Freedom as Non-Delusion:

James Baldwin on Freedom and Ideology

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Introduction

This project aims to bring together two important themes that show up in both feminist philosophy and philosophy of race. The first is that identity plays a paradoxical role in our lives both as a source of oppression and social division and as a source of community, culture, and personal and political will. Second, ideology dominates our epistemic landscape—it shapes what and how we know. What is common between these two is that both play a role in how we formulate our life plans: what matters to us, what relationships we want to or can form, what goals we want to or can pursue, which identities we are ascribed and which ones we ascribe to ourselves. Our personal freedom—the extent to which we can choose or control our life plans—depends on how we shape our identity and the influence that ideology has on that. Making sense of this relationship motivates a new understanding of freedom, one that focuses not solely on external restraints or internal struggles of the will, but on the epistemic status of the individual and the ideologies they are subject to. Freedom as non-delusion is a view of freedom that claims an individual's personal freedom is limited to the extent that they hold certain delusions. These delusions are ideological misrepresentations—distorted or misleading beliefs about the individual and/or their society that bear directly on the individual's ability to understand their place in the world and their relationship to others. A person may exercise control over their life in other ways, but so long as they continue to hold these delusions, they will not be fully free. By distorting the individual's understanding of themselves and others, ideological delusions prevent them from effectively creating their identity, and therefore are a loss of freedom.

The inspiration for this conception of freedom comes from James Baldwin, who wrote extensively about the relationship between identity, freedom, and ideology (although he rarely called it 'ideology'). Still, Baldwin never gives a clear picture of his conception of freedom or how the various pieces relate to each other. What is clear from his writing are two core commitments. First, creating an identity is central to expressing freedom and living a meaningful life. Second, delusions and myths about the history of America, especially the facts of oppression and violence and the relationships between society and the individual, limit our ability to form an identity.

The project to provide a complete picture of Baldwin's conception of freedom has already been started by Nicholas Buccola, who has suggested that we call Baldwin's conception of freedom 'freedom as non-delusion.'[1] In "What William F. Buckley Jr. Did Not Understand about James Baldwin," Buccola interprets Baldwin's writings to create a coherent account of how delusions about our past—specifically the racial history of the US—limit our freedom in the present. I will extend his arguments by connecting the basic claims that freedom as non-delusion makes to more concrete views of the relationship between identity and freedom and other conceptions of freedom. In the first chapter, I will approach freedom as non-delusion as a conception of personal freedom, highlighting how particular ideological delusions limit individual's ability to create and form their identity. In the second chapter, I will turn to the political implications of this view of freedom, specifically regarding how delusions contribute to ongoing systems of domination and therefore our political theories ought to respond directly to the threat of delusions. Because this conception of idea finds its roots in Baldwin's writing, I will rely heavily on his work, as well as secondary literature on his work that has tried to extract more tractable philosophical claims. For these reasons, many of the examples I draw on will refer to race, specifically race in America. This is not meant to limit the applicability of freedom as non-delusion only to the issue of race. I hope to highlight how the examples indicate underlying patterns that could be similarly discovered in gender, class, ethnicity, etc.

This introduction will sketch Buccola's conception of freedom as non-delusion, focusing primarily on his definition of delusion and the features relevant to his analysis. I will begin by presenting freedom as non-delusion through the lens that Buccola and Baldwin use, that of race in the United States. I will then turn to the issue of defining delusion in the relevant sense. I will narrowly define delusions as specific parts of a more extensive belief system that can be classified as an ideology in a particular sense of the term. At the end of this introduction, I will introduce the arguments I will make in chapters one and two of this thesis.

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[1] Buccola, N. (2017). What William F. Buckley Jr. Did Not Understand about James Baldwin. In S. J. McWilliams (Ed.), *A Political Companion to James Baldwin* (pp. 116–148). University of Kentucky Press.

0.1 Overview of Buccola's Work

Central to James Baldwin's philosophical perspective is a skepticism of all grand theories and ideologies. He says, "I think all theories are suspect, that the finest principles may have to be modified, or may even be pulverized by the demands of life."[2] He fears that dedication to grand theories and ideologies prevents people from appropriately adapting their beliefs to the facts of the world. For Baldwin, the most pressing ideology was the belief held by a significant portion of white Americans that:

> their ancestors were all freedom-loving heroes, that they were born in the greatest country the world has ever seen, or that Americans are invincible in battle and wise in peace, that Americans have always dealt honorably with Mexicans and Indians and all other neighbors or inferiors, that American men are the world's most direct and viral, that American women are pure.[3]

This collection of myths prevented Americans from understanding their place in the world and adequately engaging with black Americans with whom they had "been integrated for a very long time."[4] Despite having lived together in America for hundreds of years, the problem of integration was treated as something new. From Baldwin's perspective, the problem of integration was older than the nation itself; it had existed since the first slaves were brought to the New World. The myths that white Americans held about their past prevented them from understanding the lives and

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[2] Baldwin, J. (1998). Autobiographical Notes. In T. Morrison (Ed.), *James Baldwin: Collected Essays* (pp. 9). Literary Classics of the United States. Hereafter, entries in this volume to be cited as "Essay name" in *Collected Essays*, ed. Toni Morrison. Pg. number

[3] "Down at the Cross." In *Collected Essays*, ed. Toni Morrison, pg. 344

[4] Debate: Baldwin vs. Buckley. Boston, MA: Film and Media Archive, Washington University in St. Louis, Library of Congress, American Archive of Public Broadcasting (GBH and the Library of Congress), Boston, MA and Washington, DC. This quote does not appear in the condensed published version of the speech.

experiences of black Americans and therefore prevented them from ever being able to fix the social problems that plagued both groups. Buccola says that the myths and illusions Baldwin is concerned with can be described as "delusions," and he takes the simple dictionary definition of the term to be sufficient: "an erroneous belief that is held in the face of evidence to the contrary."[5] These delusions limit people's freedom because "ideological thinking, Baldwin worried, provides theoretical justification for people to behave unjustly."[6] I will return to the problem of defining the various terms (such as "myth," "illusion," "delusion," and "ideology") in the next section, but for now I will use Buccola's understanding.

Buccola is careful to point out that non-delusion is not the only aspect of freedom that Baldwin cares about. Baldwin makes an important distinction between "political" freedom and "personal" (what he also calls "spiritual" freedom). He says that "liberty" is a genuine political possibility, while personal freedom is entirely different, "though affecting politics and affected by it."[7] Buccola takes this distinction as indicative of Baldwin's belief that we may be politically unable to legislate personal freedom. So we need a different conception of freedom for political applications than personal ones. However, Buccola still takes freedom as non-delusion to be a political, not personal, conception of freedom. In addition to non-delusion, Buccola attributes to Baldwin a commitment to non-interference and non-domination. However, Buccola does not address how freedom as non-delusion interacts with both non-interference and non-domination to create a coherent vision of political freedom. This will be the task I return to in Chapter 2. For now, I want to focus on laying out freedom as non-delusion as Buccola presents it.

The basis for freedom as non-delusion is the belief that "an individual could not truly be free unless he was free from delusion about himself, others, and history."[8] Delusions obscure reality—they create a particular perspective that downplays certain

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[5] wordnetweb.princeton.edu entry for "delusion", quoted in N. Buccola, 2017: 126

[6] Buccola 2017: 122

[7] Baldwin, J. (2010). The White Problem. In R. Kenan (Ed.), *The Cross of Redemption*. Vintage Books. Pg. 91.

[8] Buccola, 2017: 125

facts while emphasizing others in a way that distorts the evidence. One can consider the narratives taught about the Civil War, the bombing of Hiroshima, or even the more recent myths told about the Civil Rights Movement that Baldwin took part in. While parts of the narratives are true, for example, Martin Luther King, Jr. did advocate a non-violent approach, the narratives obscure the reality. The policy of non-violence was not chosen out of fear of or moral aversion to violence itself but rather as a way to contrast the extreme violence of racial capitalism and the state that defended it.[9] While the difference seems minor, it affects the way the history of the Civil Rights Movement operates in modern discourse and limits the socially acceptable types of political resistance. The political consequences of these delusions are important: it will be more difficult to correct for racial inequality and the lasting effects of slavery if we do not fully understand the role race has played throughout America's history. While we can (and have) taken steps intended to resolve certain aspects of historical racism, such as legal action to prohibit discrimination, protection for voting rights, and affirmative action, Baldwin fears that approaching justice through only material and legal reforms will not be sufficient to repair the psychological effects, including the persistence of ideological delusions.

Baldwin does not want people to become stuck living in the past, but at the same time he worries that simply ignoring history and moving forward allows past injustices to continue. A person's understanding of the past largely determines our perspective, or what Baldwin calls their "system of reality." If they think their ancestors were "freedom-loving heroes" who founded this country as a beacon of freedom, then they may view the arc of the nation's history as a perpetual (if slow) arc towards greater freedom. Their role in such a history, what they morally ought to do (and perhaps also politically ought to do) might be very different from their role if they view their ancestors as flawed people who enslaved, oppressed, and exploited women, Africans, and native people. Neither view may capture the full subtleties of the objective historical truth, but an emphasis on the latter allows a "moral evasion." Buccola says,

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[9] Douglas, Andrew J., and Jared A. Loggins. (2021) "'Showdown for Nonviolence': On Black Radicalism and the Antipolitical." In *Prophet of Discontent: Martin Luther King Jr. and the Critique of Racial Capitalism*, 55–73. University of Georgia Press.

"the 'collection of myths' to which we 'cling' function as ideological weapons we use to ward off taking responsibility for ourselves."[10] If the arc of history has been moral progress, then their complicity is reduced—they may not need to think about how to rectify the atrocities of the past.

To summarize, Buccola argues that Baldwin views history as a live influence on the present. The threat of history comes not from the mere fact that it influences the present; Baldwin is not a historical determinist. But when we delude ourselves about history, we can no longer act morally in the present. If white people and black people in the US have wildly divergent views of the racial history of the country, they will never be able to act morally towards each other, nor will they be able to create political institutions that can progress the nation towards a better future. This, Baldwin argues, is a matter of freedom. But Buccola blends the personal and political aspects of freedom in his analysis. There are two concerns: first the extent to which delusions hide or distort an individual's view of their position in history, and second the extent to which a person suffering from delusions will act to limit the freedom of others. The first is a concern over personal freedom. The second is the political concern. Separating these two concerns will allow for a better understanding of the way delusions limit freedom.

0.2 Ideology and Delusion

In the previous section, I provided Nicholas Buccola's definition of delusion: a delusion is "an erroneous belief that is held in the face of evidence to the contrary."[11] So the two criteria are that the belief is erroneous, which could simply mean false, but might include other types of epistemic errors, and that there is available evidence that contradicts the belief. Further, to call a belief a delusion in this sense is to make a negative judgment—one ought not hold delusional beliefs. Of course, standard epistemology agrees that an agent should not hold false beliefs, especially when the

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[10] Buccola 2017: 130

[11] wordnetweb.princeton.edu entry for "delusion", quoted in Buccola 2017

agent has the evidence to disprove the belief. The agent holding a delusional belief is already violating epistemic norms or being irrational. However, a more nuanced understanding of delusion, and especially the influence of ideology on beliefs, highlights how things are not so clear from the agent's perspective. What I want to suggest is that from the delusional agent's perspective, their beliefs are not held in violation of the evidence at hand, and in fact the evidence *supports* the beliefs. From your perspective, whether a belief seems delusional comes down to, as Baldwin says, "where you find yourself in the world, what your sense of reality is. That is, it depends on assumptions we hold so deeply as to be scarcely aware of them."[12] To put this in other terms, a person's response to the world—which beliefs seem rational and which seem delusional—comes down to ideology. An ideology might slant a person's view of the world so they can agree with someone else on the facts but disagree on what those facts are evidence *for*. Understanding how this works and what consequences come from this is central to much work on ideology.

'Ideology' is often used in two distinct ways. In what Tommie Shelby calls its "non-evaluative" sense, ideology "refer[s] to the worldview or belief system of a particular social group, society, or historical era"[13] or "to certain comprehensive political doctrines."[14] In this sense, ideologies are sets of beliefs that create a more or less cohesive structure, but to call something an ideology in this sense is not to judge the beliefs good or bad, right or wrong. Then there is the evaluative notion of ideology. As Shelby says, "To claim that a particular belief system is ideological, in the evaluative sense, is to impute to the system of belief some negative characteristic(s) that provides a reason to reject it (or at least some significant part of it) in its present form."[15] Defining ideology in this sense requires analyzing what kinds of negative characteristics are appropriate for rejecting a system of beliefs. Shelby says there must be three aspects to such an analysis: an *epistemic* flaw, a negative *functional role*, and a *genetic* history of the

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[12] "The American Dream and the American Negro" In *Collected Essays*, ed. Toni Morrison, pg. 715

[13] Shelby, T. (2003). Ideology, Racism, and Critical Social Theory. *The Philosophical Forum*, *34*(2), 153

[14] *Ibid.*

[15] Shelby 2003: 157

conditions under which the system of thought was widely accepted. In the remainder of this section, I will expand on these three aspects as Shelby understands them and compare them to the notion of delusion that underpins freedom as non-delusion.

A system of belief can only be rejected if it is epistemically flawed. An ideology, Shelby says, always claims to provide knowledge of the world and, as such, ought to be rejected when the beliefs it requires are false. This criterion seems straightforward enough: if a belief is false, then a person has good reason to reject it. If a belief is true, they have good reason to accept it. Of course, they might not know whether a belief is true or false, so this criterion comes down to the way our evidence supports (or fails to support) the belief, as well as flaws in "consistency, logical validity, conceptual clarity, etc."[16,17] Ideologies rarely assert known falsehoods, but rather present largely agreed-upon facts in a particular framing to entice people to take up a certain perspective, or leave out specific relevant facts to obscure the whole truth. They also rely on "inconsistency, exaggeration, half-truth, equivocation, circularity, neglect of pertinent facts, false dichotomy, obfuscation, misuse of 'authoritative' sources, hasty generalizations, and so forth."[18] Shelby calls all of these "cognitive defects" and refers to the outcomes of reasoning based on these as "ideological illusions." This part of the definition includes the falsity and unresponsiveness to evidence that Buccola is concerned about but also includes other epistemic flaws. This is important since, as Baldwin recognizes, one's "system of reality" plays a significant role in determining whether a particular proposition is true or how evidence bears on a proposition.

As an example, in Baldwin's 1965 debate against William F. Buckley, the proposition for debate was whether the American dream came at the cost of black people in America. Baldwin says that for a person like a white Southern sheriff, "the

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[16] Shelby 2003: 164.

[17] Shelby does not think this sort of epistemic evaluation requires a commitment to a particular view of what constitutes knowledge, evidence, or justification. Rather, he thinks those very same concepts are open to critique. Common-sense approaches to knowledge will suffice, so long as the approaches are themselves subject to critique and revision (Shelby 2003: 168).

[18] Shelby 2003: 166

proposition we are trying to discuss here does not exist."[19] That is, from the perspective of a white man with some measure of state-sanctioned power, whether or not his position comes at the expense of slaves and their descendants is not even a question he can consider. The position of black Americans is not a subject of debate for him; it's simply a fact of the world. Therefore, his position is also just a fact of the world. From his perspective or according to his ideological beliefs, it makes no sense to ask whether his position comes at the expense of others.

Ideologies distort, rather than deny, reality—when you already hold the perspective of the ideology, the new facts can be explained by reference to your already-distorted perspective. Shelby gives the example of black ghettos. From one perspective, they represent the structural failure to provide adequate education, employment, childcare, etc. to those living in certain areas. As Shelby argues in "Justice, Deviance, and the Dark Ghetto," responding to the systemic underfunding of necessary institutions by turning to crime to support oneself is rational behavior. But if a person already believes black people are inferior, lazy, or dangerous, they might interpret the situation differently. If they believe this about black people, it is a sound fiscal policy to underfund programs to help them since they would abuse the system. Thus, the current plight of the ghetto is evidence that this person's view was correct: people living in the ghetto do not deserve assistance since they are criminals and will not work. Comparing this to the definition that Buccola uses for delusion when he says delusions are held despite evidence to the contrary, the ideological explanation is that the evidence fits into the causal structure of the world differently depending on the person's perspective. What may seem contradictory to one person is not so to another. Shelby uses the term "illusion" to refer to the "distorted, biased, or misleading representations of reality" that ideologies create. Baldwin often uses 'illusion' and 'myth' alongside 'delusion' to refer to these errant systems of reality that cause the holders to see things in a specific, distorted way. In any case, the meaning is similar: they are all ways of distorting one's perspective so that facts get interpreted in a particular, biased way.

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[19] "The American Dream and the American Negro" In *Collected Essays*, ed. Toni Morrison, pg. 714

The second aspect of ideology, the functional role, also prominently features in Buccola's analysis, even though he doesn't include it in his definition of delusion. The function of an ideology is the effect that the ideology has on the world. A system of beliefs alone may be epistemically flawed and held by people despite evidence to the contrary, but unless that system of beliefs leads people to act in the world in certain ways, Shelby says we do not necessarily want to call it ideological. Shelby thinks ideologies must "establish or reinforce forms of social oppression."[20] Baldwin also recognizes this functional role of ideology. According to Buccola, Baldwin sees myths as allowing "moral evasion." Buccola says, "the 'collection of myths' to which we 'cling' function as ideological weapons we use to ward off taking responsibility for ourselves."[21] Ideology, among other things, allows people (particularly those who benefit from the ideology) to ignore or downplay their role in maintaining oppression.

Finally, there is the genetic component of Shelby's definition of ideology. An important feature of ideology is the conditions under which the ideology is widely accepted. He gives the example of why some black people in America have accepted certain aspects of racial ideology. The fact of their subjugation seems to be evidence itself of their inferiority, and the ideology which justifies their subjugation appears to present a straightforward narrative. To draw on Baldwin again, if the American dream is open to everyone, as the ideology behind America says, then if black people are not achieving that dream, it must be their fault. By convincing black people of their inherent inferiority, the ideology gains acceptance among the oppressors and the oppressed, despite the oppressed being harmed by that very ideology. Shelby distinguishes his interest in the genetics of an ideology from a similar *genealogical* concern. Genealogy proceeds by "constructing a quasi-historical narrative about the origin of an ideology…emphasize[ing] those historical conditions that are thought to have given rise to the peculiar discursive content of that ideology."[22] The difference would be between explaining why racist ideology arose in America and explaining why people living in

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[20] Shelby 2003: 180

[21] Buccola 2017: 130

[22] Shelby 2003: 183

America under specific historical conditions come to believe the ideology. Genealogy tries to trace the history of the beliefs, while genetics tries to understand how the beliefs maintain themselves.

Comparing this to Buccola's argument one final time, the two share a concern for the genetics of myths. One of the core questions that guides Buccola's analysis of Baldwin's writings on myths is looking at "why Americans cling to these delusions."[23] His concern in answering this question is not about how the delusions or myths came about in the first place, but about looking at why they still exist, perhaps despite the other progress we have made in society. Understanding the conditions myths and delusions gain traction is essential to understanding their effects and developing ways to overcome them.

Due to the similarities between Buccola's understanding of delusions and Shelby's understanding of ideology, it seems very appropriate to utilize the work on ideology in laying out a more precise conception of freedom as non-delusion. For consistency, I will use 'ideology' to specifically refer to a large set or system of related beliefs (such as 'racist ideology' or 'capitalist ideology') while using 'delusion' to refer to individual beliefs (such as the belief that black people are genetically inferior). That belief fits into a larger ideology of race but can also be considered on its own when it is used to support specific other beliefs (such as to justify why black people have lower educational outcomes, for example). Similarly, when quoting Baldwin, I take him to use 'myth' in a similar way to my use of 'ideology.' However, 'myth' may refer more specifically to a false history that justifies ideologies rather than the ideology itself.

0.3 The Structure of this Thesis

With these preliminary points laid out, I want to preview the arguments I will make in the remainder of this thesis. Freedom as non-delusion is primarily a conception of personal freedom. An individual is limited in their ability to control and create their

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[23] Buccola 2017: 129

identity by the ideological delusions they hold. However, personal and political freedom cannot be entirely separated. Political institutions ought to promote full freedom insofar as it is consistent with other political ideals, and therefore it is worth investigating how freedom as non-delusion manifests on the political level. In the first chapter, I will address the personal aspects of freedom as non-delusion. I will argue that delusions limit our abilities to undertake meaningful identity creation and thus limit our freedom to pursue our life projects in accordance with values and ideals we can reflectively endorse. This task of identity creation requires that the individual be free to critique the standards of their society and be free from delusion about the historical relevance of the categories that people use to create their identities. Following Shelby, I take ideologies to function in part to support the advantage of one group over others. This means that the impact of delusions on freedom differs between those advantaged by the ideology and those disadvantaged by it. Specifically, the delusions that an oppressed member of society is susceptible to are different from those that a member of the dominant group is susceptible to. I will show that, in each case, the individual suffers a loss of their ability to form their identity, and this limit constitutes a limit to freedom.

In chapter two, I turn to the political aspects of freedom as non-delusion. While the conception of freedom primarily focuses on personal freedom, we cannot entirely separate personal freedom from political freedom.[24] In particular, freedom as non-delusion can provide a new perspective on the types of domination that Philip Pettit finds harmful to political freedom. I will give an overview of Pettit's freedom as non-domination, focusing on how Pettit suggests we approach the issue of domination that results from structural, indirect domination as opposed to direct domination. I argue that his theory falls short when trying to explain specific types of domination that result from ideological delusions. Drawing on the work of Christopher Lebron, I will show how delusions help maintain persistent indirect domination that can best be explained by considering the role delusions play in limiting freedom.

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[24] Baldwin emphasizes this in "Down at the Cross" (in *Collected Essays* ed. Toni Morrison) as well as "The White Problem." (In R. Kenan (Ed.), *The Cross of Redemption*. Vintage Books.).

Chapter 1

Extracting a theory of freedom from Baldwin begins with his distinction between what he calls "spiritual" freedom and political freedom (or liberty). He says, "Liberty is a genuine political possibility, in spite of the fact that the word is so often used as a slogan; and freedom—which, as I understand it, is beyond politics, though affecting politics and affected by it—may be the very last thing people want."[1] This is an odd place to start on a theory of freedom, with Baldwin implying that the type of freedom he is concerned with may not be one that people want. This personal freedom requires each person to wrestle with who they are and what they want, something which may pose a problem for people who have delusions about themselves and their role in the world. In contrast, political liberty seems to be, for Baldwin, a more negative conception, a protection of the individual from others.[2] Freedom as non-delusion is, first and foremost, a conception of personal freedom because it is focused on exactly the issue of how an individual can form an identity, form their values and goals, and pursue a meaningful life when they hold deluded, ideological beliefs.

Taking Baldwin's writings on freedom as a starting point, in this chapter I will develop a conception of freedom that focuses on the epistemic and psychological threats of ideology. This conception claims that a person pursues freedom by working to rid themselves of delusions about themselves, their social relationships, and the history of their society. This type of freedom emphasizes the importance of identity—one's relationship to and view of oneself within a web of relationships and hierarchies. Delusions about how these relationships affect people's lives and how the individual fits into the web cause a loss of freedom by limiting the individual's ability to navigate their social situation. Kwame Anthony Appiah and Allison Weir have both argued that identity creation requires resolving this paradox between the importance of our identifications and the use of those identification to control and oppress. In Section 1, I

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[1] Baldwin, J. (2010). The White Problem. In R. Kenan (Ed.), *The Cross of Redemption*. Vintage Books. Pg. 91.

[2] I will discuss this aspect more in chapter two

will expand on this idea and argue that this creative view of identity can be at the core of a more robust conception of positive freedom.

The limitations on identity creation arises for different reasons depending on the person's relationship to the ideologies that preserve the social hierarchies. The focus of Section 2 of this chapter will be on identifying certain epistemic effects in the oppressed and oppressing groups and showing how those effects create delusions that limit freedom. For the oppressed, the loss of freedom can come from either *narrative buy-in* or *ego skepticism*. In the first case, the individual comes to believe the ideological narratives that support their own oppression. For example, a woman may come to believe that she is not as good of a worker as a man, and therefore ought to stay home and take care of the family, even if this is not actually true. The loss of freedom here comes by closing off certain relevant options—the woman no longer considers work outside of the home a live possibility. The second effect, ego skepticism, is the loss of epistemic authority over oneself. This leads to the individual lacking control over their identity and being more susceptible to the ideological narratives, once again limiting their freedom.

For the beneficiaries of the hierarchy, the tendency is to become *closed-minded*, ignoring or downplaying the experiences of others and refusing to acknowledge the benefits they receive. This closed-mindedness makes it challenging for the individual to properly engage with others, since they are actively closing off information about not only other's lives, but their own lives. This failure of knowledge limits the individual's ability to effectively control their social identity, because a gap has been created between their view of themselves and the reality of their social position.

1.1 Identity and Meaning

Isaiah Berlin's lecture, "Two Concepts of Liberty," has shaped a large portion of subsequent writing on freedom. In this lecture, he distinguishes negative liberty, which is the freedom one has when they are not interfered with by others, from positive liberty. Positive liberty, he says, "derives from the wish on the part of the individual to

be his own master…to be the instrument of my own, not of other men's will…to be conscious of myself as a thinking, willing, active being, bearing responsibility for my choices and able to explain them by references to my own ideas and purposes."[3] Negative liberty is easy to measure compared to positive liberty. Interference requires that someone act against a person—frustrating their choices, limiting their options, enforcing penalties for making certain choices. To measure negative liberty, one only must look at how many ways an individual is being interfered with. Positive liberty, on the other hand, requires knowing what it means for an individual to be truly autonomous, self-legislating, and free from the influences of others' wills. The worry Berlin has about determining the true self is that it can be difficult to distinguish true desires from surface-level ones. It seems very common for a person to make a decision they later regret because, in hindsight, they realize it was not what they truly wanted. However, when they made the decision, it may have felt like the correct decision; more transient impulses masked their true will. Berlin argues that positive liberty makes it easier to accept this story of the self as split into the higher true self and the lower impulsive self. Positive liberty would then become the view that freedom is the promotion of the true self, and the surface-level self can be ignored or overruled.

This division of the self into two parts motivates Berlin's criticism of positive liberty. A theory of positive liberty based on the division of the self requires an explanation of what the true self wants. Depending on a person's theory of self and people's true desires, they could convince other people that actions that violate those others' surface-level desires are for the benefit of their true selves. This, Berlin warns, could lead to the opposite of freedom, where people are manipulated into believing a false theory of self that is used to justify some other political goal. He gives nationalism as an example, whereby the true self is identified with a territory or national identity. Citizens are told that the highest freedom they can attain is devoting themselves to the national goal. The language of positive liberty and the vagueness of the true self "renders it easy for me to conceive of myself as coercing others for their own sake, in their, not my, interest. I am then claiming that I know what they truly need better than

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[3] Berlin, I. (1969). Two Concepts of Liberty. In *Four Essays on Liberty* (pp. 118–172). Oxford University Press. Pg. 131

they know it themselves."[4] If positive freedom requires this bipartite view of the self, then positive freedom runs the risk of violating pluralism. If all people share an innate true self (despite any surface-level differences in desires), then any differences in values must be surface-level and can therefore be ignored.

Berlin's assumption, though, was flawed. Positive freedom does require a conception of autonomy and individuality—it is, after all, about promoting and individual's ability to undertake their life according to their will, not just about enforcing negative injunctions—but that need not involve stipulating a true self. What is needed to overcome Berlin's objection is a better understanding of how the self is created and how a person exercises their autonomy through the formation of their identity. The desire to be one's own master need not involve the impossible search for the true self but the creation of the self through a process of critique and positive identification with values that a person could reflectively endorse (or as may happen, abandon). Instead of treating the search for identity as "uncovering" the true self by stripping away surface-level desires and social influences, we ought to view identity as a creative process by which individuals combine the facts of their life with the goals and values they aspire to. Thus, one's identity is not a fixed fact but a changing mix of personal history, aspirations, and values that can come from various places. The creation of identity becomes a core part of expressing one's autonomy, and thus we can escape Berlin's concern that positive liberty can lead to authoritarianism.

Allison Weir and Anthony Appiah have both proposed views of identity that reject the need to distinguish the true self from the surface-level self, instead emphasizing the role of critical reflection in disentangling socially imposed or transient beliefs from ones that a person can reflectively endorse. Both authors use Foucault and Taylor as examples of opposing approaches to identity. Foucault represents the view that identity categories are purely negative: they are used to define the out-groups to oppress and dominate. Thus, the Foucauldian critique of identity is that it ought to be done away with entirely. Identities represent oppressive categorization and therefore serve no positive purpose in people's lives. On the other side, Taylor argues that

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[4] Berlin 1969: 133

identification is a process of aligning oneself with the goals and values of their society in order to form an identity that they can share with others in their community. This view of identity makes it clear how identity can form part of a meaningful life for a person. However, because Taylor relies heavily on taking values from the existing society, there is little room for questioning or rejecting those values. A better view of identity would take the critical aspects of Foucault's theory and the positive aspects of Taylor's theory.

To help frame the discussion of identity later in this section, I want to introduce three aspects of social identity that Appiah provides. Importantly, I am not taking this as a definition of identity, but rather as a useful way of breaking down different parts of what we call "identity." First, there are the available terms, called labels, in public discourse that "pick out the bearers of the identity by way of criteria of ascription, so that some people are recognized *as* members of the group."[5] For the purposes of explanation, Appiah lets 'L' stand in for an arbitrary identity label, and I will use this as well. He says the social consensus that determines group membership relies on stereotypes about what members of the group are like, how they act, and what distinguishes them from other groups. He says this constructs a "*social conception*" of what an 'L' is that does not need to be perfect (there can be disagreement along the margins of whether a specific individual falls in the group or not), and the content of the social conception can change over time.

Further, the groups themselves can play a role in determining the content of the social conception. Appiah uses the example that African Americans who have lived in the United States for several generations may view the meaning of "being black" differently from other people in the United States, both white people and other black people such as recent immigrants. However, as I will discuss later, reliance on only the categories provided by society is one of the types of delusions that Baldwin is most concerned about. Nevertheless, everyone starts from a position within society and thus is shaped by society's categorizations.

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[5] Appiah, A. (2005). *The Ethics of Identity*. Princeton University Press. Pg. 66

Second, there is an "internalization of those labels as parts of the individual identities of at least some of those who bear the label."[6] This is what he calls *identification as*. A person might, for example, be labeled as a woman by the standards of the social conception but not identify as a woman (they may identify as another gender or feel no identification with gender at all). 'Identification as' involves shaping one's life (to a greater or lesser degree) around being an 'L.' For example, they might react positively to other L's succeeding since they share this important identity. They may also interact with other Ls in a particular way or act in a certain manner because they are an L and want to conduct themselves in a way that accords with that identity. Some aspects are moral or ethical (acting a certain way, treating others in a certain way) while others are not (dressing a certain way, talking with a particular dialect). Sometimes, the ethical implications are even negative: for some, identifying as a man might involve the feeling that one deserves power over women. 'Identification as' can also be a positive process, opening oneself up to new communities and ways of living, but it is important to separate this from the descriptive aspect of identifying oneself with a label.

Third, there is the "existence of patterns of behavior towards Ls, such that Ls are sometimes *treated as* Ls."[7] Being labeled as an L involves others believing that a person is or does or believes certain things because they are an L, regardless of whether it is true in the specific case. To quote from Baldwin's letter to his nephew: "You were born where you were born and faced the future that you faced because you were black and *for no other reason*."[8] "Black" as a label determines how people (and institutions) treat a person. In a weaker sense, Appiah says that when agent A acts toward a black person, agent B, 'because B is black' "figures in [A's] internal specification of her reasons for the act."[9] As with 'identification as,' 'treatment as' is not universally benevolent or malevolent. At its worst, 'treatment as' involves discrimination, sexism, racism, oppression, and so forth. But it also forms the basis for sexual orientations, where a

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[6] Appiah 2005: 68

[7] Appiah 2005: 68

[8] "My Dungeon Shook" In *Collected Essays*, ed. Toni Morrison, pg. 293. Emphasis in original

[9] Appiah 2005: 68

person changes their behavior towards a person depending on their gender identity. A straight man may tend to act a certain way towards some feminine presenting people (show romantic or sexual interest) that he would not act towards masculine presenting people. 'Treatment as' is also the basis for many claims to equal treatment: responding to inequalities requires us to recognize the basis on which those inequalities arise and treat others accordingly. If Ls have been denied resources on the basis of being Ls, then they may be owed something (resources or otherwise) on the basis of being Ls.

With this story of identity, I can rephrase the alternatives presented by Foucault and Taylor in Appiah's terms. Foucault's view of identity as oppressive categorization overemphasizes the treatment-as part of identity, especially the malevolent aspects. He also emphasizes the limiting role that socially available labels play. If all a person has is the labels society has provided, then at best they can create their self-identity within the bounds of what is already socially acceptable. His overemphasis of these two aspects is to the detriment of both the positive aspects of treatment-as (such as those that help target groups for benefits to compensate for inequalities) and the positive aspect of identification-as, where an individual gains community through identification. Taylor's critique overemphasizes the identification-as aspect, highlighting the value in identifying with one's social community. But his account fails to address the treatment-as aspects of identity or provide substantive grounds for critiquing the values, ideals, and social categories (labels) that a person receives from society. Neither account gets the whole picture right since identity importantly consists of both treatment-as and identification-as, as well as a creative effort to push past socially received categories and values.

Allison Weir distinguishes 'identity as oppression' from 'identity as social connection.' She says, "understanding identities as sources of freedom requires that we differentiate identity as *category* from identity as *connection to* and *identification with* ideals, each other, and defining communities."[10] She argues for a shift from treating identity as a metaphysical question to an ethical and political concern. Similarly, Anthony Appiah calls for a shift in the thinking of identity as an ethical concern because

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[10] Weir, A. (2013). *Identities and Freedom*. Oxford University Press. Pg. 3

"we make our lives *as* men and *as* women, *as* gay and *as* straight people, *as* Ghanaians and *as* Americans, *as* blacks and *as* whites."[11] Moving identity into the realm of ethics and politics, rather than metaphysics, shift the concern from analysis of identity as a concept (what identity is) to how identity is used in political and social settings. Weir, like Baldwin, sees identities as a way of forming and building community, not as walls and borders between people. Responding to both Foucault's critique and Taylor's insufficient treatment of the negative aspects of identification will allow for a more complete picture of the role identity plays in peoples' lives.

Responding first to Foucault, Weir argues that identities can serve as sources of solidarity, resistance, and freedom when they create "relations we can critically affirm."[12] Identity as a source of politics also arises in the statement of the Combahee River Collective: "The focusing upon our own oppression is embodied in the concept of identity politics. We believe that the most profound and potentially most radical politics come directly out of our own identity, as opposed to working to end someone else's oppression."[13] In this statement, the identity of "black woman" plays a role both as an oppressive category (one in need of liberation) and as a source of solidarity and community that can ground a liberatory project. Baldwin similarly believes that identification with a people, a tradition, and a history is essential to living a meaningful life. He critiques Richard Wright's novel *Native Son* precisely because Wright denies the protagonist, Bigger, this type of connection to other black characters. In failing to do so, Wright only allows Bigger to experience the negative side of identity, creating what Baldwin argues is a distorted view of black life.[14] People find meaning in identity categories despite (or in some cases because of) the shared history of oppression they

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[11] Appiah 2005: xiv

[12] Weir 2013: 14

[13] Taylor, K.-Y. (Ed.). (2017) [1977]. The Combahee River Collective Statement. In *How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective*. Haymarket Books.

[14] Baldwin critiques Wright's novel across a series of three essays, "Everybody's Protest Novel," "Many Thousands Gone," and "Alas, Poor Richard," In *Collected* Essays, ed. Toni Morrison

may grow out of, and viewing identities purely in the negative, as Foucault does, limits our ability to use them for these purposes.

This positive view being developed sounds similar to Taylor's theory, which emphasizes identity's value as creating or affirming social relationships that strengthen our connections with others. But going too far in that direction leads to trouble, as well. The threat of social influence means that even if a person can choose to form relationships that they value through identification, they do not choose the values by which they judge those relationships. They may choose whom to befriend based on values like loyalty, honesty, or pursuit of a common goal. But it is less clear why they decided to value those things over alternatives, like humor, passion, or wealth. If everyone gets their values from socialization, then the values themselves have little to do with individual identity and are determined by where and when someone happens to be born. If a person does not question the sources and content of their values, they may identify with groups or values that seem immoral. Can we, or must we, defend the positive value of an individual identifying with Neo-Nazis because the individual finds value in racial superiority? Is that individual as free as the black woman who finds solidarity and community in the Combahee River Collective? Weir does not want to give that ground to the social determinists and say that social circumstances determine a person's values, and they have little or no control over them. There must be space in a conception of identity for the critique of social values and labels, and even the rejection of identifications that are based on values that cannot survive ongoing critique. This positive view must be combined with a means of critique, as Foucault suggested.

Appiah's definition of social identity relies on labels that society has already given. But this limits our ability to create our identity since it traps people into taking those categories for granted. As Baldwin puts it, "We take our shape, it is true, within and against that cage of reality bequeathed us at our birth; and yet it is precisely through our dependence on this reality that we are so endlessly betrayed."[15] Even though a person cannot escape the social influences of their community, they should not resign themselves to thinking those categorizations are the only available options.

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[15] "Everybody's Protest Novel" In *Collected Essays*, ed. Toni Morrison. Pg. 16

Especially for minorities, many of the categorizations and associated values available to them will be oppressive rather than liberating. In later sections of this chapter, I will show how delusions can make it easier to take categories for granted. For now, I want to focus on how the ability to critique society plays a role in identity in the first place. J.S. Mill argued that the best life is one in which the individual exercises their higher faculties to critically evaluate all their options, create new ideas for living, and reject dogmatic tradition.[16] A person may start with a set of values given by their parents, friends, schooling, and so forth, but with sufficient negative freedom to question and critique those values, they can (in the best case) dispense with the ideas and values that are detrimental to the type of life they want to lead and take on or create better ones. The advancement of anti-discrimination laws and securing Civil Rights for women and minorities in the US only came about because people were willing to question the status quo of racial segregation and restricted suffrage.[17] Through questioning and critiquing not only the values of society, but the categorizations that are used to define people and how those categories ought to affect people's lives, individuals can create a more complete sense of themselves and improve the social conditions of others.

Putting these pieces together, the view of identity I have been explaining has three components. First, identities are socially situated, both because they allow people to create solidarity and community with others and because they can serve as the basis for differential treatment by others. Second, identity is not fixed or immutable but a creative process that a person undertakes throughout life. Even the categories society uses can be critiqued and changed through reflection on how they operate and whether they align with our other values. Third, this process of identity creation is an integral part of a meaningful life because it forms the basis for which goals and values a person takes on, what projects they pursue, and what relationships they want to have and maintain. Paraphrasing from Appiah, people make their lives, undertake their projects, and stand in relations with others as members of different identity groups. Therefore,

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[16] See Mill (1880) *On Liberty* especially Ch III, "Of Individuality, As one of the elements of well-being"

[17] It must be noted that these protestors were often met with violence and resistance from the government and portions of the populace. Even though in the U.S. they had the legal right to protest, that protection was not always enough to ensure the safety of protestors.

ensuring every person can critically affirm those identities is essential to our overall life plan.[18] Taking this view of identity, we can pursue a conception of positive liberty that promotes identity creation and does not, as Berlin feared, risk sliding towards authoritarianism.

1.2 Freedom as Non-Delusion

An individual's ability to craft an identity—shape who they are through values, goals, and relationships they endorse—is threatened by their misunderstandings of the categories they rely on and their social position. If an identity, such as gender, is viewed solely as an oppressive structure used by one group to dominate and control the other, then it becomes difficult to understand how that identity has contributed positively to people's identities, as gender does in descriptions of gender euphoria[19] or the Combahee River Collective's emphasis on black womanhood as a source of political solidarity and will. Similarly, Baldwin warns in his writings that misunderstandings of the history of racial categories can lead black people to accept "the theology that denies [them] life."[20] If they believe that they deserve their oppressed position because they are truly inferior, then they lose an essential aspect of their identity. Freedom as non-delusion provides an account of how certain false beliefs about the world interact with the value we place on our identity, thereby giving us an understanding of freedom tied to our epistemic situation.

The particular delusions I am interested in are (for the oppressed) narrative buy-in and ego skepticism and (for the oppressors) closed-mindedness. It is useful to separate the two in the analysis because, even though both groups are subject to the same ideologies, their social position changes their relationship to that ideology. A

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[18] Appiah 2005: xiv

[19] Beischel, W. J., Gauvin, S. E. M., & van Anders, S. M. (2022). "A little shiny gender breakthrough": Community understandings of gender euphoria. *International Journal of Transgender Health*, *23*(3), 274–294.

[20] "Everybody's Protest Novel" In *Collected Essays*, ed. Toni Morrison. Pg. 18

patriarchal ideology will have a different effect on women than on men, for example. I have already previewed the effects of these delusions in the introduction, and in this section I will examine the effects more closely and show that, by interfering with the individuals ability to create an identity that coheres with social reality, these delusions are limits to individual freedom.

1.2.1 Freedom as Non-delusion for the Dominated

Ideology has many epistemic effects on the dominated. In this section, I will explain two of the major effects, *narrative buy-in* and *ego skepticism*, and show how each one limits the ability of the subject to create the types of positive identities that are valuable for fulfilling lives. These limits are best understood as limits to the subject's freedom. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list, as there are many potential effects, each of which may threaten freedom in different ways. The goal of the account here is to show that some of the most profound epistemic effects extend outwards and affect the moral lives of the oppressed.

Narrative buy-in happens when the oppressed accept an ideology's explanations and claims. In his Cambridge Union debate speech, Baldwin says:

> When I was brought up I was taught in American history books that Africa had no history and that neither had I. I was a savage about whom the least [*sic.*] said was better, who had been saved by Europe and who had been brought to America. Of course, I believed it. I didn't have much choice. These were the only books there were. Everyone else seemed to agree. If you went out of Harlem the whole world agreed. What you saw was much bigger, whiter, cleaner, safer…You would go back home and it would seem, of course, that this was an act of God. You belonged where white people put you.[21]

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[21] "The American Dream and the American Negro" In *Collected Essays*, ed. Toni Morrison, pg. 717

The ideology Baldwin is identifying has replaced the true history of slavery with a narrative that emphasizes the savior role of white Europeans and downplays (or outright erases) the history of Africa. Baldwin comes to believe this narrative through two means. First, it was the only narrative available to him. Even if he wanted to doubt it, he had no other story to tell himself about why things were the way they were. Second, given that this was the only coherent narrative on offer, his daily experience—seeing the difference between Harlem and downtown Manhattan, the difference between the places white people lived and where black people lived—reinforced the story. Black people were inferior, and the fact that they lived in worse conditions was itself evidence of that inferiority. This is narrative buy-in. The ideology presents a worldview, a story about why society is and must be organized the way it is. The oppressed have very few options but to accept it until they can access alternative explanations. Shelby similarly argues that long periods of subjugation (such as during slavery) inculcate "feelings of inferiority, helplessness, and resignation in the oppressed."[22] This makes the group more susceptible to ideological explanations to make sense of their situation. Once someone accepts the narrative, their experience confirms its truth.

In another essay, Baldwin comments on the effect coming to believe these myths had on him. Baldwin says of himself, "I was as isolated from Negroes as I was from whites, which is what happens when a Negro begins, at bottom, to believe what white people say about him."[23] The effect of narrative buy-in was a loss of connection to people with whom Baldwin felt he ought to find community. This is perhaps best exemplified in Wright's *Native Son*. Baldwin views the protagonist, Bigger Thomas, as the embodiment of narrative buy-in (Bigger has "accepted a theology that denies him life").[24]

When talking with his lawyer about his murder of Mary Dalton, Bigger explains that he had the urge to rape her (although he did not do so), "'because I knew I

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[22] Shelby 2013: 182

[23] "The Discovery of What It Means To Be an American" In *Collected Essays*, ed. Toni Morrison, pg. 137

[24] "Many Thousands Gone" In *Collected Essays*, ed. Toni Morrison, pg. 26

oughtn't've wanted to…they say we black men do that anyhow…Yeah; I reckon I was feeling that way and maybe the reason was because they say it. Maybe that was the reason.'"[25] Bigger felt conditioned by the myths that white people told about black people; the myths were self-fulfilling prophecies. Backed into a corner, Bigger thought that these myths must be true because he had no other way to relate to himself or explain why he lived such a destitute life. And this, ultimately, drove Bigger to kill, to try to reclaim his agency in a world that had stripped him of it: "Never had he had the chance to live out the consequences of his actions; never had his will been so free as in the night and day of fear and murder and flight."[26] Beyond his hatred of white people, Bigger felt that this loss of agency and distrust limited how he could relate to other black people, like his mother, sister, and friends. "He felt that [whites] ruled him, even when they were far away and not thinking of him, ruled him by conditioning him in his relations with his own people."[27] The physical conditions of Bigger's life are tragic, but the mental conditions of his life—the way his view of himself, others, and the world around him has been shaped by ideology—are in some ways worse.[28]

Narrative buy-in isolates the individual from others with whom they ought to have community. Bigger believes that, even though he can see his family's suffering, he could do nothing to stop it. "He knew that the moment he allowed himself to feel to its fullness how they lived, the shame and misery of their lives, he would be swept out of himself with fear and despair. So he held toward them an attitude of iron reserve; he lived with them, but behind a wall, a curtain."[29] The combination of seeing the suffering

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[25] Wright, R. (1998). *Native Son*. HarperCollins. Pg. 341

[26] Wright 1998: 239

[27] Wright 1998: 115

[28] Compare this to what Baldwin says in his Cambridge Union speech: "Now, leaving aside all the physical factors one can quote…what this system does to the subjugated is to destroy his sense of reality. It destroys his father's authority over him, His father can no longer tell him anything because his past has disappeared." ("The American Dream and the American Negro" In *Collected Essays*, ed. Toni Morrison, pg. 717). This is a claim about the epistemic and psychological harm done by oppression, and how it destroys relationships with others by stripping him of the epistemic tools to understand reality.

[29] Wright 1998: 10

and feeling unable to do anything necessitates this distance. Bigger began to believe that being black meant you were cut off from the world, that you could live a whole life, as his mother had done, while contributing nothing of any importance to the world.[30] When he is isolated from his community, he is prevented from ever pursuing the identity formation that is crucial to a meaningful life. This epistemic effect causes a moral effect: the loss of the ability to create a positive identity. This inability to connect with others, the gap between Bigger and his sister, his mother, his brother, and his friends, traps Bigger in a cage, as Baldwin says, from which his escape is nearly impossible.

The function of ideology is to naturalize or reify categories such that resistance to them is futile. This involves downplaying or ignoring any tradition or history of that category—the ideology must make the category appear necessary, not historically contingent. Buying into such an ideology causes a person not just to believe that they are powerless to change their situation but that everyone who shares that identity is powerless in the same way. Thus, there is little left in that identity on which to form a positive identity. The Combahee River Collective focused on their identity as black women because they saw it as a source of resistance and political strength. If they believed they were powerless, that motivation to identify together would be lost. As Baldwin says, buying into the narrative "has led us all to believe that in Negro life there exists no tradition, no field of manners, no possibility of ritual or intercourse" despite the actual traditions of black life that had developed "out of their struggle to survive."[31] When a person loses that connection to some aspect of their identity, they lose the ability to use that part of their identity to create community and solidarity with others. This loss of a central part of a person's social identity is a loss of freedom to create for themselves a meaningful life.

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[30] Wright makes this point later, emphasizing Bigger's belief that he and other black people suffer and live the way they do because "none of them…had ever done anything, right or wrong, that mattered much" (Wright 1998: 105). Bigger believed that being black, and living among other black people, removed you from the world so that your actions were unimportant to the real world.

[31] "Many Thousands Gone" In *Collected Essays*, ed. Toni Morrison, pg. 27-28

The second epistemic effect is ego skepticism. As José Medina explains, ego skepticism is "a skepticism about the self, about its capacities and even about its very existence."[32] Medina views this skepticism as the result of extreme epistemic humility—the oppressed individual's status as a knower has been reduced to so low a level that they can no longer even trust their knowledge of themself, not to mention facts outside the self. Some of this can come from the narratives of the ideology itself. For example, Shelby notes that racist ideologies represent black people as "morally and intellectually inferior."[33] To the extent that a black person buys into that narrative, they will be accepting their inferior intellectual status and therefore not trust that what they think is true is actually true—they will doubt their own ability to know. But ego skepticism need not result directly from narrative buy-in. Medina notes that:

> Accounts of the 'Negro mind' from the nineteenth century can be used as an illustration. The other side of Tocqueville's psychological picture of the white Southerner in the 1830s United States is his account of the slave mentality that is produced by an ongoing intellectual subjugation through processes of socialization and control…There were all sorts of training processes and cultural practices that carefully crafted the slave's manners, attitudes, disposition, and mental habits. The slave mentality that Tocqueville observed during his travels was created through the slave's internalization of the master's judgments and expectations.[34]

Here, the epistemic effect is directly a result of the interactions between the oppressors and the oppressed and not due to the oppressed believing the narratives given by the ideology. Slaves' epistemic abilities were explicitly undermined by limiting their education, training their habits, and adapting them to serve their masters. Ego skepticism without explicit narrative buy-in can still occur today even though people

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[32] Medina, J. (2013). Active Ignorance, Epistemic Others, and Epistemic Friction. In *The Epistemology of Resistance: Gender and Racial Oppression, Epistemic Injustice, and the Social Imagination*. Oxford University Press. Pg. 42

[33] Shelby 2003: 177

[34] Medina 2013: 40-41

have more access to information. The systemic disvaluing of certain groups' epistemic abilities reinforces the idea that the oppressed are cognitively worse off than others. For example, testimonial injustice is a type of epistemic injustice that involves systemically unfairly discounting or disregarding information because of the source's social identity. When a person's statements and claims are systemically disregarded by others it can, over time, instill a belief in them that their claims are not valuable, that their expertise in the subject (even when that subject is themselves) does not matter. Therefore, they begin to doubt their "status as a subject of knowledge."[35] Both explicit manipulation of cognitive powers (as during slavery) and more subtle effects, such as those that result from testimonial injustice, can create ego skepticism without the subject needing to buy into the narratives of the ideology, and so the effects of ego skepticism can be considered separately from narrative buy-in.

Ego skepticism eliminates the positive sense of identity that Weir argues is valuable and leaves only the oppressive view of identity. As Charles Mills says, "one is a subperson precisely because *others*—persons—have categorized one as such and have the power to enforce their categorization."[36] "Black" in this case is a category used to mark the individual as a subperson, and ego skepticism creates in that individual the belief that they are nothing more than the category used to define them. The acceptance of social categories as necessary or fixed prevents the individual from viewing themselves any differently.[37] The individual loses their sense of self because their doubt about their status as a subject of knowledge has made them doubt whether they can overcome the "resistance of those subjects who subjugate them."[38] Thus the epistemic effect that excludes oppressed subjects from gaining status as an epistemic agent creates

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[35] Medina 2013: 42

[36] Mills, C. W. (1998). *Blackness Visible: Essays on Philosophy and Race*. Cornell University Press. Pg. 9.

[37] This is why I pointed out in section 1 of this chapter that Appiah's definition of social identity that involved relying on the existing social labels was troubling for my approach in this chapter. Certainly, we do use the existing social labels, but emphasizing them too heavily makes it more likely that individuals will feel trapped and categorized by a label, rather than being able to view it as an important aspect of their positive identity.

[38] Medina 2013: 42

a further effect of making the subject doubt their knowledge of their own identity and makes them dependent on others to give them shape. This dependence on others is a loss of freedom. The subject has lost their ability to control their identity themselves and has ceded that power to the oppressors. The delusions created in the individual by ideology—the belief that they have no epistemic authority over even themselves—strips them of control over their identity. Their freedom to organize their life has been limited by these delusions.

1.2.2 Freedom as Non-delusion for the Dominant

I turn now to the ways that ideology negatively impacts the dominant group. By viewing these negative impacts as threats to freedom, I will argue that ideology, despite in some ways benefiting the dominant group, damages their ability to live meaningfully free lives. Baldwin is deeply concerned with the effects of racial ideologies and myths on the white people with whom he interacts. In his Cambridge Union speech, he discusses the violence committed by Sheriff Clark in Selma, Alabama in the months prior to the debate, saying:

> …he does not know what drives him to use the club, to menace with the gun and to use the cattle prod. Something awful must have happened to a human being to be able to put a cattle prod against a woman's breasts. What happens to the woman is ghastly. What happens to the man who does it is in many ways much, much worse. Their moral lives have been destroyed by the plague called color."[39]

Baldwin's focus on the dominant may seem out of place—why is he concerned about the moral lives of the people who protect the hierarchies and perpetuate the oppression of others? But the fact that they have institutional power means that understanding how ideology affects the dominant groups is central to critiquing the ideology and creating better relationships among people. The purpose of investigating the effects of ideology

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[39] "The American Dream and the American Negro" In *Collected Essays*, ed. Toni Morrison, pg. 716

on the dominant group is not exculpatory but explanatory. Baldwin is not asking for sympathy for Sheriff Clark, but he is demanding that an analysis of racist ideologies takes seriously how ideology affects everyone in society. With that said, in this section I will look at one of the primary epistemic effects of ideology, what Medina calls "closed-mindedness," and show how it creates a follow-on moral effect that is best understood in terms of a limit to freedom.

There are many things that the beneficiaries of ideology do not know, but there are two main reasons why they do not know certain things. For example, under an ideology that enforces strict gender roles, men may not need to know domestic skills like cooking and cleaning. When a man in that situation fails even to be curious about seeking out this knowledge, Medina says they are being "epistemically lazy." The information is there, but they do not need to know it and therefore do not go through the effort of seeking it out. Medina distinguishes this from closed-mindedness, which involves avoidance of learning about certain things. The facts that are hidden by closed-mindedness relate more directly to the maintenance of the ideology. Medina gives the example of racist ideology in which white people can easily reject the experience and testimony of racial minorities since the position of minorities makes their experiences unimportant to the dominant group. This exclusion of alternative perspectives "usually involves the lack of openness to a whole range (no matter how broad or narrow) of experiences and viewpoints that can destabilize (or create trouble for) one's own perspective."[40] Closed-mindedness is more active than epistemic laziness—it requires the specific avoidance of certain facts and evidence, not just a failure to seek out evidence.

Attitudes like color- and gender-blindness exemplify this kind of epistemic flaw. Claiming to be color-blind implies that one does not see the marginalized position of racial minorities or the ways that race impacts the lives of people unlike themself. A person can only treat gender or race as irrelevant if they do not understand the ways gender and race impact people's experiences and daily lives: "Color- and gender-blindness require being actively and proudly ignorant of social positionality, which

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[40] Medina 2013: 35

involves a double epistemic failure: a failure in self-knowledge and a failure in the knowledge of others with whom one is intimately related."[41]

There is trouble here in the framing of closed-mindedness as the active decision on the part of the individual to not learn certain things. A person might refuse to learn about slavery so they do not have to confront the idea that their ancestors did horrific things or that the benefits they currently enjoy in the United States come at the cost of untold numbers of slaves. But often people are not consciously deciding to not learn these things. Rather, Medina argues, it results "from a socialization that leads one to be insensitive to certain things and immune to certain considerations."[42] Educational, cultural, and social practices have been shaped over time to ignore the facts which challenge the ideology. This starts to sound like epistemic laziness since the problem is that social practices have made these facts unnecessary to learn, and a failure to go seek them out is laziness, not avoidance. Medina argues that at least one of the crucial differences is that the types of facts hidden by closed-mindedness would threaten to destabilize the dominant ideology (like learning the facts about slavery from the example above). However, for my purposes, it is not so important to develop these details, because the types of active closed-mindedness present in color- and gender-blindness are enough to show that this epistemic effect of ideology allows individuals to maintain delusions that are a threat to their freedom.

Closed-mindedness involves blindness to social hierarchies and differential experiences that also features prominently in Shelby's analysis of ideology. Ideologies tell people a story about the way the world is that doesn't match the totality of the facts, often hiding or downplaying the impact of the social hierarchies on the oppressed. Members of the dominant group will lack good information about the differential experience of the groups who are oppressed by the hierarchy because the ideology has

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[41] Medina 2013: 37. Medina is careful to distinguish active forms of close-mindedness, of which gender- and color-blindness are examples, from a more structural close-mindedness, which he says is an "unconscious defense mechanism. It does not result from a decision or a conscious effort to ignore, but from a socialization that leads one to be insensitive to certain things and immune to certain considerations." (Medina 2013: 36)

[42] Medina 2013: 36

deemphasized those facts. This blindness can be literally not seeing the suffering (by retreating into insular communities and pushing the suffering to the edges) or by becoming insensitive to the suffering, viewing it as deserved or the fault of those suffering. When that lack of information then turns to active maintenance of ignorance through, e.g., race-blindness, it becomes a clear case of closed-mindedness. This can manifest as calls to stop talking about race or gender, or as Chief Justice Roberts put it, "The way to stop discrimination on the basis of race is to stop discriminating on the basis of race."[43] While the motivation may come from a good place—a desire to stop racial or gender or other discrimination—the effect is that the individual remains blind to the ways discrimination is embedded into the structures and ideology of society.

Considering the role that identity plays in developing one's self-conception and exercising their autonomy, the fact that closed-mindedness can hide important features of one's identity becomes not only an epistemic but an ethical concern. Of course, one might say that a race-blind person would also reject any benefits that they receive from their whiteness. They would not make race an important part of their identity because, to them, race ought not to be something that matters. So lacking the relevant information for incorporating race into their identity would not be a problem for them—they simply ignore their own race when they think about their identity.[44] But this elides the fact that race does have an impact on how a person interacts with the world, whether one personally wants it to or not. We can choose how to emphasize various features of ourselves and to some extent how we present ourselves to others,

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[43] *PARENTS INVOLVED IN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS v. SEATTLE SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 1* 551 U.S. 701 [2007] Chief Justice Roberts was writing to strike down a law which allowed certain school districts to assign students to schools in part based on their race in order to have racially diverse schools. In his opinion, he argues that the laws in question did not pass the "strict scrutiny" standard for the use of racial classification in law. Even the school districts were de facto racially segregated, there had been no laws mandating school segregation, and so no law to correct the segregation could use law as a deciding factor. The quote emphasizes Justice Robert's view that simply ignoring race entirely would be better at reducing discrimination than writing laws which could be used to perpetuate discrimination.

[44] This may happen subconsciously, as well. If the majority of people are white, and whiteness has the dominant position in the ideology of that society, then white people may not need to view their race as relevant since it is "default"- the other is racialized, the dominant is not.

but our identity "must be…constructed in response to facts outside oneself, things that are beyond one's own choices."[45] If a person has the social markers of 'whiteness' in American society, then they will be viewed by others as white regardless of whether they themselves attach much significance to their race.[46] Recall in Appiah's definition of identity, treatment-as was a crucial aspect of having a certain identity, and treatment-as is not something a person can directly control.

Closed-mindedness (at least the more active types) will result in a divergence between a person's self-conception and the reality of their social context. A closed-minded person actively ignores facts about their social positionality. This is, in part, an effort to free themselves from having to confront the effects that dominant status has on themselves.[47] But understanding those social contexts is essential to meaningful identity creation. Weir says:

> if we think our identities are just about what is salient for me, what I
> *choose* to identify with, then we are failing to understand who we really
> are. The fact that we are constituted through social contexts and through
> regimes of power means that we don't know ourselves until we
> understand those contexts and those power regimes.[48]

Understanding these contexts and power regimes that enforce identity from outside the individual does not require submitting to them, though. The coherence between a person's self-conception and their social position does not require forming oneself to match society's view of what it means to have a certain identity. What it requires is that the individual understands that, insofar as their identity challenges social norms or differs from how others view them, they may face different treatment. Let's take two examples. First, an individual may choose to present themselves in a way that

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[45] Appiah 2005: 18

[46] Recalling Appiah's first criteria for identity from 1.1, the markers of belonging to an identity category are socially constructed and can change. Thus, who counts as "white" might not be stable across time

[47] Medina 2013: 38

[48] Weir 2013: 32

challenges gender norms, and so there will be a gap between how others view them and how they view themselves (they may appear more masculine to others despite viewing themselves as a woman or non-binary). But when this is done with the knowledge of how the norms will be applied (even if that means knowing one will be mistreated) there is still a coherence between the individual's view of themselves and their knowledge of their social position. They understand the social norms they are operating under, even if they want those norms to change.[49]

But consider now a successful man who views himself as gender-blind. He tries to evaluate others (his coworkers, those that work under him, etc.) according to their performance alone and not their gender. But, at the same time, he views his own position as the result of his hard work, talent, skill, and so forth and not a result of (at least in part) the benefits he received from being a man. Such a man may believe that if he was able to work hard and be successful, anyone else can, regardless of their gender. In this case, the man may come to value hard work, perseverance, and determination. These values are not on their own bad to have, but in this case they come in part from a mistaken belief that those values are the markers of a successful person and that people who are unsuccessful must be lacking in those. He believes that the world, at least with respect to gender, is and ought to be a meritocracy. The people who are successful have earned it, and those who are not successful are lazy or unproductive. From his perspective, he is successful because he has earned it completely on his own, whereas others see him as evidence of how men benefit from a patriarchal society. This disconnect between how he views himself (his values and their relationship to the facts of his life) and the reality of his social context endangers his ability to form a meaningful identity.

Closed-mindedness deludes an individual about the facts of their life, it allows them to form values and identities that they would not otherwise critically endorse. The act of critiquing one's values and identifications—subjecting them to the "demands of

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[49] This is not a claim that being is such a position is easy or desirable. Many would prefer not to have to challenge norms at all and be free to present themselves however they like. But insofar as gender norms do exist, recognizing them is an important part of working to change them.

life"[50] as Baldwin would say—is central to identity creation. Without ongoing critique and confrontation with one's social context, an individual is not exerting their own will over their identity, but allowing other forces (ideology, social pressure, etc.) to shape their identity. If they allowed themselves to reflect on the facts of their life (the benefits they received from their social position), they may still endorse the same or similar values, but that endorsement would be reflective of the true circumstances of their life, and not ideological delusions. Because delusions prevent the closed-minded individual from undertaking the type of critical reflection needed to form an identity they can critically endorse, they are lacking an aspect of control over their life, and we should view this as a limit to their personal freedom.

It is important to distinguish this closed-mindedness from simply lacking knowledge. There are many things that, if a person learned them, might change their actions. Everybody operates under some uncertainty and that need not threaten freedom. In this section, I am not making the claim that any failure of knowledge is a limit to freedom or even any failure of knowledge about oneself. A person may go through an identity crisis, where they struggle to make sense of the various aspects of their self-conception and how that self-conception interacts with the way others treat them. That is different from the epistemic situation of the closed-minded person. The information they are deluding themselves about is facts about how others are labeling them and how those labels impact their social position. The active avoidance of the information makes closed-mindedness different from a general lack of knowledge.

1.3 Conclusion

The ability to create and adapt an identity in response to social reality is a central aspect of living a meaningful life. Identifying with certain values, ideals, goals, or groups is what makes an individual's life meaningful to them. When that activity is

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[50] "Autobiographical Notes" in *Collected Essays*, ed. Toni Morrison. Pg. 9.

limited or threatened by ideological delusions, the individual experiences a loss of freedom, just as they would experience a loss of freedom if another person actively prevented them from pursuing certain goals or having certain relationships.

People will be susceptible to different delusions depending on the ideologies that are prevalent in their society and their position in the society. The examples I used in this chapter may only apply to the U.S. and the particular history of race and gender here. However, any ideology will, by definition, create a split between those who benefit from the ideology and those who are oppressed by it. This may cut along ethnic, class, race, gender, religious, or other lines, but the underlying principle by which the delusions are created should be relatively constant. Members of some groups will be susceptible to believing the ideological narratives that portray them as subordinate, and members of other groups will be susceptible to actively downplaying and ignoring the benefits they receive. In either case, the individuals will be limited in their ability to create their identities and will experience a loss of freedom.

As a conception of personal freedom, freedom as non-delusion demands of individuals that they actively pursue their own freedom. A person cannot be free merely by being left alone; they must continuously evaluate their beliefs, especially those that they are predisposed to hold by virtue of the ideologies of their society. Failure to do so can lead a person to simply accept the standards and values of their society not because they endorse those standards, but because they have not seriously considered for themselves any alternatives. This process does not assume there is an objective standpoint outside of society and social influence that the individual takes on. Rather, each individual can evaluate various aspects of themselves and their society from the standpoint they already inhabit. This task may be more or less challenging depending on one's position—the purpose of ideology, after all, is to hide or explain away inequalities. Sometimes, the victims of the ideologies can better understand the structures that oppress them because of their differential experience.[51] Individuals who are members of one of more oppressed groups may have an easier time recognizing the

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[51] Mills 1998

delusions that threaten their freedom, but their position also makes it more difficult to successfully reject and replace the dominant ideology.

Chapter 2

Freedom as non-delusion is primarily a view of personal freedom—how an individual relates to themselves and the world through their ability to create an identity and live a meaningful life. But ideology and the delusions it creates are not merely personal problems that can make an individual's life go better or worse. They are also political problems. Ideology supports and defends social hierarchies that exist within a political structure and define our relations with others. In this chapter, I will connect freedom as non-delusion to the idea of domination, creating a political conception of freedom as non-delusion. Drawing on Christopher Lebron's criticism of egalitarian theories, I will show how the delusions that ideologies maintain create pernicious relationships of domination that cannot be dealt with by Philip Pettit's view of freedom as non-domination. This will point us towards incorporating non-delusion as a crucial aspect of political freedom.

The central political problem that ideology presents is the maintenance of oppressive hierarchies that justify or explain inequalities by making them appear natural. An ideology offers incorrect or misleading explanations of why certain groups have less wealth, higher unemployment, higher crime rates, and so forth and, importantly, justify why those inequalities ought to be there. These inequalities are not only unjust and unfair, but they are damaging to political freedom. The inequalities, when maintained over a long period of time, create forms of social domination that make members of some group dependent on the goodwill of other groups to express their political freedom. These forms of social domination, I will argue, result specifically from ideological delusions among the dominant groups, and are therefore not directly addressable via redistributive or legal schemes, which are the focus of the major egalitarian approaches to political freedom. Thus, full political freedom requires a commitment to non-delusion.

The connection between Baldwin's theory of freedom and domination, or being subject to another's will, was recognized by Buccola in his initial work on freedom as non-delusion. He argues that Baldwin's complete conception of freedom includes a

commitment to non-interference and a claim that, "one's freedom is threatened by conditions of inequality. In other words, an individual's freedom is threatened not just by coercion but also by domination."[1] Large inequalities give one group power over others, and that is inconsistent with having freedom in political society. However, Buccola does not go on to investigate the connection between delusions themselves and the type of dominating relationships that limit political freedom. A commitment to non-delusion should be an integral part of freeing oneself of all forms of domination. Thus, the political commitments of freedom as non-delusion are natural extensions of the moral or psychological commitments that I examined in Chapter One.

In my introductory sketch of Buccola's version of freedom as non-delusion, I brought up that Buccola viewed Baldwin's conception of political freedom as including non-interference, non-domination, and non-delusion. While I agree with Buccola that domination plays an important role in Baldwin's work, I want to address an issue with his claim that Baldwin can be committed to both non-interference and non-domination. As I will explain in section 1 of this chapter, preventing domination requires that a government institute laws that limit the way people can act. Non-domination requires some amount of interference, and so a conception of freedom cannot include a commitment to both non-interference and non-domination.

2.1 Freedom as Non-domination

Freedom as non-domination requires that individuals be free not simply from actual interference, but from the capacity of others to arbitrarily interfere in their lives.[2] Bosses unconstrained by laws restricting hours or the safety of the workers can demand longer hours and harder work since the workers have no recourse. A boss may act with

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[1] Buccola 2017: 125

[2] Pettit, P. (2006). The Republican Ideal of Freedom. In D. Miller (Ed.), *The Liberty Reader* (pp. 223–242). Paradigm Publishers.

goodwill and be fair to the workers, but nothing requires it; if that boss is replaced, or if they decide of their own will that they need to enforce more draconian rules, nothing will protect the workers from that interference. Pettit wants to provide a conception of freedom that can explain why depending on the goodwill of others for your ability to act is a loss of freedom.

Pettit distinguishes interference from arbitrary interference by focusing on the reasons for the action. If agent A acts in such a way to change the menu of options available to agent B, then A has interfered with B. But if A did so because limiting B's options promoted B's will—by, perhaps, instituting a law that protects an interest that B wants to be protected—then the act was not arbitrary. When a democratic government requires citizens to pay taxes, they are interfering with the citizens—the citizens can no longer use that money in other ways—but those taxes ensure the government can continue providing the security and social institutions needed for the people to live their lives. The interference is not arbitrary; it is done to promote the will of the people, who have voted (perhaps through their representatives) for certain policies to be undertaken. Because the policy is instituted in line with the will of the people, the citizens are not being subjected to an external will. If instead the government officials paid themselves absurdly high salaries with those taxes and let the social institutions crumble, their interference would be arbitrary, since the reason they collected the tax was to serve their own will, not the will of those suffering the interference.[3]

The previous paragraph shows how interference does not ensure domination, but one can also be dominated by being subject to the will of another, even if the other chooses not to actively interfere. Consider the following scenario: you are employed in a jurisdiction with very few worker protections. You don't know your boss's political leanings, but you do know that if you disagree with them, you might be fired. This might mean that even off the clock you change your behavior to ensure that your boss doesn't find out your political leanings, e.g., you don't go to candidate town halls, you don't engage in canvassing for a particular candidate, party, or lobby, you don't write

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[3] The example here rests on the democratic government operate with political legitimacy, as laid out in Pettit 2013 chapter 2. The government must be constrained in their actions so as to avoid the government itself being a source of domination, but Pettit argues such a government is possible.

publicly about politics, and so forth. By virtue of the power they have over you, your boss has limited the range of options for acts you might take without ever taking an action to interfere with you. Your boss dominates you by virtue of the position they have as the arbiter of firing decisions. Even if they denounce this power, in the absence of positive law protecting workers, the structure of the relationship means that you are dominated.[4] This capacity to arbitrarily interfere limits the options available to the dominated person by making them subject to the will of the dominator and dependent on remaining in their good graces.

Similar to Buccola's claim that inequalities drive domination, Pettit says that the core of freedom as non-domination is the desire to be able to "look others in the eye without having to defer to them or fear them."[5] This "eyeball test" is a rough standard used to evaluate whether someone is sufficiently undominated. Both Buccola and Pettit view freedom from domination as requiring some amount of equality. Inequalities in resources create conditions under which the disadvantaged may need to or be enticed to curry favor with the advantaged to ensure they will not be interfered with. When one group or person has material or legal resources with which they could exert their will over others, the others are restricted in what they will do for fear that those resources will either be withheld from them or used to punish them. That fear, the uneasiness about whether one's actions will lead to retaliation by someone in a position of power over them, is a loss of freedom.

Pettit's theory relies on two means of preventing domination: resourcing and protecting. Resourcing focuses on providing the necessary goods to all people for them to make their choice. If someone does not have the education needed to evaluate their options and make a choice, they do not have the undominated ability to make that choice.[6] Protecting an individual's choice requires guarding them "against subjection to

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[4] Pettit 2012: 63

[5] Pettit 2006: 231

[6] Later in this section, I will discuss the restrictions Pettit places on the types of choices that require freedom as non-domination. He does not argue that we must be fully resourced to pursue any possible choice, as that would place an unreasonable burden on the public provisioning of resources.

the will of any other person or group in how [they] exercise the choice."[7] In order to satisfactorily protect against domination, the agent who is positioned to interfere must be restricted in their capacity to interfere and not merely made to feel that choosing to interfere will incur extra costs that do not have significant deterrent value.[8] Pettit does allow, though, that there is a way to impose penalties for interfering that make choosing that option so costly or burdensome that the individual at risk of being interfered with would not, "by local standards," have reason to be anxious. This subjective standard is set, Pettit argues, by the "eyeball test" mentioned earlier. Even if complete protection is not possible, when members of society can look one another in the eyes as equals, no one will view interference as an eligible option.

Turning now from the definition of freedom as non-domination to Pettit's argument for how we can ensure it for everyone, we can see how interference is not only compatible with non-domination, but necessary. If we want to ensure that employees remain free to exercise their political rights outside of the workplace without fear of retaliation by their boss, then we need to create a law that limits the causes of termination.[9] This law would interfere with the boss's choices—it would take off the table the ability to fire workers for their political activity. But that law tracks the interests of the people, all of whom would benefit from not being fired for their political activity. So interference is required to protect the workers from domination. Law, particularly the fair rule of law, is necessary to guarantee that all people have equal, undominated access to the "basic liberties" through "public resourcing and protection."[10] Cashing out the theory, then, requires specifying what the basic liberties are and what must be done to ensure they are protected from domination.

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[7] Pettit 2012: 70

[8] Pettit 2012: 71

[9] We also might consider reorganizing production so that the boss-worker relationship no longer exists, but that too would require a change to the laws to prohibit, for example, private ownership of productive property.

[10] Pettit 2012: 77. I will have more to say about these basic liberties shortly.

Pettit is cautious to restrict the relevant sense of domination to only those choices that satisfy two constraints. First, that the "choices…ought to be capable of being exercised by each, consistently with being exercises by all" and second, the choices "ought to be capable of being satisfying or fulfilling each, consistently with satisfying all."[11] Any and all choices that meet these constraints are part of the basic liberties that must be protected. For our purposes, it will be sufficient to understand the set of examples of such choices that Pettit presents: the freedom of thought, freedom of expression, freedom of religion, freedom of association, freedom to own and trade certain goods, freedom in choice and change of occupation, and freedom of travel and residence.[12]

Preventing domination in these choices is achieved through policy relating to three basic categories: infrastructure, insurance, and insulation. For my purposes in this chapter, I will focus mainly on infrastructure and insulation, as those relate most directly to the type of social domination that ideology creates. Infrastructure programs are largely about resourcing people's choices, and they support freedom as non-domination in three major areas. First, education must be available and emphasize "a full sense of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and indeed to let them know how bad it is for anyone to suffer domination in the sphere of basic liberties."[13] Second, there must be adequate infrastructure to support the various activities we need to undertake in our lives. Property, contractual arrangements, tort claims for wrongs done, and stable economic and financial institutions are all required to give people enough resources and options to live undominated lives. Third, protections for the natural environment, like sustainability, transportation, public health, and physical security of the territory are all required since people need clean air, water, transportation, basic health care, and security in order to exercise their basic liberties. The purpose of

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[11] Pettit 2012: 93

[12] Pettit 2012: 103. Pettit recognizes that cultural difference, even minor ones, might create variations in the basic liberties. But his criteria (co-exercisability and co-satisfiability) are transferable. Thus, the exact list of basic liberties may change slightly but the basis for choosing the liberties remains the same.

[13] Pettit 2012: 111

infrastructure programs generally, then, is to ensure all people not only have the legal right to these basic liberties, but the resources necessary to exercise them.

Insulation relates more to protecting individuals from the capacity of others to interfere. It may be protection from a specific other individual (such as the case of a boss or a spouse) or general others (as in the protection from crimes that can be perpetrated by anyone, like theft, fraud, or assault). For the purposes of this chapter, I will restrict the discussion to only the insulation from specific others. These protections must be pursued in two ways. First, there is the imposition of legal duties on the more powerful party. In my example from earlier, a boss may be legally prohibited from firing an employee for their political beliefs. But this only helps the employee after the fact—they can seek compensation through an unlawful termination suit. Pettit points out that this post facto restitution can have its own consequences, like when an abused partner seeks legal protection against their abusive male partner and is met with indifference or even malice by a legal system that privileges men. He argues that to sufficiently avoid domination in special relationships, the weaker party must be given resources to protect themselves. In the case of spousal abuse, there should be adequate provisioning of shelters that can house and provide support for victims fleeing their partners. Finally, he admits that these measures can only be effective if they are supported by social norms. If a woman knows she will be isolated and socially outcast if she tries to leave her abusive husband, then she will be less likely to do so. There must be a norm of support for victims of abuse in order for women to have the undominated option to leave an abusive relationship.

Finally, we turn to Pettit's idea of how the fair rule of law and the social norms he finds necessary are related. Because Pettit is focused on guaranteeing equal undominated choice within the realm of basic liberties, equality is only required up to a point. This sufficientarian approach means that material inequality need not always threaten freedom, since the relevant sphere is protected by laws that are stronger than the material power that the wealthy can gain against the poor. Extreme inequality may be untenable, but he argues we need not pursue strict equality either. Alongside the laws that protect the basic liberties, he argues that "public habits of mind" and "communally endorsed norms" affect the way that people view others and the extent to

which material inequalities can be put to use to dominate others.[14] Laws can prompt people to change their habits and norms so as to "establish for citizens an entrenched status—their public status as free persons—that suffices as a bulwark against the advantages on which the rich can draw."[15] If we can gather the political will to pass laws protecting basic liberties and ensuring all people have access to the resources they need to exercise them, then over time violations of the law will garner more disapproval and become less common, until the enforcement of the law is done largely through public norms against violating it.

Being subject to another's, and not your own, will is the hallmark of unfreedom in both the negative and positive senses. But the ways in which one can be made subject to another's will are not limited to direct interference or the high likelihood of interference. A person can be dominated when another has the capacity to arbitrarily interfere with them, regardless of whether any interference takes place. Further, interference can be used to protect and promote freedom, as defenders of positive freedom argue, since punishing certain actions and providing individuals with resources ensures all people can equally exercise their freedom. By defining freedom in terms of domination, rather than interference directly, Pettit creates a theory of freedom that combines aspects of both positive and negative freedom. However, when he turns to the question of how we promote this type of freedom in society, there are certain types of unequal relationships that he cannot satisfactorily explain.

2.2 Lebron and Baldwin on Moral Inequality

Against a trend in the literature on egalitarianism, justice, and freedom, Christopher Lebron developed a theory of equality that focuses not on material resources or basic liberties, but on the experience of moral standing within a

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[14] Pettit 2012: 127-128

[15] Ibid.

community. Drawing on James Baldwin's 1965 Cambridge Union speech, Lebron argues that Baldwin's political project should be seen as an effort to rethink our ethical relationships with one another, rather than calls for specific material or legal reforms.[16] While Lebron focuses mainly on equality and theories of egalitarianism, his critiques can be brought to bear on theories of freedom, especially theories like Pettit's which rely so heavily on notions of equality and the "eyeball test." In this section, I will present Lebron's argument and his critiques, focusing on his critique of Elizabeth Anderson's democratic equality. In the next section, I will show how similar lines of critique from Lebron pose problems for Pettit's theory, as well.

Christopher Lebron argues that the history of racism and racial ideology in the United States has created inequality in moral standing between black people and white people.[17] He develops two concepts that help explain the experience of inequality that goes beyond, as Baldwin says, the "bloody catalogue of oppression which we are too familiar with."[18] First, *democratic distance* is the recognition that, despite sharing a country with white people, black people have always been kept at a distance from the ideals of American democracy. Slavery, the events of Reconstruction and post-reconstruction Jim Crow, and ongoing explicit discrimination (especially at the time of Baldwin's speech) have made it clear that calls for equality and liberty—the ideals that the country supposedly was founded on—were not intended to apply to black people in America, and in fact the successes of the country came at the expense of the black slaves and laborers who built much of the country. Baldwin argues that the distance between people comes from the fact that they share the same country and the same basic facts but their perspective, their "system of reality," leads them to wildly different conclusions. He gives the example of the young black girl facing down the southern sheriff. Whereas the girl will see a symbol of the authority of white people over her, both in the legal form of the law and the social form of whiteness, the sheriff sees an

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[16] Lebron, C. (2014). Equality from a Human Point of View. *Critical Philosophy of Race*, *2*(2), 125–159. Pg. 127

[17] Lebron 2014

[18] "The American Dream and the American Negro" In *Collected Essays*, ed. Toni Morrison, pg. 714

affront to his authority. "The Mississippi or Alabama sheriff . . . really does believe, when facing this negro boy or girl—this woman, this man, this child—must be insane to attack the system to which he owes his entire identity."[19] This gap between people's understanding of the same facts leads to the distance that Lebron identifies. Despite being "integrated for a very long time," race remains a feature that heavily influences our psychology. More specifically, this difference in perspectives on the role and meaning of race leads to what Lebron identifies as a difference in the interpretation of the "idea of America:"

> For whites that idea represented the rightness of their ascendancy. For blacks the idea of American democracy meant the principled conviction that they too ought to enjoy the full benefits of inclusion as well as the esteem of their co-participants alongside the blatant fact that whites held them in no such regard. They effectively stood at a distance within America such that their well-being was out of bounds for white Americans.[20]

Because ideological notions of race have influenced the interpretation of the ideals and history of America, white and black Americans, according to Lebron, no longer share a moral foundation. From one perspective, America was founded by and for white people, whose dominant position in society serves as proof of that perspective. For blacks, the ideals of equality and liberty have never been anything but empty promises. Democratic distance keeps black people separated from ever enjoying the benefits of American democracy that seem so easily attainable by white people.

Democratic disaffection is a consequence of democratic distance, and consists of the distrust and demoralization that occurs when confronted with the reality that, "the country which is your birthplace and to which you owe your life and identity has not, in its whole system of reality, evolved any place for you."[21] Law and custom has progressed since the founding of America, spreading democratic power from only

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[19] Ibid.

[20] Lebron 2014: 129

[21] "The American Dream and the American Negro" In *Collected Essays*, ed. Toni Morrison, pg. 715

relatively wealthy white men to, eventually, all adult citizens.[22] This certainly did not escape Baldwin's mind, but he worried that legal changes were insufficient to deal with the actual problem. Speaking in 1965, less than a year after the Civil Rights Act passed, he said, "We have a civil rights bill now. We had the 15th Amendment nearly 100 years ago. If it was not honored then, I have no reason to believe that the civil rights bill will be honored now."[23] This lack of belief or faith in the American legal system to actually enforce the laws regarding race and discrimination is the disaffection that Lebron is concerned with. Confronted with the democratic distance between themselves and white America, Baldwin sees that black people are losing faith that the tools of American democracy can ever be used by them to attain equal status as Americans.

Lebron begins his analysis of equality and egalitarianism with democratic distance and democratic disaffection as two of the core problems that such a theory should be able to solve.[24] An adequate theory cannot just lead to material or legal redistribution but must rectify the distance and disaffection that people experience. He considers three types of egalitarian theories, resource egalitarianism, welfare egalitarianism, and democratic equality, but finds each one lacking in their ability to recognize and correct for democratic distance and democratic disaffection. Of particular interest is Lebron's critique of Anderson's democratic equality since her theory and Pettit's republican freedom share many similar features, a fact that we will return to in the next section.

Before turning to Lebron's critique of Anderson, it is important to understand her approach to egalitarianism. Anderson herself is a critic of egalitarian theories that focus solely on resource distribution and correcting for unfortunate circumstances. She says of egalitarianism:

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[22] Except, it should be noted, the several states in which felony convictions are grounds for revoking ballot access.

[23] "The American Dream and the American Negro" In *Collected Essays*, ed. Toni Morrison, pg. 716

[24] A full theory of egalitarianism would be able to address material and legal inequalities, as Anderson's does, as well as addressing the two problems Lebron focuses on. Lebron does not argue that we have to focus on the psychological effects *at the expense of* pursuing material equality.

The proper negative aim of egalitarian justice is not to eliminate the impact of brute luck from human affairs, but to end oppression, which by definition is socially imposed. Its proper positive aim is not to ensure that everyone gets what they morally deserve, but to create a community in which people stand in relations of equality to others.[25]

Instead of viewing equality as a feature of the distribution of divisible, privately enjoyed goods, Anderson views equality as a feature of relationships among people. While material and legal resources may feature in creating those relationships, the resources themselves should not be the focus. She argues that what matters for creating relationships of equality within a democratic system is that all people have effective access to participate in civil society. This includes voting, political speech, running for office, and other formal political activities, but also

public streets and parks, public accommodations such as restaurants, shops, theaters, buses and airlines, communications systems such as broadcasting, telephones, and the Internet, public libraries, hospitals, schools, and so forth. Enterprises engaged in production for the market are also part of civil society, because they sell their products to any customer and draw their employees from the general public.[26]

All people ought to have equal effective access to these institutions, not merely equal legal access. When a group of people is denied equal access to any of these institutions, then their equality within the democratic community is damaged even if there are legal measures in place to protect their political rights. This focus on moral equality extending beyond the codifying of rights into law makes Anderson's theory, at first, compatible with Lebron's concerns. If the threat of disaffection and distance is the removal of black people from the sphere of moral concern despite the written law preventing discrimination, then a theory of equality that emphasizes a wide-ranging definition of democratic citizenship ought to respond well to the critique.

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[25] Anderson, E. S. (1999). What Is the Point of Equality? *Ethics*, *109*(2), 287–337.

[26] Anderson 1999

Lebron, however, does not take Anderson to have adequately addressed Baldwin's concerns. He critiques her theory along two lines: first, her focus on providing resources to the oppressed rather than changing the behavior of the oppressors, and second, she insufficiently addresses the role social norms play in maintaining systems of oppression. Taking the first critique, Anderson's theory is committed to the idea that "justice requires focusing squarely on the sufferer or disadvantaged as the agent either (1) to whom goods are given, or (2) who will be enabled by goods."[27] Her theory is (correctly, Lebron adds) focused on the ways certain individuals and groups are marginalized by pushing them towards to fringes (or excluding them entirely) from civic life, but she tries to address that solely through providing resources to the disadvantaged. When people with disabilities are prevented from engaging in the full range of civic life because many buildings or events are not accessible, we ought to make those buildings and events accessible. But, Lebron points out, this does not require of the abled any critical reflection on why it is that those buildings and events had been organized to exclude those people in the first place. The material benefit of gaining access to those spaces should not be discounted, of course, but when the type of exclusion is not physical (as in being physically unable to enter a building) but psychological, the kind of exclusion that democratic distance is concerned with, it becomes clear that focusing solely on the disadvantaged has its limits. Lebron says it seems inappropriate to ask the black girl confronting the Mississippi sheriff what resources she needs to feel equal, rather than to ask the sheriff why it is he feels so attacked by this black girl. It is not her lack of resources that directly disadvantages her in this situation, rather it is the sheriff's belief that he does and should have power over her. In order to respond to Baldwin's complaint, the theory must be able to address the role of the advantaged or oppressors in the unequal relationship.

The first critique, in some ways, leads to the second critique since, once we set aside the distribution of resources to the disadvantaged, another obvious way to correct unequal relationships is to affect new norms of public behavior. Lebron says Anderson is correctly focused on the inequalities that arise from oppression and marginalization,

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[27] Lebron 2014: 146

"but it seems clear she has a particular conception of how oppression and marginalization may be practiced—as explicit regimes of exclusion and suppression."[28] Anderson mentions the ways that gender and sexual norms, even internalized ones, limit the ways that people can express themselves in public, so she does recognize non-explicit forms of oppression.[29] But Lebron seems more justified in saying that, to the extent that she does address the problem of norms or public sentiments, "she presents what amount to blanket negative injunctions, that is, to not discriminate or to not arbitrarily ascribe identities to persons or groups."[30] These negative injunctions are not enough to clearly articulate the ways in which norms and public ethic affect actual practice. "If you doubt that claim," Lebron says, "simply observe our strong public norm against racism, and the persistence of, among many examples, job discrimination."[31] Her theory can properly articulate the problem of social oppression but cannot articulate a method or approach to dealing with the norms that underly the oppression.

The problem with Anderson's theory is that it presupposes a level of democratic engagement that Baldwin argues does not exist among at least a subset of people. The oppressed group has become distrustful of democratic institutions, politicians, and even some highly influential members of their own community.[32] Members of the dominant group, by virtue of the prevailing ideology, either do not see the inequality of status or they think it is simply a natural feature of the world that cannot be changed.[33] The

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[28] Lebron 2014: 145

[29] See Anderson 1999 pp. 319-320

[30] ibid.

[31] Ibid.

[32] See "The American Dream and the American Negro" In *Collected Essays*, ed. Toni Morrison, pg. 718 where Baldwin mentions that he believes there is a subset of the black population in America who does not trust him or Martin Luther King, Jr.

[33] There are certainly some members of the dominant group who do recognize the moral issues at stake and want to change them, but at least from Baldwin's perspective that group was not large enough yet to achieve the goals he had.

problem is not that the two groups need access to the means of democratic participation but that they need to engage with each other on the grounds of equal moral status. So long as one group sees the other as being unfairly benefitted by institutions, and the other does not see themselves as benefiting at the expense of the oppressed, then, Baldwin would say, we will be unable to solve our political and social problems. It is for this reason that Lebron rejects Anderson's theory. Her proposals can only work after we have resolved the deeper moral issues.

2.3 Laws, Norms, and Ideology

Pettit's focus on domination and not just capability leaves open the possibility that the type of unequal democratic status that Lebron identifies can be resolved under his framework. Anderson's approach is susceptible to Lebron's complaints because her focus on capabilities requires attending only to the victims of inequality. Protecting equal freedom as non-domination, on the other hand, could involve a comprehensive view that includes both the victim and beneficiary. Any instance of domination, regardless of the source, ought to be opposed. In this section, I will argue that despite these apparent advantages, Pettit's theory remains unable to satisfactorily articulate and respond to the type of domination that Lebron identities in democratic distance and democratic disaffection

In section 2.2, I presented Pettit's approach to evaluating and responding to domination. The subjective measure he proposes is the "eyeball test." If any member of society has to defer to or fear another with regards to their choices over basic liberties, they are dominated. On this standard, democratic distance and democratic disaffection are clearly domination. Those who feel distanced and disaffected feel that way because they have had their democratic liberties restricted by the powerful, and according to Baldwin continue to feel powerless to do anything to change that. Let us look more closely at how Pettit's theory can deal with this kind of domination.

His two main approaches to combatting domination are resourcing and protecting. A resource-based approach falls into the same trouble that Anderson's theory faced. A focus on providing resources to the disadvantaged misses the fact that their domination stems from a belief among the powerful that the oppressed are not morally relevant. The appropriate target for fixing the inequality is not the lack of resources of the disadvantaged but the powerful who are failing to take adequate moral concern for the disadvantaged. It is the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of the powerful that are at issue, and a proper theory of equality should emphasize that.

Turning to protection, Pettit focuses on establishing laws and penalties that can sufficiently deter would-be dominators from feeling as though interference is an eligible option. This focus on the powerful does get closer to addressing Lebron's concerns, but still fails to get the substance of the concern right. Protection or insulation, for Pettit, still ultimately comes down to penalizing acts of interference, albeit in a way that is so burdensome that it instills a norm against even being tempted to interfere. The concern of democratic distance and disaffection, though, is precisely the belief among the disadvantaged that the laws and norms of their society will not help them, that they have yet to establish themselves as full equals in the society and that therefore they will not be afforded the protection they need to escape other forms of domination.

Pettit may object that I am being too pessimistic about the relationship between laws and norms. Over a sufficiently long time, instituting laws against, e.g., discrimination can reduce discrimination. That may be true, but it would be hard to disentangle the causal network—are legal changes driving social changes or vice versa? Further, the time scales might be so long that this response rings hollow as an approach to preventing domination. In the last section, I quoted from Baldwin's Cambridge Union Speech where he expresses frustration that the 15th Amendment had been in force for nearly a hundred years, but the rights it was supposed to protect were still threatened. Why, then, should he believe that the Civil Rights Act that had just passed would be treated with any more seriousness? Yes, it was an improvement to have the Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act put in place, as they afforded minorities more legal protections, but asking oppressed people to wait a century for their established legal rights to be enforced is an inadequate response to domination.

Lebron's concern regarding democratic distance and democratic disaffection is that they establish systems of domination that do not manifest solely in the material and legal relationships between people but in the beliefs that the powerful hold about the oppressed. Despite the advantages that Pettit's theory has over some alternatives, it cannot account for these epistemic aspects of domination. This indicates that to fully respond to Lebron's concerns, we need a theory of freedom that emphasizes the role of beliefs in producing domination and limiting freedom.

2.4 Delusion and Domination

In this final section, I will argue that freedom as non-delusion, applied in the political realm, has the resources to address the type of domination that comes from democratic distance and democratic disaffection. As a political conception of freedom, non-delusion claims that an individual's freedom can be limited by the delusions that other people hold and ensuring freedom for all people will require people to rid themselves of these delusions. This may feel odd at first—how can someone's freedom be limited merely by the *beliefs* of others? —but, as I will argue, this approach helps us make the most sense of the domination that results from democratic distance and democratic disaffection.

To begin, I want to say that I will limit my discussion to a democratic distance, but this will be sufficient. As Lebron presents it, democratic disaffection is a downstream effect of democratic distance: when a person realizes that there are outside the moral concern of the dominant group in society and that the ideals of democracy, especially equality and liberty, are denied to them for that reason, they start to lose faith in the ideals and the institutions of democracy. Thus, distance is the primary concern.

Resolving democratic distance is a difficult task and doing so should resolve the disaffection it creates.[34]

In Baldwin's Cambridge Union Debate speech, he talks about what it is like for him, a black man from New York City, to try to get a telegram at a Western Union office in the South:

> The girl at the Western Union desk…doesn't know quite whom she is dealing with—by which I mean, if you are not part of a town…it shows in a million ways. She simply knows that it is an unknown quantity and she wants to have nothing to do with it. You have to wait a while to get your telegram. We have all been through it. By the time you get to be a man it is fairly easy to deal with.[35]

In this interaction, the woman's discomfort with Baldwin shows "in a million ways." She does not treat him too badly, although she waits to serve him longer than perhaps she ought to, but she conveys to him that she is uncomfortable having to even interact with him. Baldwin argues that the tragedy of the situation is that the woman has clearly come to believe the racial ideology that paints him as dangerous or a risk to her and others. Her delusions about race are conveyed to Baldwin through her actions and it is his recognition that she holds those beliefs about him that makes him feel his inferior status. Baldwin indicates that this type of interaction is so common that, by the time he was an adult, it had become routine. This is the root of democratic distance: the oppressed individual recognizes, in their interactions with oppressors, that the oppressor has a set of delusions about them that they can do nothing to change because the ideology sustains the delusions.

The girl at the Western Union desk, "the policeman, the taxi driver, the waiters, the landlady…the millions of details 24 hours of every day which spell out to you that

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[34] Restricting my argument to democratic distance does not give my position an advantage over Anderson's or Pettit's theory. Their theories were unable to adequately make sense of both distance and disaffection.

[35] "The American Dream and the American Negro," in *Collected Essays*, ed. Toni Morrison. Pg. 716.

you are a worthless human being"[36] constitute a system of domination. They require that the oppressed constantly defer to the oppressor because the oppressor holds a delusional picture of their relationship. Despite Baldwin being the one who has to stay calm and defer to the lady at the Western Union desk, she views Baldwin as the one who poses a risk to her safety. Here, the "eyeball test" that Pettit suggests might not give the best picture, since, from each person's perspective, they do feel the need to defer to the other.[37]

The attitudes and norms that allow for the maintenance of this domination do not arise out of a rational response to social reality. The norms in question are explicitly ideological—they only persist because of a racial ideology that distorts the relationship between white people and black people in America. Because of this, the norms are more resistant to change. Recall that a key feature of ideology is its ability to incorporate new facts without giving up the core tenets of the ideology. Thus, passing a law to stop discrimination might not sufficiently challenge the ideology to force a change in those core tenets. The dominant may still feel that certain groups are deserving of (explicit or implicit) discrimination, and those attitudes will still be conveyed through the day-to-day interactions of people. Overturning these types of norms requires challenging their ideological basis.

By supplementing Pettit's concern for domination with a view that these norms, backed by delusion, also threaten freedom, freedom as non-delusion can provide a better explanation of how the democratic distance threatens freedom. A member of an oppressed group goes about their day with the constant reminder of their low status, while the oppressors seem to hardly register the ways their actions convey that. Following this, we ought to see democratic distance as a type of domination, created by delusions, which lead the oppressed to defer to the dominant members of society and accept their subordinate position as a means of protection. The delusions of the

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[36] "The American Dream and the American Negro," in *Collected Essays*, ed. Toni Morrison. Pg. 715.

[37] Of course, the eyeball test need not be entirely subjective. Given the context, it would be fairly easy to reject the woman's claim of domination. However, there may be other situations in which she is dominated by a black man, so it cannot simply come down to her racial privilege. This, if nothing else, should show the limitations of the eyeball test when it comes to dealing with oppression.

dominant, therefore, cause a loss of freedom for the oppressed. The loss is still related to a form of domination, and thus this approach is compatible with Pettit's more expansive view of freedom as non-domination. However, the unique epistemic features of democratic distance require an epistemic approach to freedom.

Conclusion

Before I close, I want to briefly address the concern that focusing on the epistemic effects of ideology rather than the material effects is getting the problem backward. That is, instead of focusing on the experience and epistemology of oppression, the focus ought to be on the material impacts: the way resources have been systemically diverted from certain groups, the way legal systems implicitly reproduce discrimination, and so forth. My argument in this thesis is not that ideology-critique and the pursuit of freedom as non-delusion are more important than material change to give people the resources to pursue their life plans. One could free themselves of delusion yet still find themselves severely materially disadvantaged. Also, someone who benefits from ideology could free themselves of their delusions and still decide that they prefer to continue reaping the benefits of the hierarchy rather than working to eliminate them. However, pursuing freedom as non-delusion can, at its best, open new personal and political opportunities that are hidden by ideology. Full equality will be difficult to achieve so long as some groups are deluded about the benefits they receive by virtue of their social position. Freedom as non-delusion can supplement other approaches that focus on the more material and legal concerns, as I suggested in my pairing of freedom as non-delusion with freedom as non-domination.

Freedom as non-delusion requires the individual to seek out information that can threaten their worldview. This is an ideal that many may espouse, but as Baldwin said, it may be the very last thing people want.[38] Confronting ideological beliefs is difficult not just because ideology serves to hide the assumptions and beliefs from view, but also because without them, "we will be hurled into the void, within which…the foundations of society are hidden."[39] Ideology stabilizes inequalities and injustices, so confronting ideology will bring those inequalities and injustices into starker contrast and makes it

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[38] Baldwin, J. (2010). The White Problem. In R. Kenan (Ed.), *The Cross of Redemption*. Vintage Books. Pg. 91.

[39] "Everybody's Protest Novel," in *Collected Essay*, ed. Toni Morrison. Pg. 16

more difficult to avoid resolving them. For the dominant, this may require losing their privilege, something many will be reticent to do.

Education must play a central role in promoting freedom as non-delusion on both the personal and political levels. As Baldwin mentions, he believed a lot of the myths about black people because those were the stories that the history books and history classes told. It is impossible to free oneself of delusion if you have no access to alternatives to the mythologized narrative. Similarly, if the beneficiaries of ideology are only taught the "rightness of their ascendency"[40] then they will fail to see the ways that any other groups are dominated, implicitly or explicitly. If the inequalities they see are supposedly natural, then they do not constitute domination. Perhaps the beneficiaries can be moved to feel compassion at the undeserved suffering of others, but they will not view themselves as the cause or beneficiaries of the suffering. An education system adequate for responding to these concerns would not only need to focus on the accurate facts of history and society, but would likely have to address how, at various points, misrepresentations or outright falsehoods had been used to justify systems of oppression. For example, in the U.S. regarding the history of racial oppression, of course factual histories of slavery, abolition, Jim Crow, and the Civil Rights Movement are important. But it would also be important to include an analysis of the myths of race that had been told, including race science. The conditions under which those myths gained popularity (their genetics, as Shelby calls it) are relevant to understanding the complete racial history of the United States, and hopefully would help individuals dispel any lingering delusions they hold.

Both Pettit and Anderson highlight education as an important aspect of democratic citizenship, and so their theories of equality and freedom are amenable to this approach. However, particularly for Anderson, the focus is on providing the individual education for their own improvement: education provides the skills and knowledge needed to develop talents and pursue a productive life.[41] Pettit takes a more expansive view of education that not only includes the knowledge to "bring their

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[40] Lebron 2014: 129

[41] Anderson 1999

talents to fruition" but also "to give them a full sense of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and indeed to let them see how bad it is for anyone to suffer domination in the sphere of basic liberties."[42] However, as I described in the previous paragraph, ideologies mask the domination. In order for the education to be useful in dispelling ideological delusions, it must confront those delusions directly. It is not clear that simply being exposed to the facts of the suffering of others is enough—those facts will have already been explained away by the ideology. What is needed to overcome the ideological delusions is not merely a recognition by the oppressors of how terrible it is to suffer oppression, but a recognition that the suffering of others exists to benefit certain groups, and that correcting that injustice and unfreedom will entail giving up some of those benefits.

In Chapter 1, I argued that ideological delusions play a fundamental role in shaping our epistemic lives in a way that threatens our freedom by undermining our relationship with ourselves—our identity, our values, and how we connect with others. These delusions differ between the beneficiaries of ideology and those oppressed by it. In 1.2.1, I argued that for the oppressed, the central effect of ideology is the devaluing of their projects, plans, and identities. Whether this is achieved through narrative buy-in or through ego skepticism, the ultimate result is that the oppressed accept their identities as worthless and therefore lose connection with others. In 1.2.2, I argued that for the beneficiaries of ideology, the effect of ideology is to blind them from the reality of their lives. They want to avoid thinking about the benefits they have received by virtue of the oppression of others, but in that very process, they lose the ability to construct their own identity in a way that coheres with the facts of their life. Both groups, then, have reasons to rid themselves of delusion in pursuit of greater personal freedom for themselves and for others.

In Chapter 2, I investigated how this new conception of freedom could help make sense of political concerns, specifically the concerns of Christopher Lebron. When prolonged domination and inequality distance certain groups from democratic citizenship, the ideological delusions that maintain such a system may require direct

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[42] Pettit 2012: 111

confrontation, rather than indirect solutions that might result from material redistribution. Freedom as non-delusion can help make sense of pernicious types of domination that arise out of the ideological beliefs that the dominant hold about the oppressed.

Freedom as non-delusion is not, as Baldwin says, "something that can be given; freedom is something people take and people are as free as they want to be."[43] It is a conception of freedom that places demands on each person to continuously question their beliefs, values, and assumptions about the world not only for their own sake, but for the sake of others. This is demanding but necessary if we are to free ourselves from the delusions that dominant our lives and allow for the domination of others.

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[43] "Notes for a Hypothetical Novel," in *Collected Essays*, ed. Toni Morrison. Pg. 229

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