced for consumption, more land is utilised, and exploited for the production of these goods. Forests are felled, factories pollute the air, land and sea, animals and land are intensively farmed, natural resources are mined etc. Moreover, the high turnover of these goods leads to more and more waste in the form of rubbish, with no adequate means of disposing of it all, culminating in the irony of expensive new houses being built on old landfill sites and slowly sinking. The goods themselves are just as destructive; cars pollute, aerosols release CFC's, etc. Scientists warn of environmental catastrophe as the Earth warms, and the food chain becomes polluted.

Not only are these the environmental consequences of conspicuous consumption and the drive for invidious distinction, but this relationship between man and the environment is

also the result of the same aggressive, and combative traits which makes status so demanding to us. Our relationship to the environment is one of domination; with the corresponding demand that everything is there for our purposes. We aggressively conquer the natural world and then make trophies out of it, in the form of goods, with which to dominate others. However, this situation is non-sustainable; in trying to dominate the environment, we destroy it and consequently ourselves. Conspicuous consumption is the motor to environmental catastrophe for us.

In summary, we have seen that the significance of property as invidious distinction is alienating for us, self-defeating, and unsustainable. In the next chapter, we shall be examining whether it is inevitable that property has this meaning for us, and whether there is another way for us to relate to things, to ourselves, to each other, and to the environment. We shall argue that the answer, or alternative lies in an exploration of aesthetic possibilities.

Chapter Three

This part of the discussion will be divided into three parts; the materialist solution; the grounding for an aesthetic salvation; and finally the aesthetic solution. The first will examine the Marxist response to the problem of property ownership; the second and third will explore an aesthetic attitude towards property, and speculate upon implications of this, using Heidegger's 'Essay Concerning Technology' as a starting point.

3.1: The Materialist Solution

"The various stages of development in the division of labour are just so many different forms of ownership." (Marx, 1844, p161) For Marx, property ownership, technology, means of production, and accumulation of capital are symbiotic and inter-related. In 'The German Ideology' he argues that history is simply the movement through various forms of property ownership, and consequent changes in technology etc. He posits a future where private property is abolished and thus labour itself is changed, which he calls Communism.

Indeed, this seems to be an immediate solution to the problem discussed above. If we simply abolished private property, then we would no longer alienate ourselves and others in it, we would no longer be dominated by the desire for acquisition and the purchasing of invidious distinction. We cannot change the meaning of property, so we will change property itself.

Nonetheless, there are problems with this solution. We can imagine a situation where private property is abolished, yet the psychological traits of domination and aggression remain. Therefore, abolition of private property would have to be enforced, and coercion would dominate. Consequently the outlet for these traits may be displaced, and sublimated elsewhere, and even within communal ownership a type of competitive tribalism might dominate. Thus, abolition of private property would not get to the root of the problem, and would not alter the fundamental form of social relationship.

Nevertheless, it is clear that Marx did not hold this to be the case. He argues that;

The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men...Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life.

(Ibid, p164)

Consciousness is bound to the material process, and independence is a philosophical illusion. Therefore, abolition of private property, which would change division of labour, accumulation of capital etc., would actually change consciousness, attitudes and conceptions. For Marx, the change of property ownership would fundamentally change social relationships, would change the way that men think, and what they think. In fact, then, the psychological traits of aggression and domination which are the meaning of property, would meet their demise with the abolition of property.

In 'The German Ideology' Marx argues that these conclusions are empirically verifiable; that empty talk about consciousness has ceased. However, without claiming that the Soviet state was communist, we can briefly examine it to see if abolition of private property resulted in the demise of 'amour-propre', of alienation, and of dominated lives; to see whether the

argument is empirically verifiable. It is clear that coercion was used in order to maintain the abolition of private property, and that a large number of Russian people embraced private ownership again when it became available to them; thus consciousness had not changed fundamentally. It is also clear that the Soviet state, as property owner, was aggressive and dominating on the citizens of the Soviet Union, as well as in foreign policy. Indeed, in terms of the rest of the Eastern Bloc, the Soviet Union expanded territorially, assuming a property relationship with the invaded countries. The East attempted to 'own' more of the world than the West, as it engaged in that combative and aggressive relationship with the United States of America. The meaning of state owned property was of the same family as the meaning of individual private ownership, although couched in patriotic terms. Moreover, the Soviet Union still viewed the world as a resource for it, and the environmental consequences of that are still articulated.

Therefore it seems that although private property was abolished, consciousness did not change fundamentally from the picture we painted in the first two chapters. That a solution of abolition, at best displaces the problem, to tribe, or nation, or ideology, and at worst frustrates those psychological traits, thus creating more problems than it solves. In the next section we will turn this solution on it's head, and argue that a change in attitude, or consciousness is needed first, before material conditions can change.

3.2: The Grounding for Aesthetic Salvation

In his essay, 'The Question Concerning Technology', Heidegger articulates the view that modern industrial technology is alienating and even dangerous. Although his essay is

concerned with technology, many of the arguments and conclusions that he draws, could equally well be applied to property, as we have analysed it so far. It is through his argument concerning technology that a hope for salvation is revealed, which is also applicable to the problem of property. In this section of the essay, we shall give a brief exposition of the main points in Heidegger's argument. We shall then attempt to show how this can be applied to our analysis of property, and explore whether it provides a satisfactory solution to the problems outlined in the last chapter.

Heidegger's concern is with the essence of technology, and what this is. He explores the etymology of the word to discover that it means revealing, "The essence of technology is ultimately a way of revealing the totality of beings." (Heidegger, 1953, p309). What this means is that all of nature is utilised and challenged to become part of an available stockpile of resources for technology. Therefore, what technology reveals the world as is "standing-reserve";

The revealing that rules in modern technology is a challenging...which puts to nature the unreasonable demand that it supply energy which can be extracted and stored as such.

(Ibid, p320)

Man is himself taken as standing-reserve, which is alienating, but he, in turn, orders the rest of the world as standing-reserve, thus he sets upon and exploits the rest of the world. This is what Heidegger calls 'enframing';

Enframing is the gathering together which belongs to the setting-upon which challenges man and puts him in a position to reveal the actual, in the mode of ordering, as standing-reserve.

(Heidegger, 1953, p329)

The problem is that man's attitudes and perceptions are derived from the particular mode of revealing, which makes it difficult to appreciate or understand a more primal or former revealing in which the world is more authentically revealed, "Where this ordering holds sway, it drives out every other possibility of revealing." (Ibid, p332). Moreover man, in ordering the world as standing-reserve, arrogantly deludes himself that he is, "Lord of the earth" (Ibid, p332), forgetting that he himself is also ordered as standing-reserve. Therefore, this mode of revealing threatens to overwhelm man, which is why it is dangerous. Enframing conceals the way to other, more primal modes of revealing;

Enframing threatens man with the possibility that it could be denied to him to enter into a more original revealing and hence to experience the call of a more primal truth. Thus where enframing reigns, there is danger in the highest sense.

(Ibid, p333)

Therefore, man becomes subservient to technology, whilst under the illusion that he can dominate it.

Nonetheless, Heidegger argues, we may be able to save ourselves. It is through a questioning, such as this, that new ways of revealing become apparent, as the danger of the old ways are exposed. This may be difficult but it is not impossible. Art also reveals, and here may lie 'the highest possibility' for art, that it may be what saves us from modern technology.

Through aesthetic revealing we can reveal the world not as standing-reserve, but 'primally' and authentically. For Heidegger, the 'saving power' of the arts is the promise that we can apprehend the world anew, and rescue it and ourselves from the danger of technology.

3.2.1: Comparisons

Initially we can see many similarities between our analysis of the meaning of property, and Heidegger's analysis of the essence of technology, although the methodologies are somewhat different. In this section we shall concentrate on exploring the similarities, through which we can approach an aesthetic solution to the problem of property.

Etymology aside, technology reveals the world as standing-reserve, according to Heidegger. In a similar way, we have argued that the meaning of property is rooted in aggressive and dominating psychological traits; that property reveals the world as a stage for the purchasing and flaunting of invidious distinction; and that the demands of self, others, and nature are subsumed under the demands of property and conspicuous consumption. Thus, the world is revealed as standing reserve for conspicuous consumption.

Heidegger argues that man too is viewed as standing-reserve, but he also orders the world as standing-reserve, and thus, exploits the environment. Similarly we have argued that man is quantified by the property he owns, and viewed as a status-thing, yet he also orders or quantifies others, relating to them as status-things and the world as status-objects or possible resource for consumption. The world is enframed by the demands of invidious distinction and conspicuous consumption, and is exploited as such.

Both Heidegger, and Marx argue that to some extent man's attitudes and conceptions are produced by the technological mode of revealing or material conditions, i.e., property. Man is therefore held subservient before technology or material conditions, whilst under the illusion that he is in control. In the previous chapter we discussed how in order to dominate others, man can never rest in his quest for acquisition, and therefore is himself dominated by the purchasing of invidious distinction.

For Marx, the answer was to abolish property. For Heidegger, the answer lies in the development of a more primal, or authentic revealing. Similarly Rousseau has described society as 'an assembly of artificial men', and the claim for a more authentic mode of being is articulated, free from domination and dependence. Nonetheless, this is surely problematic, if we are truly subservient to technology/property. However, Heidegger argues that in exposing the technological mode of revealing for what it is, we become free to choose our own mode of revealing. We free ourselves through insight. Salvation lies in aesthetic revealing. In the next sections, we shall explore how the development of an aesthetic mode of being can provide a solution to the problems outlined in the second chapter, and what the implications are for property itself.

3.3: Towards an Aesthetic Solution

For Heidegger, the world is revealed more authentically through Art and poetry. In our discussion on property we must consider whether, and how the 'truths' revealed through Art and poetry pertain to property. Secondly, we must explore and elaborate upon the development of an aesthetic mode of being

It is certainly true that most Art does not address the world as a stage for the purchasing of invidious distinction; although these themes are at times addressed, most notably, perhaps by Dickens. In fact Art reveals the world as tragic, magical, comical, and so on, and not always as a place of aggression and domination. Certainly then we can agree that Art at least reveals the world in various ways and that an appreciation of art must, to some extent, widen our view of the world, and ourselves within that world. Art must take some place in shaping our attitudes, and releasing us from the domination of the purchasing of invidious distinction.

Nevertheless, the relationship between Art and property is rather more complicated than this. Certainly in the case of visual art and specifically portraiture, the main function of Art has been as status object. Rich families had their portraits painted as a sign of wealth and status, therefore artists were consigned to fuelling invidious distinction, rather than revealing the world in any more authentic way. 'Art for art's sake' is a fairly recent slogan for the autonomy and independence of Art. It is even argued that Shakespeare's plays were written with particular character and content to please royal privilege.

Even today 'high Art' is still regarded as the privilege of the rich, and to be cultured confers status and honour. It is arguable whether art galleries are attended through aesthetic sense or from the same motivations expressed in connection with property.

Moreover, Art is continually regarded as property, as invidious distinction. Antiques are bought and sold at outrageous price by collectors who seem to regard them more as investments than objects of beauty. Pictures are bought into private collections at enormous cost, thereby stopping the rest of the world from viewing them, and conferring status, and distinction on the purchaser. First editions are bought and sold at huge cost although the contents are the same as a £2.99 paperback. All of this has nothing to do with aesthetic appreciation, and everything to do with the meaning of property that we are discussing.

We can see, therefore, that the historical production of Art is bound up with the purchasing of invidious distinction. That Art and artists have been regarded as property by the rich, and owned and used for the status that this has brought. The high status that Art is accorded with, is to some extent the result of this historical relationship with the rich. Moreover, this art as property relationship continues to this day in the auction rooms of the capital cities. The problem we now face is how Art can be a salvation for us when it seems wholly bound up with property.

3.3.1: The Aesthetic Mode of Being

Although to some extent we can agree that through art and poetry the world is revealed in various ways, differing from the world as resource for conspicuous consumption, we have discussed how this is often corrupted through the use of Art as property relationship. Nevertheless this does not mean that we should abandon the aesthetic solution altogether, for if we speculate we discover that the world is revealed or apprehended in particular ways under aesthetic conditions, and that it is here that a solution to our problems may lie.

It seems that the existence of Art is not enough to alter attitudes and motivations, because all too easily Art is turned into property. Nonetheless we can approach aesthetics in a more active way than this; and this is in the development of an aesthetic mode of being. This is a mode of being embracing creativity and contemplation. It reveals the world as non-instrumental, without means and ends. The meaning of property entails that we relate to the world as a collection of objects suitable for private ownership, or as a resource for conspicuous consumption, as means with which to pursue our ends of status, invidious distinction, and

aggressive and dominating urges. The aesthetic mode of being relates to the world as beautiful or sublime in itself. It is content with appreciation, without any thought of own ends. The aesthetic mode of being, or aesthetic engagement with the world, is always at its end. Everything, and everyone is an end in itself, rather than a means to an end.

In still life drawing, for example, the problem is one of representation, and because this is the problem, psychological traits, desires, urges, are pushed out of the mind. The concentration is wholly upon the subject, as it is in itself, without concern for self within the relationship. Therefore, aggressive, and competitive traits are allowed no space to breathe. Moreover, because these traits are abandoned in creative contemplation, the meaning of property itself is abandoned, therefore a painting, or drawing once completed has a life of its own, separate from the Artist. It is not regarded as property (as invidious distinction) but is related to as one would relate to one's child. However, more importantly, the aesthetic mode of being is more concerned with the next problem, and has already moved on.

The aesthetic mode of being has already moved on because it is in direct opposition to possession. The relationship is like that between the noun and the verb. The piece of Art is the noun; the creative, active and contemplative mode of being is the verb. It is hardly surprising that the piece of Art can be property, that it can be used for invidious distinction, for it is a thing in the world. On the other hand, the development of the aesthetic mode of being, is the development of a dynamic relationship with the world; which is constantly moving, and changing.

D.T.Suzuki in 'Studies in Zen', illuminates this difference between the aesthetic mode of being, and possession with two poems; the first is by a Japanese poet called Basho, the second is by Tennyson:

When I look carefully
I see the nazuna blooming
By the hedge!

Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies;-
Hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower-but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.

(Suzuki, 1960, p1&p3)

The first poem reveals the experience of the aesthetic mode of being, that we are discussing, the second reveals the experience of the possessive mode of inquiry into the world, which ends up by killing the flower, rather than let it be.

We have described the aesthetic mode of being as active, and creative; as essentially dynamic, and we have argued that this is different from a possessive experience of the world. The aesthetic mode of being reveals the world as moving and changing, whereas the possessive experience makes the world static. The aesthetic mode of being relates to the world non-instrumentally, as a collection of ends in themselves, rather than a collection of means to satisfy private ends. In the next section of the essay we will explore the implications of the development of the aesthetic mode of being for the institution of property, as well as exploring the implications for the problems raised around self, relationships with others, and the world, and how it solves these problems, thereby providing a solution.

3.3.2: The Aesthetic Mode of Being and Property

We have argued that the meaning of property is invidious distinction, and that it signifies dominance over others. What makes status so demanding upon us is the combative and aggressive relationships that we have with others. In the last section we speculated upon developing an alternative mode of being, which we have called the aesthetic, and briefly described its opposition to the possessive experience of the world. We will now expand on this further in the context of questioning whether, given the meaning of property that we have articulated, property can make any sense under an aesthetic mode of being.

Property is the successful, visible expression of competition and distinction; conferring honour and self-regard in comparison with others. The question is whether comparison and competition, honour and distinction, have any place in the aesthetic relation to the world. Initially we described the aesthetic mode of being as apprehending the world as non-instrumental, which means that the world is not revealed as a collection of means with which to serve private ends. Therefore, the self is effectively taken out of the property relationship, becoming something like a non-attached observer, or non-attached agent. It seems that comparison and competition, honour and distinction, are judgements which rely upon the self being attached and engaged within a network of relations with the world, apprehended as means and ends. More than this, the self implicitly has something to gain and something to lose in these relations which provides the dynamic to attachment and engagement. The non-attached aesthetic agent has nothing to gain or lose, for he is content with the world in itself, non-instrumentally. Without concern for gain or loss it is difficult to see how questions of comparison and competition, honour and distinction, can gain hold. Therefore it is difficult to

see how property as the expression of these things can have any meaning for him, and by implication how it can survive as an institution under an aesthetic mode of being.

This is not to say that survival is not an issue for the aesthetic mode of being; food and shelter are necessary before any alternative relationship with the world can be developed. But this is instrumental response to simple need, and as such can be satisfied, allowing development of the aesthetic mode of being. The desire for property is never sated, as we have argued, for it is not response to need, but other psychological traits. Property has little to do with subsistence in the West, therefore the need for survival does not of itself necessitate the institution of property.

Our characterisation of the aesthetic mode of being as the non-attached agent returns independence to man, which was lost in social man, according to Rousseau. It is this return of independence and self-containment, which means that, on the one hand property no longer has meaning for him, and on the other hand, means that property no longer dominates him, releasing him from the quest for acquisition, and alienating relations with self, others and the world.

Without property I am no longer quantified, and measured by what I own, but more importantly, I no longer judge myself by my property because I no longer view the world in this way. Independent from comparison with others, the dictates of fashion and taste no longer control my aesthetic appreciation, and I am free to make my own discernments. Free from the eternal quest for acquisition, I can explore other possibilities in life which rest more on experience than on possession.

Moreover, I no longer relate to others as commodities, judging them by their property, and no longer wish the worst for them in order for myself to look better. My relations with

others are no longer paranoid. I no longer relate to others in the dependent relations we have called master/slave. I am independent because I no longer constitute my own personal construction of what I am by casting someone else as a slave, because I no longer relate to others in an instrumental way. The development of an aesthetic mode of being is the development of an apprehension of the world which is non-instrumental and non-relational. Thus, I am no longer dependent on dominating others. My own personal construction of what I am is self-generated, and not governed by comparison and competition.

The world is no longer apprehended as a resource for conspicuous consumption, and thus resources are no longer squandered and wasted. The world is restored to itself and appreciated in itself; environmental problems are avoided. Under the aesthetic mode of being, man becomes, once again, free and autonomous, independent and life-affirming, no longer dominated by "the mania of owning things" but content with experiencing the world rather than possessing it.

The aesthetic solution is more satisfactory than the materialist solution because it addresses the underpinning of property ownership, in an attempt to change attitudes and conceptions themselves. Therefore, the problems of coercion and displacement are avoided. More importantly, the non-attached, independent agent characterised, returns man to Rousseauian authenticity, and to where we began this essay. Relating to the world as non-instrumental and as an end in itself, with the satisfaction that there is therefore, nothing to gain or lose, removes man from the comparison, competition and dissatisfaction which gives meaning to property. The world is appreciated as it is in itself, aesthetically. The world is revealed in a more primal and authentic way. As we have seen, this solves the problems raised in the second chapter, although means that the institution of property itself, becomes meaningless and redundant.

Conclusion

In this essay I have argued that we own property because it has particular meaning for us. However, because of this meaning, the ownership of property becomes self-defeating, alienating and unsustainable for us. Therefore, I have attempted to offer a solution to these problems, albeit a speculative solution.

In the first chapter, we examined the work of Rousseau and of Veblen to discern a meaning, or set of meanings, that property signifies for us. We argued that it is no longer the case that in the West property is owned because of survival and subsistence needs, for this cannot account for the demands of consumerism. Instead property must mean something other than economic subsistence, and in both Rousseau and Veblen we found an analysis that led us to another set of meanings, whereby property is socially significant.

The underpinning of the analysis is that man as a social being embodies certain psychological traits which Rousseau terms *amour-propre*. *Amour-propre* arises as man engages in social relationships and compares himself with others. This comparison leads to distinctions being made, from which arise pride, shame, envy, and contempt. Property is a visible communication of success or failure in this competitive battle. As honours and status become primary motivators, the meaning of property becomes status.

Moreover, property as status demands that there is inequality, for it is the favourable comparison with others that gives meaning to our property. The motive that lies at the root of property ownership is emulation. As such property is invidious distinction. What makes status so demanding on us are the combative and aggressive relationships we have with others and

this, coupled with the demand for inequality, leads to the conclusion that property signifies dominance over others. Aggressive and dominating traits are sublimated in property ownership. Property is sublimated aggression.

The meaning of property thus articulated raises a number of issues. Man has become dependent upon these favourable comparisons with others. This means that he is dependent upon external regard, thus he is dependent upon the good opinion of the very people that he is trying to dominate. The extreme example of this is the master/slave property relationship, whereby the master is dependent on the slave to remain a slave for the public esteem that it brings. More than this, he is dependent upon this for his own self-esteem because this also becomes estimated to himself on the quality and quantity of property that he owns.

This dependency on favourable comparison is never over, and allows consumerism to hold us in its grip. New and 'better' goods are marketed, which, in order to maintain the favourable comparison, we must obtain. Fashions dictate our tastes, which are over as soon as they have begun, and resources are wasted in order to feed the demands of conspicuous consumption.

In chapter two we pursued these themes in respect of implications for the self, relationships with others, and the environment. The contention is that the significance of property as domination is self-defeating, in that the desire for acquisition ends up by dominating our lives, and threatening our own self-preservation.

In terms of the self, property and the desire for acquisition dominates all actions. For example, dull or morally ambiguous jobs are tolerated for the pecuniary reward that they bring. Little satisfaction is derived from these jobs, or indeed from the property acquisition that they allow, because the desire for property is never sated. I am objectified and quantified by my

property, both by others, and, because I accept these standards, by myself too. I am cut off from myself, which is naturally free and autonomous, and am summed up and dominated by my property.

Relationships with others are competitive and combative. In the end I want the worst for others so that I can be looked upon more favourably. On the one hand this means that I relate to others in terms of their property, and quantify them and judge them in terms of this, thereby de-humanising relationships. On the other hand, relationships are paranoid, because just as I want the worst for others I can be assured that they too want the worst for me. Thus, I imprison myself and my possessions in burglar proof houses. Moreover as I try to dominate others, I use coercion and trickery in the form of fashion and taste, in order to maintain my domination. Relationships with others are therefore unfulfilling and corrupt.

Conspicuous consumption also demands the squandering of resources, and this has serious implications for the environment. The relationship between man and the environment is the result of the same aggressive and combative motivations which views the environment as something to be conquered and owned, with the corresponding demand that it is there for our purposes. These purposes are invidious distinction and conspicuous consumption. Therefore, more and more land and resources are needed and wasted, and the goods themselves pollute and destroy the natural world. This situation is unsustainable, and threatening to our very preservation.

Given this situation, we had to ask whether this situation is inevitable, or whether there is an alternative. In the final chapter we addressed this question, presenting two alternative solutions to the problems raised. The first argues for a change in material conditions, i.e. property, from which attitudes and conceptions are derived. The second argues for the

development of alternative attitudes which will lead to a change in material conditions, i.e. property.

We, albeit briefly, examined the materialist solution to the problems raised, espoused by Marx. He argued that conceptions and consciousness are determined by material conditions, therefore an abolition of property would change the psychological traits discussed. Rather than attempt to change the meaning of property, property itself should be changed. On the grounds that Marx claimed these conclusions to be empirically verifiable, we turned to an example of a society where private property had been abolished, to see if Marx's theory held water. We found that in that society, consciousness does not seem to have changed fundamentally.

We then turned to an alternative, grounded in changing attitudes. We used Heidegger's analysis of technology as a springboard, in which he argues that technology reveals the world in one particular way, and that the salvation could be found in Art, which reveals the world in an alternative way. We also needed to find an alternative way that the world could be revealed. Although we dismissed Art itself, as the historical production of it seems wholly bound up with property and invidious distinction, Heidegger's analysis did lead us to speculation on the development of an aesthetic mode of being.

This we understood to be an active and creative apprehension of the world. A relationship with the world which is not instrumental, a collection of means to serve private ends, but that everything and everyone is an end in itself. The non-attached, aesthetic agent has nothing to gain or lose because he is content with the world as it is in itself, and therefore, is not trapped in comparison and competition with others; the articulation of which is property ownership.

It is difficult to see how the institution of private property can survive this, as all meaning is robbed from it; status and domination are no longer motivations. The non-attached, aesthetic agent has had his independence and autonomy returned to him, he is no longer trapped in dependent relations for the world is viewed non-instrumentally, and non-rationally. Therefore, we have returned, or maybe rescued man from amour-propre, and he consequentially, no longer has a use for property. The problems of unsustainability, of being dominated and alienated by property, by implication vanish.

It is this speculation that I see as a salvation from the problems outlined, rather than the materialist solution. I think that it succeeds because it addresses the attitudes that are articulated in property ownership, and that it stands in direct opposition to these attitudes, and property itself. The aesthetic mode of being is active and experiencing, in opposition to having and controlling. To relate to everything and everyone as an end in itself is in opposition to the demands of invidious distinction and conspicuous consumption. It is only through analysing the meaning of property, and the problems that this creates for us and our world, that we can attempt to address the underpinning of this institution, and question and gain insight into our own motives. It is only through doing this that we can hope to solve our problems.

Where the aesthetic solution finally succeeds, is however, that it rescues man from amour-propre, and attempts to return him to something like the independent and autonomous being envisioned by Rousseau. It returns man to authenticity and self-reliance, in the face of social life. How the aesthetic mode of being can be developed is a problem of education; that education should be a joy in itself, rather than a means to an end; and that more weight should be given to aesthetic and creative pursuits in the curriculum, is an initial response.

In conclusion, we have argued that property signifies dominance over others, however property, and the demands of acquisition end up by dominating us, thus it is self-defeating.

This is not only a problem of authenticity for man, but is also a problem for survival, as the demands of conspicuous consumption threaten environmental disaster. We are all trapped in 'the mania for owning things', and a way out demands an alternative set of attitudes, such as our speculation has attempted. A revealing that reveals the world in a more primal and authentic way.

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