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Many readers analyzing Goffman and Le Guin's texts will find a common theme between them. That people are very quick to follow authoritative figures. The inevitable result is that they will be used by those figures for their gain. As was in the case of George Orr in *The Lathe of Heaven*, who allowed Dr. Haber to harness his power to alter reality in his image because he thought he was helping him. Goffman adds to this thought by proposing that everyone is an actor deceiving their audience into thinking they are something better than what they are. Many readers may struggle to understand the ethics behind these texts. Wondering if this deceit can be justified. By further analyzing *The Lathe of Heaven* and *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, it becomes clear that it is morally permissible to benefit oneself at the cost of your followers as long as your intentions include advancing society. Followers are those that trust a figure with their problems based solely on their appearance. This trust naturally causes followers to be taken advantage of because of the human nature to take for oneself. Additionally, followers can be used to benefit society when making them believe they are the sole reason for its improvement. Advancing society makes it morally permissible to benefit oneself at the cost of your followers because more people are now able to enjoy the benefits of your followers.

Followers are defined as those who give up their problems to figures based solely on their appearance. Often, this appearance is false because their true self is not enough to get people to follow them. So, they often pretend to be greater than they really are. Goffman said something similar to this thought when he said, "Performers may attempt to give the impression that their present poise and proficiency are something they have always had, and they have never had to fumble their way through a learning period" (Goffman 47). In this quote, Goffman is arguing

that people are drawn to those that appear to be perfect, as a result, the performer pretends to be perfect at all times. The reason people are drawn to perfection is that they want someone to take on their burdens. Followers choose to see these people as capable of alleviating all their problems. George Orr is a perfect example of this, George did not want the responsibility of changing reality with the use of his dream. As a result, he saw Dr. Haber as someone far greater than him in having this, "You haven't seen the help your own mind can give you, the ways you can use it, employ it creatively. All you need to do is not to hide from your own mental powers, not to suppress them, but to release them. This we can do together. Now, doesn't that strike you as right, as the right thing to do?" (Le Guin 50). George saw the confidence in Haber that George lacked. Haber gave off the impression that he knew what he was doing. As a result, while George did not fully trust Haber as a person, Haber's appearance and persuasion made George believe that he was more fit to control this power. To summarize, followers want to follow people that are perfect, even when that isn't the reality, as long as they uphold the image that they are perfect. Followers desire this quality in a person because they want someone capable of taking on their challenges.

Followers will naturally get take advantage for the benefit of the authorities because greed manifest. It is in human nature to desire to come out on top, and whenever there is an opportunity to benefit off of someone, humans will take it. Goffman shared a similar belief when he said, "The performer may be moved to guide the conviction of his audience only as a means to other ends, having no ultimate concern in the conception that they have of him or of the situation" (Goffman 19). In other words, without even knowing it, people will use anybody for the benefit of their own, even if it costs them their reputation later. They will act to deceive their followers so that they can meet their goals. The most common goal is for the betterment of

oneself. An example of this is in the character Dr. Haber from *The Lathe of Heaven*. Even though it becomes clear to both the readers and the characters that Haber is using George, Haber doesn't even seem to realize it, convincing himself that deep down he is still helping George with his issues, saying, "Always keep one patient of his own, to remind him of that fundamental commitment, to keep him in contact with the human reality of his research in terms of the disturbed personality structure of individual people. For there is nothing important except people" (Le Guin 79). This internal monologue perfectly demonstrates the thought process of those who have influence over other people. Even when clearly using followers to benefit themselves, they will still try to justify it by saying they are helping them. From these texts, we can conclude that greed is a natural thing found in all humans. That no matter how ethical one might be, when they have the chance to influence someone they will use that power for their own benefit. Even if it means hurting their followers in the process.

Followers do not always have to be used for oneself but can be used to better society, this is possible when making them believe they are the sole reason for its improvement. In other words, the control that is held by the authorizes can be used for good, when they give the followers the illusion that their actions are of their own. This example of manipulation is found in *The Lathe of Heaven* when Dr. Haber tries to regain control of George by telling him that George is the sole reason for the good that has come out of their experiments, "You'll be the greatest benefactor humanity has ever had in spite of yourself. All the time and energy humans have wasted on trying to find religious solutions to suffering, then you come along and make Buddha and Jesus and the rest of them look like the fakirs they were" (Le Guin 195). In this quote, Haber is trying to get George to continue the experiments by showing him all the good that has come out of it. He shows him just how much better society is now, and how much better

it can get, and it's all thanks to George. Goffman gives excellent real-world examples, "Doctors who are led into giving placebos, filling station attendants who resignedly check and recheck tire pressures for anxious women motorists, shoe clerks who sell a shoe that fits by tell the customers it is the size she wants to hear" In Goffman's example, by telling their followers what they want to hear, this cures their worries. This in turn makes them more proactive. Goffman's example indirectly benefits society because with more people who are living healthy lives and can create a chain reaction helping others. These examples show that followers do not just have to be used for bettering oneself, but can be used to advance a society, if making them believe that they are the ones directly responsible for it.

Ultimately, advancing society makes this morally permissible because more people are now able to enjoy the benefits of your followers. In other words, since you're already going to take advantage of your followers, by sharing your prosperities with the rest of society, it is no longer considered unethical because society is better off with your actions. Returning to *The Lathe of Heaven*, Haber unquestionably created a better world, than the world readers first read about in the beginning of the story, "No more mass killing of humans by other humans. No fighting in Iran and Arabia and Israel. No more genocides in Africa. No stockpiles of nuclear and biological weapons, ready to use against other nations. A world at peace with itself. Peace as a universal life-style on Earth" (Le Guin 128). Haber was able to use George's power to take the world from an overcrowded gloomy world to one where people who live at peace with each other. Initially, even George could not deny the good Haber was doing to society. Goffman carried a similar thought, "We find that there is hardly a legitimate everyday vocation or relationship whose performers do not engage in concealed practices. Thus, in well-adjusted marriages, we expect that each partner may keep from the other secrets having to do with

financial matters, past experiences, current flirtations...” (Goffman 64). To Goffman, society only runs because there is deception. He claims that people are willing to put up the selfish actions of others if it means maintaining the status quo. In both examples we see that the followers who are being hurt in the process don’t do anything because they see the benefit to everyone. For these reasons, it can no longer be considered unethical to hurt others, more specifically your followers, because of the overall benefit you are bringing to society.

Some readers may come to a different conclusion after reading these texts. That it is morally permissible to benefit oneself at the cost of your followers when they are ignorant. At first glance this might be the case, George Orr initially seems to be completely oblivious to Haber’s deception. Readers will point to this line, “There was an acceptant, passive quality about him that seemed feminine, or even childish. Haber recognized in himself a protective/bullying reaction toward this physically slight and compliant man. To dominate, to patronize him was so easy as to be almost irresistible” (Le Guin 28). The defense then becomes that because George is unfit to have this power, that it is acceptable that Haber took it for himself. While this line of reasoning might be true, an important thing to consider is that George did not stay ignorant for long, very quickly did he suspect that he was being used, “He had thought for a moment that the doctor must mean his power of changing reality by dreaming; but surely if he'd meant that he would have said it clearly?” (Le Guin 51). The reality is that when taking advantage of someone because they are ignorant, they will eventually come to learn the truth of their situation. It is for this reason that the action of bettering society is so critical, not just for making it morally permissible but for maintaining their authorities over their followers. As already mentioned, followers will allow themselves to be taken advantage of when they see society improving. So,

while it may be true that ignorant people should not possess great power, it does not make it morally permissible nor a permanent.

In conclusion, these texts advocate that it is morally permissible to benefit oneself at the cost of your followers as long as your intentions also include advancing society. Followers are those that trust a figure with their problems based solely off their appearance. This trust naturally causes followers to be taken advantage for the benefit of the authorities because greed is a part of human nature. Additionally, followers can be used to benefit society when making them believe they are the sole reason for its improvement. Advancing society makes it morally permissible to benefit oneself at the cost of your followers because more people are now able to enjoy the benefits off your followers. In the case of *The Lathe of Heaven*, this shows that Dr. Haber is not as evil as readers might initially think. His actions, while flawed are justified. Understanding that the harming your followers is not bad, is important because it allows them to have a better understanding of how humans should interact. Knowing that society benefits as a direct result, may also give the reader comfort that society is constantly improving. While it may be a grim reality, it should not come as a shock. Afterall, most readers are similar to George Orr, they realized long ago that they were being used. They just convinced themselves that it was for the best.

Works Cited

Goffman, Erving. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Penguin Books, 1990.

K., Le Guin Ursula. *The Lathe of Heaven: A Novel*. Scribner, 2008.