Wanting Freedom

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"To be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others."

—Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*

I. Do We Want Freedom?

On first hearing, asking whether human beings want freedom seems like a silly question. Of course we want freedom! Patrick Henry's cry "Give me liberty or give me death" is a sentiment that has been echoed by every succeeding generation of warriors, patriots, and resisters. But the actions of contemporary Americans (who are surely not alone in this) often belie this sentiment. Collectively, at least through our government's actions, we seek safety through greater government control over our actions and we condone human rights violations in the name of security.[1] As private individuals, we often constrain our actions or reactions in the name of getting along, not rocking the boat, or respecting tradition.[2] We accept something less than our vision of the good for ourselves or others out of selfishness, fear, peer pressure, or resignation. We seem to want freedom only if it is easy to get.

What is it, then, to want freedom? First note the ambiguity with the word "want": am I asking whether we lack freedom or whether we desire it? I suggest that these are related issues; lacking freedom reduces the desire for freedom, although having a desire for freedom does not guarantee a path to it. Freedom is, on the account I shall pursue here, a hard-won human achievement, and desiring or valuing such freedom is an essential part of the achievement. Second, what do I mean by freedom? I will argue that we should distinguish four types of human freedom beginning with metaphysical freedom—the idea that despite living in a deterministic world there is freedom to act. I am not primarily concerned here with the metaphysical freedom of the will, although I shall assume enough freedom, at least a compatibilist notion of metaphysical freedom, to allow for the question I am interested in off the ground.[3] The second type of freedom is political freedom, which I define as the ability to pursue a wide variety of ways of life without coercive intervention by government. This is the sort of freedom Patrick Henry was demanding. For my purposes I will simply assume that such freedom is a prerequisite for fully achieving the freedoms that I am interested in here; although

that is not an uncontroversial assumption, it is not my aim to defend that claim here. I am primarily concerned with two other types of freedom: individual moral freedom, which I will also call "autonomy," and social freedom, as well as the linkages between these two. By "autonomy" I mean, roughly, the internal ability of individuals to act in accordance with desires and beliefs that are their own and to choose and follow their own plan of life. By "social freedom" I mean, roughly, the social conditions that allow and support individual autonomy.

This paper is about the connection between moral and social freedom, and the ways in which they mutually reinforce and support each other or are incompatible with each other. My thesis is that if we want autonomy (in the broad and rich sense of self-development and creative enrichment that I shall argue for) then we ought to want social freedom (in the sense of supportive, antioppressive, mutually liberating social arrangements), and we ought to want both. For any of us to be free, in the sense of autonomy, we must come to desire and work toward social conditions that support autonomy for all. The problem is that we are easily led not to desire freedom, either in the sense of autonomy or social freedom. I maintain that the taste of freedom in each sense generates an appetite for more freedom in both senses. Hence, if we are to be free we must choose that path which generates the desire for these rich types of freedom.

II. Conceptions of Freedom

Philosophical thought about freedom offers many different, complex conceptions. Gerald MacCallum's analysis of freedom as a triadic concept is a good place to start any discussion of freedom because of its simplicity. On his account there is only one concept of freedom, and it is to be analyzed thus:

> **x is (is not) free from y to do (not do, become, not become) z**,
> [where] x ranges over agents, y ranges over such "preventing conditions" as constraints, restrictions, interferences, and barriers, and z ranges over actions or conditions of character or circumstance.[4]

On this analysis, only human subjects can be free, and they are free to do or become something (z) only when they are free from interferences or preventing conditions (y). Freedom on this account relates a subject to an end he pursues and the means he takes to pursue it. The analysis is inclusive, in that it reconciles competing accounts of positive and negative freedom under one concept, in which the fundamental kind of unfreedom is interference. MacCallum's relational analysis of freedom allows for freedom to be violated either by externally imposed interferences with one's freedom, such as being stopped from enjoying a Sunday stroll by a mugger, or lacking sufficient support, such as being unable to enjoy the Sunday stroll because of one's lack of a pair of shoes (owing to social conditions). MacCallum's triadic analysis of freedom is well suited as a concept of freedom of action on the metaphysical assumption that both free and unfree acts

are possible for human subjects. The analysis highlights the relation between the subject's ends and her capability to act. Although this univocal account of freedom is elegant and clear in its focus on interference, there are combinations of ways of forming ends and ways that one can be able or unable to act that can be usefully distinguished. One's ends can be one's own, others' ends, or ends that one has but that would not be endorsed on reflection (such as from an addiction). One's ability to act can be interfered with by outside forces that are human or nonhuman in origin, or one can be unable to act because of a lack of natural ability or a lack of social support. However, we may not wish to say that all of these ends, interferences, and inabilities are essentially connected with freedom. These distinctions allow us to separate three types of human of freedom and different conceptions of each within the triadic analysis of the concept of freedom.

First consider the matter of ends. A conception of *moral freedom* answers questions about what qualities a person's will or motivation has to have in order for an action or a character to be judged as morally acceptable, worthy, or good (or not). Was that act the agent's "own?" Was she helped or caused to do it by some force external to her will? Did she intend and plan the action? What aspect of her character motivated it? A Kantian conception of moral freedom claims that a free agent's acts should be framed by the moral law and enacted by the agent's own desire to be in conformity with the law.[5] A contractarian conception of moral freedom claims that an agent's actions should be constrained maximization of her preference satisfaction subject to the ability of other cooperators to likewise achieve constrained maximization of their preferences. More recent discussions of autonomy have centered on questions about whether the agent was under the influence of adaptive preferences or deformed desires.[6] Theorists of autonomy differ over whether there are substantive conditions on the kinds of desires that motivate free acts, and what procedural accounts of reasons and motivations characterize autonomous actions.[7]

Next consider how internal and external impediments matter for freedom. A conception of *social freedom*, I propose, concerns the freedom from impediments provided by a group for its members. Such a conception answers questions about what a society or a group of persons owes to each other by virtue of being in certain relations which that conception considers morally valuable. Is everyone in society owed a certain basic minimum outcome, or just a framework within which individuals can operate and cooperate? What are the limits of support that we owe each other as members of the same family, community, or state, or because of our common humanity? A communitarian conception of social freedom would be one that is based in the ties of community.[8] The Universal Declaration of Human Rights can be seen as offering a conception of social freedom based in the common humanity of persons. It begins with the phrase "Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world"[9] and goes on to enumerate a list of positive and negative rights that secure this freedom. In Article 28 the social order is held responsible for ensuring these rights

and freedoms. One important kind of social impediment that conceptions of social freedom consider is oppression. Different conceptions of social freedom will disagree on what counts as oppression, but most theorists of freedom will agree that it is a kind of unfreedom. Yet oppression is a form of unfreedom not as easily recognized by conceptions of moral freedom, which focus on individual ends and harms.

Social freedom is distinct from *political freedom* in that the latter concerns the coercive powers of government vis-à-vis individuals, while the former concerns relations between any groups of persons with morally valuable relations among them and the individuals that make them up. Political freedom can thus be considered a form of social freedom, under the assumption that there are morally valuable political relations. It is worthwhile keeping the social distinct from the political, however, because formal, legal restrictions backed by a coercive power is a very distinctive form of constraint on action and requires legitimation in ways that social groups generally do not. Conceptions of political freedom recognize forms of oppression that originate from governments' impediments to or failures of support for individual autonomy, but they may not recognize forms of oppression suffered by social groups as a result of legal though harmful traditions and behaviors that constrain individuals. Social freedom highlights these social impediments to individual autonomy.

While modern liberal political philosophers characteristically offer conceptions of political freedom, they do not always offer conceptions of social freedom. Mill, as I shall argue, is an exception. We could also single out Rousseau for a particularly misogynistic vision of social freedom, in which women are to be raised to serve men so that they, the men, can collectively enact a general will.[10] Female and feminist writers have typically been more concerned with social freedom than most liberal political philosophers. This is understandable given the fact that women, until recent times, have been excluded from the formal, political realm, though they have been full partners in or even dominated limited social realms. Modern female philosophers like Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Astell argued for education as the route to female social freedom, if not political equality.[11] In the mid-twentieth century Simone de Beauvoir posed a vision of social freedom as enabling everyone to escape the confines of immanence, to achieve an authentic, transcendent life.[12] In contemporary philosophy, feminist philosophers have often been more concerned with equality than with freedom, but there are important exceptions. Drucilla Cornell's vision of social freedom is one in which sexual freedom allows persons to imagine and reimagine their erotic lives.[13] Carol Gould's project of rethinking democracy attempts to satisfy both ideals by offering a conception of social freedom as self-development constrained by the requirement that persons have an equal right to social provision of the conditions of self-development.[14]

Philosophers may offer a conception of one of these two types of freedom (moral and social) without being much interested in the other. However, particular conceptions of moral freedom are compatible, that is, mutually achievable, only

with certain conceptions of social freedom. For example, a conception of moral freedom that requires noninterference with individuals is incompatible with a conception of social freedom that holds that freedom consists in shared ties of tradition and obedience to social hierarchy. Therefore, philosophers interested in moral freedom should attend to the conception of social freedom that is implied by the widespread achievement of their conception of moral freedom, and vice versa. If we desire both moral and social freedom, as I shall argue we should, then we must embrace conceptions of freedom that are compatible with each other.

III. Varieties of (Moral and Social) Freedom Worth Wanting

There are some types of moral and social freedom that are not worth wanting. Feminist and Marxist thought has helped us to see that there is a kind of hyper-masculine, aloof independence that we should not celebrate or foster in our children. We definitely don't want to see it in others. This type of moral freedom celebrates choice without constraint and creates a character that has been called the possessive individualist,[15] characterized by the attempt to live free of essential economic, social, or moral ties to others. The possessive individualist is the self-interested egotist, who does not need anyone else to support him in any way and who in turn does not feel the responsibility to offer support except on his own selfish terms. Admittedly, the virtuous possessive individualist may have his good points, for himself and for others. In good times he does not ask for other people's money or care; he resents paying taxes but cheerfully offers gifts; he generously supports causes that he believes in; and he is loyal to his family and friends. He takes pride in his ability to care for himself and chosen others, and he thinks of himself as having made it to his position of independence by his own efforts. The possessive individualist's political philosophy of freedom is libertarianism, and he believes that he and others should be left alone by government, which should exist only to protect his property. Social projects should be completely voluntary; no one in need *deserves* a share of his hard-earned wealth. The possessive individualist is willing to fund a police force and a defensive army to protect the wealth of the nation's individuals, but the sense he gives to "wealth" is impoverished. It comprises only the goods that one can see as goods here and now (though this may indeed be an extensive list). It does not include education or the development of new sensibilities for art, culture, or morality if those are not on the wish list of the ones who can pay for them.

The good point about this notion of freedom as independence is the emphasis on individuals having choices. Freedom must afford individuals choices. But I have three objections to the possessive individualist variety of freedom. First, possessive individualism does not value social connection in itself because it has a mistaken ontology of the self.[16] The result is that it is a self-undermining value system. Social connection is at the heart of what we are. Our families and communities provide the structure within which we understand the world through

the language, institutions, and social norms they provide for us. Although we no doubt respond to these structures in individual and unique ways, our reactions make sense only within and through the senses that these structures allow. To put it another way, our choices only become choices rather than just random behaviors through the meanings that social structures provide.[17] Social institutions are always already there; we then take them and make our individual contributions to them to alter them for our collective future, but we are not subjects without them.

Second, as a result of this mistaken ontology of the self, the possessive individualist pursues a suboptimal strategy of living. All of us can enjoy belonging and feeling loved by a family and a community. Yet we can also alienate these feelings from ourselves to some degree by creating norms of individualism that create more isolating spaces for each other, and rewarding individuals for meeting them. We can form our more or less local social norms to accentuate greed, self-interest, winning at all costs, and individual status attainment. But this is not an optimal strategy for anyone to pursue for a lifetime, and not for most of us even in the short run. We all start off, and many of us end up, unable to win contests for goods or status. Dependence is a basic fact of human life, at least in the beginning and often in the end and at points in the middle, and we all need to cultivate connections to each other if we want to be able to depend on others when we need them.[18] As we mature, our aims and desires change to include others' good as well. Love of family and friends consists in taking their good to be our own. Even if we think that the good is to be measured by how much our current desires are satisfied, the strategy of pursuing the possessive individualist good at the cost of social connection is self-undermining. It causes individuals to compete for and seek out their individual good rather than looking for opportunities for cooperation for mutual advantage.[19] Thus, by failing to value social connection for its own sake, possessive individualists fail to create a community in which there are opportunities for cooperation to seek each individual's good. Now the possessive individualist will say, "but I reciprocate benefits to those who benefit me; all others I take advantage of or ignore." But at best this works only if one's life never turns out to need others to act toward one without thought of reciprocal benefit. One cannot assume that will happen; such a life is extremely rare and usually ends suddenly. Given our enormous uncertainty about the future, this strategy is too risky to be rational. Furthermore, such a life would be one without love, and so not reasonable to wish for. At worst this instrumental, exploitative attitude toward strangers is infectious, mutual trust disappears, and social life degenerates into a series of prisoner's dilemmas.

My third objection to this sense of freedom is that it is paired with a faulty conception of social freedom, which I will call "libertarian liberty." This conception of social freedom assigns very few responsibilities to individuals, and they are nearly all negative duties to refrain from interfering with others. The exceptions to this are the limited duties to contribute to collective defense and collective enforcement of negative duties.[20] Libertarian liberty holds the possessive individual to be its ideal person. It does not recognize the full value of social

connection, namely the constitutive aspects of social connection, and so it assigns no responsibility for social provision of goods which must be collectively provided.[21] This has two bad results. First, the unlucky are not cared for or provided for. This is another self-undermining feature of this view of freedom, if we have even a minimal aversion to risk, since most of us will need care at some point in our adult lives, and many of us will not be able to command it with our wealth alone. Further, we are even more likely to have friends or loved ones who need care that we cannot command, since the larger the number of people we consider the more likely at least one will be in need. The second bad result is that it is likely that women will suffer disproportionately from the care deficit, and this is unfair.[22] Women tend to be caregivers because they have been acculturated to take care of the children, the sick, and the elderly. A libertarian society of possessive individualists will blame women for their perverse preference for taking care of people (even while they appear to praise them), and it will continue to exploit them.

Not only do these varieties of freedom, possessive individualism and libertarian liberty, lead to injustice, they are also impoverished by their sense of the good. The good is subjectively determined in these theories by each solitary individual and is not up for discussion or dispute—it is a subjective welfarist theory of the good. Individuals see no compelling motive to compare their preferences to some objective standard or make an intersubjective comparison, and so no way for a society to pursue any collective goods, other than unanimously agreed upon protection of their individual wealth. But this sense of the good stagnates without any challenges from outside the individual. The possessive individualist does not seek outside opinions about goodness; any change or improvement in his sensibilities comes haphazardly if at all. Yet we know that it is possible to cultivate our desires and preferences in ways that will improve them. We can educate our desires in a variety of ways, aesthetic, cognitive, and moral, so that we want better things, and things that ultimately make us better off by our own lights. Conceptions of moral and social freedom that recognize this aspect of what we can aspire to and achieve would be worth wanting.

John Stuart Mill is famous for his work on liberty, yet he also encouraged cultivation of the good life through education and self-development. Mill agrees with other utilitarians that overall happiness or pleasure is the highest good, but he holds that pleasures differ not only in quantity but also in quality and that the cultivated pleasures outrank the uncultivated ones. Through education and proper moral and social upbringing, we learn to take pleasure in pursuits that exercise our higher-order capacities for intellectual activity, creativity, imagination, sympathy, and other types of emotional connection.

Mill holds that we can determine what counts as a higher quality of pleasure by seeking the advice of competent judges, who are people who have been educated to appreciate these various sorts of pleasures and can rank pleasures by their quality. Mill is thus in one sense an elitist about pleasure, since he thinks that we need to have attained a certain elite level of education in order to appreciate all of the truly pleasurable experiences human life has to offer. But this elitism is

mitigated by the fact that his philosophical system that produces this elitism also supplies an argument for ensuring that everyone is so educated. He argues that everyone can learn to appreciate higher-order pleasures.[23] Since educating everyone to this point will increase pleasure in the world, and utilitarianism requires us to maximize pleasure, we should work for a world where everyone is educated enough to achieve this level of development. Once children have reached this level, the requirement on society to educate is fulfilled on Mill's view.

Our development continues beyond this point, however, through our own efforts at self-development. By self-development Mill means the experiences we choose to engage ourselves in to exercise our capacities and make new associations of our pleasures with our capacities, our creations, and our social connections. Self-development creates new kinds and qualities of pleasure for us, but it risks bringing failure and unhappiness. We also risk criticism from others or even social sanctions if we behave in new and different ways. Different individuals will have different levels of tolerance for the amount of risk they are willing to undertake for new experiences. Those who take more risks and reach out to the edges of their capacities are performing "experiments in living" which we can all learn and benefit from. Hence, he argues, we should allow each other the freedom to develop ourselves without social sanction, provided that we are not harming others directly by violating their rights. So individuals' choices are very important for Mill, but they need to be choices from an educated, informed, and socially connected set of options, free of the psychological effects of oppressive socialization, to earn the name "liberty."[24]

This account of Mill's argument for the liberty principle implies two lessons for the thesis I am defending. First, the freedom to develop one's capacities in accordance with our desires, without social sanction, and on the foundation of a thorough intellectual, moral, social, and physical education is the kind of moral freedom worth wanting. This is the freedom that I will term "autonomy" and describe in short as free self-development.[25] A Millian perspective on autonomy is thus largely procedural in that it comes through educated capacities for choosing, but it is not entirely content neutral in that higher-order pleasures are to be preferred by autonomous persons to lower-order ones.[26]

Autonomy on this description is worth wanting because it is pleasure-seeking and it is progressive: it promotes psychological changes in the individual that track both pleasure and social connections. It avoids the self-undermining problem of possessive individualism by promoting social connection and thus cooperation. And while pleasure-seeking, it is not reductive; the way it counsels us to seek pleasure is by exercising our developed capacities as we choose (provided that we do not harm others). These capacities include the capacity for forming and enhancing social connections, and hence this form of autonomy is not socially isolating.

Second, Mill's argument entails that we will have a collective obligation to provide for the education of the next generation because children are at that stage where they need to be taught to develop their capacities if they are to be autonomous

adults. Since that is the way that more and higher-quality pleasure is created, we are obligated on a utilitarian view to provide the education.[27] I am not a utilitarian, but I do think that other moral and political theories can generate this obligation as well. For example, a contractarian can argue that by educating children in this way we provide more and better opportunities for cooperation for mutual advantage. A Kantian can simply argue that it is the only way to treat children as ends in themselves. With this full-bodied description of autonomy as free self-development, we can generate a moral imperative to provide a full, effective education for children on any reasonable moral theory.[28]

I have so far concentrated on the positive goods and efforts that need to be provided to children to allow them to achieve autonomy as they mature. I have said little about the restrictions and constraints that need to be removed, and little about what we need to provide for adults. These are connected needs; for most adults, what they need to have had is good education and the freedom from constraint to continue their development. Freedom from these constraints requires freedom from oppression. Autonomy requires an absence of oppressive social constraints that prevent free self-development. Systematic violence, economic discrimination and segregation, social shaming, and vicious stereotyping are among the most autonomy-defeating forces because of the way that they tend to stunt a person's psychological growth. Victims of violence or of economic or psychological oppression tend to withdraw and narrow their sights, and such narrowing is not consistent with development.[29] The arguments for providing education for children would equally show that these forces must be prevented and removed. Thus, Mill's argument for liberty, which appeals to each to encourage self-development in others, is also an argument for what I have termed "social freedom" and describe in short as the social conditions that allow and support individual autonomy for all.

Despite the argument that autonomy and social freedom are worth wanting, we see a world in which social freedom does not yet exist, and there are great obstacles to individual autonomy. Even those who are free from oppression are often unable or unwilling to exercise their autonomy. Although Mill's argument provides an abstract and general reason for why autonomy is worth wanting, it does not seem to effectively speak to each of us to pursue a life of self-development. It is a further task to *demonstrate* that even if we do want autonomy as individuals, we should want social freedom. With our conceptions of moral and social freedom now defined, the problem of wanting freedom can be seen as twofold: (1) to demonstrate why each of us should want autonomy, and then (2) to demonstrate why we should want social freedom, the social conditions necessary for each of us to be autonomous.

IV. Why Should Each of Us Want to Be Autonomous?

Let's take the first task: to demonstrate why each of us should want to be autonomous. This is a live question only for those who are not yet autonomous,

since those who are can see that autonomy is worth wanting. So what I need to do is ask why someone who is not yet autonomous should want to be. Why would someone doubt the value of autonomy as free self-development? The answer depends on what sort of freedom one currently has or lacks. One person who doubts the value of autonomy is the possessive individualist. Recall that he wants to get his good as he now sees it; he does not want our care and concern, nor does he want to give it to others. He does not want to develop his capacities for unknown future pleasures, but simply to seek pleasure as he conceives it now. His pleasure might include that of some others close to him, but beyond that he is not interested in social freedom, that is, in working to bring about the conditions that will enhance the autonomy of others. In fact, he might prefer it if everyone else seeks to satisfy his desires rather than their own.

Earlier I argued that the possessive individualist undermines his own project of maximizing satisfactions of his desires by making cooperation with others rare and difficult. As long as there are many possessive individualists, it will be difficult for them to observe the benefits that others get from being cooperative. If there are models of cooperative, autonomous individuals, then possessive individualists, seeing cooperators succeed on the possessive individualists' terms, will choose to alter their approaches to others and begin to choose cooperation. At that point they will see that it is in their interest to be surrounded with autonomous others, since these are the persons who freely develop themselves and so have much to offer as fellow cooperators. With even larger numbers, they can begin to alter the social landscape to support the development of others who can be autonomous with some additional social support beyond the normal care and concern they enjoy.

One might object that once the autonomous person has become an adult with the capacities for self-development, they would be tempted to become the possessive individualist. Why should such a person remain a cooperative, autonomous person who upholds social freedom?[30] I think that there are two answers to this question. First, the autonomous person has developed the capacities for cooperation and the desire to live among others who are also free, self-developing individuals. Such attitudes will not be easy to shake loose, provided that they are mirrored in many others around them. There will be social norms for expression and behavior that will tend to reinforce these attitudes. Are these norms constraining norms? Yes, but not oppressively so, given the second point, which is that being a cooperator is at least not irrational given the vicissitudes of mortal life. Cooperative behavior will tend to encourage reciprocity from others. But being a possessive individualist will tend to bring only grudging service when one needs help, if one can pay for it. Social norms that reinforce what is rational to choose given the natural facts of human life are themselves rational constraints, and so not oppressive. Once one is an autonomous person, in a community of autonomous persons with social freedom, it would not be rational to make oneself into a possessive individual. In a society of mostly possessive individualists upholding libertarian liberty, this would not be a persuasive argument, however. A second

answer, admittedly less persuasive, is that autonomous persons are seeking to develop their higher-order capacities, their excellence as human beings, rather than merely satisfying their currently held desires. What is needed is a critical mass of autonomous persons who can set a model for others and create the social norms that reinforce cooperative attitudes. If this is achieved, then I believe that social freedom is self-sustaining.

Another category of nonautonomous persons who need to be convinced are those oppressed persons who are not actively resisting their oppression. Elsewhere I have argued that the most puzzling feature of oppression is its endurance: when any group of us could rise up to resist oppression, why do we find some groups oppressed for generations?[31] The short answer is that the oppressed themselves are co-opted into joining into their own oppression. This happens in a variety of ways through self-destructive psychological mechanisms, such as shame and low self-esteem, and accepting stereotypical descriptions and then appropriating those images into one's own self-concept. Conditions of material and economic oppression often cause women and cultural or racial minorities to feel shame and lowered self-esteem. Feeling shame and lowered self-esteem then drains one of confidence and assertiveness, which handicaps one's ability to plan and causes one to narrow one's view of what one can hope to be. Thus, shame and low self-esteem turn inward on the oppressed. Trauma brought on by systematic violence can cause people to rehearse and reenact the traumatic circumstances in order to try to gain some control over painful thoughts. Oppression is thus internalized; the psychology of oppression becomes like an autoimmune disease where the victims' bodies turn against themselves.

Victims of oppression are also co-opted into acting in ways that further their own oppression. When an oppressed person faces limited opportunities they naturally try to make the best of a bad lot. So, for example, when faced with serious and interconnected social obstacles to getting a better education, we take the best job that is currently available rather than seeking ways around the obstacles. When women face serious obstacles to securing good child care options, they often accept part-time work rather than asking the fathers of their children to compromise their career interests. But this leaves these women with poorer human capital, the skills and experience to seek better jobs in the future, and reinforces stereotypes of women as unpaid domestic workers.[32]

The multigenerational nature of many forms of oppression magnifies the problem by creating a stubbornly lasting image of the oppressed as inferior and unworthy of equal concern. Women have been seen as having a natural place beneath and behind men, literally and metaphorically, that both men and women find difficult to erase from their imagination, even if consciously they want to see them as equal. So women are somewhat more reluctant to speak in public than men.[33] And at the same time the women who do speak out are often branded as shrill or whining by both men and women.[34] This is old news, of course, but the problem persists despite our recognition of it and the desire that many of us—male and female—have to change it. Old habits of thought and prejudice die hard. In

this and many other ways, oppressed persons are co-opted psychologically and economically into reinforcing their own oppression. Individual strategies for change do not seem to work. Seeking political solutions to these obstacles is often even more problematic for individuals, particularly those who face multiple forces of oppression, since that requires collective action which is time consuming, expensive, and often requires special skills that most of us do not possess.

These indirect psychological and economic forces of oppression lead many of the oppressed not to resist oppression and thus to live lives of lesser freedom in either sense of moral freedom that I have discussed. They are neither free in the limited sense of the possessive individualist, since they lack a full range of choices that are available to nonoppressed persons. They may not even have the ability to seek out their best interest even as they currently calculate that. Nor are they free in the sense of autonomy as free self-development, since they are unable or unwilling to develop their capacities and take risks or make experiments in living.

Fighting indirect forces of oppression, which work internally within the psychology and behaviors of the oppressed themselves, is, I believe, an even more difficult task than fighting direct forces that are applied from outside. Direct forces are injustices that, when made manifest, can be made rallying points for collective action. Indirect forces appear to be choices made by the oppressed. These choices are no better than the choices of the possessive individualist. While he chooses with his immediate best interest in sight, the oppressed person who is co-opted chooses for her long-term worst interest—she actually chooses with a view to maintaining the forces that oppress her, though she may not see it that way. Opposing oppression then raises a sort of moral dilemma: if the oppressed are making choices, then is that not a manifestation of their freedom? If the oppressed are prevented from so choosing, would that not be a further cause of their oppression? So the problem of wanting freedom becomes: how can the oppressed be motivated to want free self-development rather than the best of a bad set of options (which her choice itself reinforces)? The problem is that in trying to motivate people to want something other than what they now choose, we seem to have to replace their choice with our judgment.

Autonomy requires free self-development; social freedom requires that we empower each other to achieve autonomy. But it is a practical problem to transition from passively (or actively) accepting the internal impediments of oppression to living autonomously. Other moral and psychological principles can play a role in determining the best path to achieve autonomy. In order to minimize harm and develop the psychology of autonomy, we should first make social, institutional changes that do not directly confront or violate anyone's rights and increase freedom to choose in hopes that by giving people better options they will increasingly demand more freedom to develop their capacities.[35] Educational institutions will play an enormous role here: seeing to it that every child and young person develops their basic capacities to read, write, think critically and imaginatively, and have sympathy and concern for others. An education for free self-development should include vivid models of how traditional barriers have been overcome and

new ranges of choice open to individuals. Then we must trust that the psychological pleasures of self-development will become manifest and will lead people to self-develop in ways that do not further the oppression of their social groups or others'. This is not to say that we should not continue to engage in dialogue with one another about ways of life that seem deformed or depraved by formerly oppressive circumstances. However, our uncertainty about what the best life is for any particular person must constrain us from choosing for others among ways of life, provided they obey the harm principle.

V. Social Freedom: The "Third Concept" of Freedom

While many philosophers recognize negative and positive freedoms in similar ways, third concepts of freedom have been proposed by different philosophers in quite different ways.[36] Isaiah Berlin discussed and rejected a third sense of freedom that he finds in the claims of colonial oppressed persons[37] and which emerged in the writings of philosophers writing about colonial oppression, such as Jean-Paul Sartre or Frantz Fanon. This form of freedom, defended as well by Cynthia Willet, is the fulfilled desire for sociality and belonging within one's group, and recognition of one's social group and their distinctive values and norms from outsiders.[38] She calls this third form of freedom "solidarity." Willett's third freedom as solidarity requires the existence of social bonds that are binding enough to tie the individuals beyond their ability to resist and set themselves free. On her view this is because the oppressed must have strong social bonds to support and provide an alternative source of social norms and meanings through which members of their group can achieve self-esteem.

I also want to resist the notion that this is a form of freedom, regardless of the good social bonds might bring. Consider again MacCallum's triadic analysis of freedom: "x is (is not) free from y to do (not do, become, not become) z, [where] x ranges over agents, y ranges over such 'preventing conditions' as constraints, restrictions, interferences, and barriers, and z ranges over actions or conditions of character or circumstance." Social bonds of solidarity are something that one can be free from, but that does not fit into this analysis as a contribution to freedom. Furthermore, they are not a characteristic end that subjects desire. Subjects may well desire the by-products of social bonds: empowerment, love, inclusion, and solidarity. But it is a conflation of means and ends to suggest that the bonds themselves are desired. Indeed, social bonds are the very forces of unfreedom in many cases. Consider the oppressive forces of social bonds on women, which require them to confine themselves to domestic life on pain of social ostracism. It is true that bonds of solidarity both enable and constrain. The first, enabling, is part of positive freedom, but the second, constraint, is not any part of freedom; it is the dark, exclusionary side of solidarity. Why, then, should we conceptually align social bonds with freedom? Empowerment surely is important for escaping constraint and thus for achieving freedom, but it is not the same thing as freedom.

Communal norms which empower can assist us to become autonomous, but they also bring along constraining aspects that can thwart autonomy. Freedom must therefore sit in tension with those norms.

In my view we want freedom in order to pursue or reject social bonds that help us to freely self-develop—not to be dominated or threatened with constraints by others who would prevent our ability to pursue or imagine them. This latter danger is most acute for members of social groups that have been oppressed for generations. Such persons have a constrained vision of what is possible for them, and need to be able to see beyond these constraints that have been erected by others but reinforced internally.

Nonetheless, a third form of freedom can emerge under the right circumstances, namely the social conditions which allow and support individual autonomy for each person, which I call social freedom. Social freedom is institutional, not tribal or based on personal connection or affiliation. It is based in the potential for cooperation across ties of affection and kin, and our ability—an ability that is admittedly only nascent in the human tribe—to transcend enmity, prejudice, and parochialism. It is the cosmopolitan third concept of liberty. Social freedom as I construe it is a conception of freedom that fits MacCallum's triadic analysis. Under conditions of social freedom we can say that the following obtains for each individual: Subject x is (socially supported to be) free from oppression (y) to self-develop (z). Oppression is the main preventing condition that social freedom eliminates, and free self-development is the characteristic end the subject achieves. But social bonds that constrain rather than empower are another form of constraint that social freedom rejects.

Social freedom transcends positive freedom by considering the needs of each as members of social groups, not just of individuals one at a time. Autonomy requires an absence of oppressive social constraints that prevent free self-development. Social freedom provides the background conditions under which individuals can seek their mutual advantage without dominating each other or binding each other in a suffocating hold. This is true of the society of free persons, which is not only free of current oppression, but whose members seek to free all persons from oppression by critically questioning and reformulating traditions. For in such a society the individuals are able to seek their own good with good will toward others as well. They seek to encourage diversity and enhance the freedom of others. They take pleasure in and recognize how they benefit from the accomplishments of others. And further, they come to see their own freedom as connected to that of the others.

VI. Wanting Social Freedom

In examining how oppression happens and how it maintains itself through generations, I have assumed that each of us generally plans our lives and chooses our actions with our interests in the short to medium term. Yet, if freedom is to be

possible, it will be necessary for at least some persons to look beyond their short- to medium-term interests and work toward a transformation of society that may be costly over that horizon. What would motivate persons to do this?

At the very least, a philosopher should offer a rational argument that would appeal to persons to work toward these ends. I want to offer an argument for the claim that the freedom of all is required for the freedom of each, which I take to be an argument for my thesis, that the price of autonomy is social freedom, and then conclude with an example of how social freedom can appeal to each. This claim may seem problematic in two ways. First, it appears to conflict with the idea that a primary reason that persons, both privileged and oppressed, participate in oppressive social institutions is because it is in their interest to do so. The conflict in this case is merely apparent. One's long-term interest can conflict with one's short- to medium-term interest, with the latter motivating behavior. Indeed, that is one way of explaining the existence of weakness of will. Second, it may appear problematic in that it is utopian to think that we can reach freedom. The argument I will give, though, shows how we can appeal to the short-term interests that many of us have to build gradually to the social freedom we seek.

In *A Theory of Justice*, John Rawls provides the outlines of the argument. Rawls argues that humans tend to obey a basic generalization of psychology, which he calls the Aristotelian Principle. The principle states: "Other things equal, human beings enjoy the exercise of their realized capacities (their innate or trained abilities), and this enjoyment increases the more the capacity is realized, or the greater its complexity."[39] This principle posits a basic motivational principle that seems to be borne out by our everyday experiences. As we grow and mature we often seek out new challenges, and we take pleasure in developing our capacities to enjoy them. Our love of sport, art, craft-making, reading, decorating our homes, cooking food, entertaining our friends, and a thousand other occupations and enjoyments testify to the validity of the principle. Psychological studies suggest that becoming and being competent at a chosen skill is one of the most satisfying aspects of life and contributes to one's overall happiness more than wealth or even popularity.[40] The second premise of the argument is supplied by the fact, noted by philosophers from Aristotle to Marx to Rawls, that humans are deeply social creatures. As Rawls explains it, "Humans have in fact shared final ends and they value their common institutions as good in themselves. We need one another as partners in ways of life that are engaged in for their own sake, and the successes and enjoyments of others are necessary for and complementary to our own good."[41] Humans must join and cooperate with others to carry out projects large and small. Over time our projects deepen in complexity and nuance. The opportunities and ways of life that any individual may choose from are bequeathed by previous generations who themselves built upon those they inherited from and built in cooperation with others. In participating in these projects our achievements are made possible by the achievements of others. Rawls calls the social units that humans form in this way "social unions."

The Aristotelian Principle suggests, then, that individuals find pleasure in the achievements of their social unions, which also means that they find pleasure in the achievements of others in those groups. At its best, participating in social unions effects a transformation of individual psychology that avoids envy and expands our concern for others. Through shared activity, we "begin to see ourselves as part of a larger enterprise; our perception of who we are and of what we can do expands to cover the activities of others who are fulfilling other parts of the overall task."[42] Furthermore, we come to see that by expanding our circle of concern to others who were once excluded we can increase our pleasure.

This idea of finding pleasure in each other's achievements and coming to identify with them proves the value of social freedom. The society of persons living under conditions of social freedom, which is not only free of current oppressions but whose members seek to free all persons from oppression, exemplifies this admirable virtue of each taking pleasure in the achievements, the flourishing, of others. For in such a society the individuals are able to seek their own good with good will toward others as well. They take pleasure in, benefit from, and identify with the accomplishments of others. And further, they come to see their own freedom as connected to that of the others. Thus, they seek to enhance the freedom of others. We can, I believe, take steps toward a free society because we are able to transform ourselves—make ourselves better—through good-willed participation in social unions that are gradually transformed by increasing freedom.

An example of a social union that promotes social freedom comes from the work of the Grameen Bank. The Grameen Bank provides small loans to poor women in Bangladesh to allow them to develop small businesses that support their families. These women borrow enough to buy a pot or a stove to make and sell chapattis on the street, or a cell phone to become their village's telephone ladies, or a cart to sell their handmade goods on the streets. The borrowers come to have a stake in the bank's success, and in this way they have a stake in each other's success. The bank has been tremendously successful on several measures: 68 percent of its borrowers have crossed over the poverty line; it is self-financing; it has generated over a dozen specialized firms; many of its women members have been elected to political office; its founder won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006.[43] The Grameen Bank example shows that even on a small scale, people can use market-based institutions to better their own lives and engage in mutually advantageous interactions with others. The bank has increased the freedom of women in Bangladesh by providing the possibility for them to take out loans, albeit small ones, that enable them to earn a living, send their daughters to school, and resist the traditional norms that have kept women and men in destitution and ignorance. The commerce that is generated transforms lives through the profits but also through the appreciation of anonymous others' efforts to make the market work for all.

Grameen has expanded to several different enterprises, from communication to yogurt, all with the end of achieving freedom from poverty for the sellers and

supplying freedom-enhancing goods for the buyers. Thus, it exemplifies an institutional framework that allows individuals to develop their capacities through free interaction that improves well-being and empowers the autonomy of others. It is a social union and an example of social freedom among its stakeholders. And it is an example of how persons can be motivated to engage with unknown others in ways that support their autonomy.

In enjoying the achievements of others, we experience freedom from what Marx called the alienation of man from man. We gain valuable information about alternative ways of life that others pursue with interest and devotion. This in turn develops our own capacities, our imaginary domains, which allow each of us the psychic space to enhance our freedom and take pleasure in it. In learning the value of diversity and tolerance, we become motivated to end oppression and unearned privilege, both our own and others'. This transformation is not easy; it requires moral character to resist the enticements of privilege or accommodation. Like autonomy, social freedom is a hard-won achievement that comes about only when we really want and work for it. But at least we can see that it is rational and humanly possible to seek the freedom of others—even those who we do not know but whose social cooperation with us is even potentially valuable—along with our own.

Notes

[1] Examples of greater restrictions of freedom include the increases in security on airline travel and restrictions on international travel, study abroad, and immigration since September 11, 2001. Human rights violations that have received too little public pressure to end them include the detainment of persons without trial at the Guantanamo prison and the practice of extraordinary rendition.

[2] Psychological research points to the power of groups to force conformity with group opinions even when individuals know that they are false. The classic experiment is by Solomon Asch, "Effects of Group Pressure upon the Modification and Distortion of Judgment" in *Groups, Leadership and Men*, ed. Harold Guetzkow (Pittsburgh: Carnegie Press, 1951).

[3] Katrin Flikschuh, *Freedom* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), argues persuasively that any liberal conception of moral, social, or political freedom is inevitably framed by one's views on metaphysical freedom. Assuming the validity of her arguments, my assumption of compatibilism is thus a substantive assumption for the moral and social conceptions of freedom that I will argue for here.

[4] Gerald C. MacCallum, "Negative and Positive Freedom," *The Philosophical Review* 76, no. 3 (1967): 312–34, 314.

[5] Anne Margaret Baxley, *Kant's Theory of Virtue: The Value of Autocracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[6] Serene Khader, *Adaptive Preferences and Women's Autonomy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Anita Superson, "Deformed Desires and Informed Desire Tests," *Hypatia* 20, no. 4 (2005): 109–26.

[7] For an excellent overview of these issues see the introduction to Catriona Mackenzie and Natalie Stoljar, eds., *Relational Autonomy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[8] Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

[9] http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Pages/UDHRIndex.asp

[10] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile: Or on Education*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1979).

[11] Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman with Strictures on Moral and Political Subject* (London: Joseph Johnson, 1792); Mary Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies for the Advancement of Their True and Greatest Interest* (London, 1694).

[12] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (New York: Citadel Press, 1948).

[13] Drucilla Cornell, *At the Heart of Freedom* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).

[14] Carol Gould, *Rethinking Democracy: Freedom and Social Cooperation in Politics, Economy, and Society* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 85.

[15] C.B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism, from Hobbes to Locke* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962).

[16] Gould, *Rethinking Democracy*, criticizes the social ontology of liberal individualism in complementary ways.

[17] This point has been made persuasively by, among many others, Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie (New York: Harper and Row, 1962); Peter Winch, *The Idea of a Social Science and Its Relation to Philosophy* (London: Routlege & Kegan Paul, 1958); Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

[18] This point is made persuasively in Eva Feder Kittay, *Love's Labor: Essays on Women, Equality, and Dependency* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

[19] Rousseau's stag hunt example illustrates this nicely. Suppose the hunters can either work together to catch a stag or each hunt a rabbit separately. If the hunters can count on the cooperation of others, then they can try to catch the stag. But if they believe that each hunter will go after the rabbit if one runs by, then they will fail to cooperate and each seek their separate good.

[20] Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (New York: Basic Books, 1974).

[21] Iris Marion Young, "From Guilt to Solidarity: Sweatshops and Political Responsibility," *Dissent* 50, no. 2 (2003): 39–45. Iris Marion Young, "Responsibility and Social Justice: A Social Connection Model," *Social Philosophy and Policy*, 23, no. 1 (2006): 102–30.

[22] Kittay, *Love's Labor*; Nancy Folbre, *Who Cares for the Kids? Gender and the Structures of Constraint* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

[23] This does not include the severely cognitively disabled, of course. These individuals are incapable of autonomy and so outside of the scope of either moral or social freedom.

[24] He makes this point in connection with people living under colonial rule, as well, in "A Few Words on Non-Intervention," in *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill, Volume XXI*, ed. J.M. Robson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 109–24. Mill argues that people who lack education generally do not need or desire the political liberty that he demands for his own country.

[25] This account of autonomy closely resembles that of Diana Meyers in *Self, Society, and Personal Choice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), in that it is a self-realization view, as Catriona Mackenzie and Natalie Stoljar term it in the introduction to their anthology, *Relational Autonomy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 17. However, unlike Meyers' account, this Millian one I am endorsing prefers higher-order to lower-order pleasures and specifically targets the oppressive processes that prevent persons from developing preferences for the higher-order ones.

[26] Natalie Stoljar, "Autonomy and the Feminist Intuition," in *Relational Autonomy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 94–111. and Paul Benson, "Free Agency and Self-Worth," *Journal of Philosophy* 91, no. 12 (1994): 650–68, present persuasive arguments against content-neutrality, although their content restrictions differ from the one offered here.

[27] Wendy Donner, *The Liberal Self: John Stuart Mill's Moral and Political Philosophy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991).

[28] Gould, *Rethinking Democracy*, offers a similar conception of positive freedom as self-development. Like mine, her conception emphasizes the role of social support for education and developing the capacities for choice for individuals among different conceptions of the good. Where we differ is primarily in our evaluation of Mill for the conception of freedom: where Gould limits the content-neutrality of valuable self-development by the requirement of equality, I follow Mill's quasi-empirical limitation that appeals to the experience of different ways of life.

[29] Ann E. Cudd, *Analyzing Oppression* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). Paul Benson, "Autonomy and Oppressive Socialization," *Social Theory and Practice* 17 (1991): 385–408, was one of the first to point out the negative effects of oppressive socialization on autonomy. See also Susan Brison, *Aftermath: Violence and the Remaking of the Self* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002).

[30] I thank an anonymous reviewer for raising this objection.

[31] I construct this explanation of the maintenance of oppression in *Analyzing Oppression*.

[32] This paragraph summarizes the case made by Susan Moller Okin, *Justice, Gender, and the Family* (New York: Basic Books, 1989), chap. 7, for the claim that women are made vulnerable by traditional gender roles in the family.

[33] The phenomenon of stereotype threat, in which members of a group with a negative stereotype attached to it tend to do poorly in situations in which that threat is activated, can account for this and other ways in which women and minorities seem to underperform. Claude M. Steele, Steven Spencer, and Joshua Aronson, "Contending with Group Image: The Psychology of Stereotype and Social Identity Threat," in *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, Vol. 37, ed. M. Zanna (Salt Lake City: Academic Press, 2002).

[34] A prominent example of this was the widely shared perception of Hillary Clinton during the presidential debates of 2008. See http://thewomenspost.wordpress.com/2008/01/06/hillary-shrill-or-just-assertive/

[35] What I have in mind here are the sorts of suggestions put forward by Richard H. Thaler and Cass R. Sunstein, *Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth and Happiness* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008).

[36] I would include here the republican concept of freedom as put forth by Quentin Skinner and Phillip Pettit. See Quentin Skinner, "A Third Concept of Liberty," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 117 (2002): 237–68; Philip Pettit, *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

[37] Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," in *Four Essays on Liberty*, ed. Isaiah Berlin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 118–72.

[38] Cynthia Willett, *Irony in the Age of Empire* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008).

[39] John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1971), 426.

[40] Kennon Sheldon, Andrew Elliott, Youngmee Kim, and Tim Kasser, "What Is Satisfying about Satisfying Events? Testing 10 Candidate Psychological Needs," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 80, no. 2 (2001): 325–39; Tara Scanlan and Rebecca Lewthwaite, "Social Psychological Aspects of Competition for Male Youth Sport Participants: IV. Predictors of Enjoyment," *Journal of Sport Psychology* 8 (1986): 25–35.

[41] Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 522–23.

[42] Marcia Homiak, "The Pleasure of Virtue in Aristotle's Moral Theory," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 66, nos. 1–2 (1985): 93–110, 104.

[43] http://www.grameen-info.org/