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10 Three, Not Two, Concepts of Liberty: A Proposal to Enlarge Our Moral Self-Understanding

Axel Honneth

Even among those of us who are not altogether convinced by Isaiah Berlin's famous essay "Two Concepts of Liberty" (Berlin 1969), it has become commonplace to adopt a distinction that largely coincides with the one he offered. On the one hand, we think that the culture of modernity adheres to a "negative" concept of freedom, which grants to the individual the widest possible sphere of protection from external intervention in the pursuit of purely personal interests. On the other hand, however, we are just as strongly convinced that individual freedom only truly exists when one orients one's actions according to reasons that one personally holds to be appropriate, and in this sense determines oneself. We sometimes adopt a distinction within this second, "positive" model of freedom between an "autonomous" and an "authentic" form of self-determination. This distinction serves to contrast individual action oriented according to moral norms and individual action oriented toward the realization of one's own nature and the most individually experienced needs.[1] But such a differentiation nonetheless largely conforms to the more fundamental classification of our freedom into negative and positive variants. In the following, I argue that this bifurcation of the concept of freedom, which has developed under Berlin's influence, is incomplete in a significant respect. The two models foreclose the possibility that the intentions of an agent can only be formed in reciprocal interaction between multiple subjects and thus can be realized without coercion only by acting together. This idea cannot be captured by the now commonplace notion that individual freedom consists in the realization of one's own already existing or reflexively achieved intentions. Rather the realization of freedom should itself be thought of as a cooperative process;

Translated by Blake Emerson. This contribution is a revised version of my Dewey Lecture at the University of Chicago Law School, delivered November 12, 2014.

[1] On this distinction, see Menke 1996, ch. 4; and Taylor 1992, p. 28.

only in the course of this process does it becomes clear which intentions should be realized.

I proceed first by illustrating with some well-known examples how we must understand such a form of cooperatively realized freedom. This first step should demonstrate that we have experience with this third category of "freedom" in our everyday lives, but that we lack the language to identify such experiences as a form of "freedom" (I). In the second part, I recall briefly the philosophical tradition in which this idea of "social freedom," as I would like to call it, has always had a central place. Thus I hope to reveal that the aforementioned examples from our everyday life have already been associated by some political philosophers with a third, separate category of freedom (II). Only in the last part do I delve into the systematic question of whether the model of freedom that I have suggested by example in fact designates a third concept, which does not conform to the traditional bifurcated understanding. Here my purpose is not only to describe the respects in which social freedom is distinct from the other two models of freedom but also to explain why we cannot abandon this third concept in our self-understanding (III).[2]

I

I begin with an example from our political everyday life in which the exercise of freedom should be easily recognizable. Consider our regular or only occasional participation in processes of democratic will-formation when we join political discussions, call for protests, sign petitions, or merely distribute leaflets at demonstrations. What is immediately obvious about such actions is how difficult or even impossible it is to describe them with the traditional category of negative freedom, although we quite obviously perceive such cases as exercises of individual freedom. To be sure, in making political statements of this kind, we make use of a space that is legally protected from governmental interference, which allows us to proclaim our beliefs freely and without fear of coercion. But it is fairly misleading to think of the author of such opinions only as an isolated "I," separated from all others, in the way the negative model of freedom suggests. So too is it misguided to think that the action is already completed with the proclamation, and thus that the expression of an opinion is

[2] In the following, I do not take up the important question of whether the outlined concept of social freedom should also have metaphysical priority over the two other concepts of freedom, which Berlin has differentiated – a claim Hegel certainly defended. Instead I am restricting myself here to the conceptual question whether such a concept of social freedom represents an independent value for our evaluative self-understanding. For a defense of the stronger claim, see Honneth 2014, pp. 42–6.

the final step in the exercise of freedom. The political belief that is expressed in public statements would be in some sense falsely understood if it were ascribed to the private resolution of the will of a solitary acting subject. The determination of the individual will would then be undertaken purely monologically and directed toward a merely private realization of its content. This understanding of political expression fails to capture its true dynamics. When the subject contributes to political discourse, she refers in her expression to a chain of earlier statements, which she attempts to correct or improve, such that she can only appropriately be understood as a member of a previously constituted, self-reflexively given, and already present "We." This means that the exercise of the "free" action cannot be regarded as complete with the mere proclamation of her belief. For what the individual proposal aims at, and where it finds completion, is in the reaction of the addressed "We," or of its individual representatives, who once again attempt to correct or improve upon the beliefs of other participants with their own. This description suggests that the participants in democratic will-formation must be able to understand their respective statements of opinion as intertwining with one another in such a way that they cannot avoid assuming a "We" that they together sustain through their contributions.

Although we obviously have the tendency to interpret participation in democratic will-formation as an exercise of individual freedom, such freedom cannot readily be described as an exercise of merely negative freedom.[3] This is because the three distinguishing elements of negative freedom have little plausible application to such cases. The actor cannot be represented as a private subject who formulates the intentions of his actions by himself; nor is he "free" in carrying out his action only when other actors do not "arbitrarily" interfere; and finally his action is not complete as an exercise of freedom with the expression of his own opinion, but rather only temporally concludes if the other participants have reacted to it in a rationally comprehensible fashion. The actions of my fellow citizens therefore do not place an obstacle to my own free political act, nor do they merely constitute the conditions of its possibility. Rather their actions are so intrinsically interwoven with mine that it is difficult to speak of an individual act at all. It therefore seems that we can only realize this democratic freedom through a collaborative process, in which we understand our individual expressions of opinion as complementary contributions to a common project of identifying a common will.[4]

[3] For a similar approach, see Crick 1969, pp. 194–214.

[4] See Anderson 2006, pp. 8–22. The British neo-Hegelian Bernard Bosanquet put forward a magnificent proposal with the same intent more than a century ago (Bosanquet 1894).

One reason why this "intersubjective" or "cooperative" structure of political freedom so easily falls out of view may be that we usually think of voting as the standard case of democratic participation. Thus it can seem as though freedom consists in the singular and secluded act of forming a private opinion about one's own preferences, and of secretly recording it without the influence of arbitrary intervention. This picture of democratic action falsely takes the part for the whole. John Dewey famously railed against this view because he saw that it masked the essential participatory element of democracy (Dewey 1969). A myopic focus on voting fails to recognize that the casting of the ballot is preceded by public discussion, including open media coverage and thus the process of reciprocal influence. Such deliberative discussions are a constitutive rather than merely an incidental feature of democracy (Anderson 2006). Taken in isolation, the casting of the ballot itself can perhaps be thought of according to the model of negative liberty. But this act is only a snapshot of a much more comprehensive process, which is meant to ensure that through appropriate instruments for the exchange of experience and opinion, individual beliefs are not only aggregated but are as far as possible bound together into a rational "general will." Even when such an agreement concerning the common good cannot be reached because starkly divergent views predominate, the resulting conflict over the better interpretation of the general welfare must be described as a cooperative process. Whoever participates in these consensual or conflictual processes of identifying the public will can no longer imagine the related experiences of freedom and the absence of coercion according to the standard of implementing private interests with the least possible interference. To be able to formulate one's own intentions, one must be able to take up the perspective of others and accept their potential corrective power. In this way, democratic will-formation can be understood as a cooperative undertaking that serves the search for the common good.

So as not to create the misleading impression that only democratic will-formation resists description as an exercise of purely negative freedom, I want to give another well-known example from our everyday lives, which, despite its many distinguishing features, shares several common elements with political participation. Personal relationships of friendship and love may also be interpreted as exercises of freedom on the basis of their non-coercive quality and the attendant loosening of the boundaries of the self, but they resist description by the standard of the undisturbed realization of privately determined intentions. Even the first premise of a negative conception of freedom does not plausibly apply to this case: Someone who is maintaining a sincere friendship or romantic relationship will understand his actions within this relationship as "free" but generally

will form his intentions only in relation to the wishes and needs of his companion. The free action obviously emerges here not from interests or purposes anchored in the will of a solitary actor. But even if the negative concept of freedom were not so strongly associated with the presupposition of an isolated "I," it would still not adequately capture the structure of freedom within love or friendship. For not only are the interventions of other persons into one's own sphere of action not felt as limitations, which would conform to the principle that only "arbitrary" or "uncontrolled" interferences impair the exercise of negative freedom, but also the wills of the participating persons are so attuned to and enmeshed with each other that talk of "intervention" loses its meaning (Pettit 2003). The limitation of one's own will with respect to the concrete other frequently rises to such a level that it becomes impossible to distinguish clearly and definitively one's own interests or intentions from those of the other. The aspirations of both persons overlap not only in certain respects but permanently interpenetrate each other, so that their fulfillment can only be understood as a common concern.[5] Where, however, individual interests are melded with those of others, where "mine" and "yours" can no longer sufficiently be distinguished, the freedom of a person should no longer be measured according to whether her "own" intentions can be realized without arbitrary interference.

It should already be clear that the examples of democratic will-formation and personal relationships have more in common than it would appear at first glance. The point at which the negative model of freedom fails is nearly identical in each case. In both democratic participation and personal relationships, it is unclear what constitutes one's "own" will, in respect to which the unrestricted realization of the free act of the individual could be assessed. In the case of democratic will-formation, a subject only understands her political actions correctly if she thinks from the concurrent perspective of a "We," the permanent renewal of which she contributes to with her own beliefs. But because of the necessity of remaining open to other perspectives, the aspect of these beliefs that is truly proper to the individual subject is only something preliminary and tentative. The beliefs therefore cannot accurately be taken as a stable output variable that is used to measure the unhindered realization of freedom. Something similar is true in the case of friendship and romantic relationships, in which the boundary between one's own intention and that of the other fall away to an even greater extent. Because of the shared perspective of a "We," the plans and the aims of the other are implicated in the determination of one's own will, such that the aspirations of both participants become intertwined.

[5] On the distinction between "overlapping" and "intertwining ends," see Brudney 2010.

Both in such personal relationships and in democratic political life, the negative model of freedom is inappropriate to describe the kind of freedom individuals practice. In these social contexts, freedom consists in an unforced cooperation, which assumes a higher degree of consensus concerning the aims of action than the negative model of freedom is capable of accommodating.

One might object to the argument up to this point that these examples, even if they do not represent instances of negative freedom, can nonetheless be understood in terms of positive freedom. Since we draw on this second category to clarify certain aspects of our normative culture, by speaking, for example, of moral autonomy, it would make sense to attempt to understand democratic participation and love and friendship in terms of the other model of freedom Berlin put forward. But this attempt, too, quickly reveals itself to be inappropriate for articulating the kind of freedom we realize in these cases. With concepts of positive freedom, we no longer describe an individual action as "free" insofar as there are no arbitrary, external obstacles to its exercise. Rather the freedom of an action is understood in terms of its realization of higher ends or values – whether this should mean agreement with moral norms, as for Kant, or the actualization of one's own natural needs, as in the romantic tradition.[6] As long we understand freedom, however, only as an activity performed by an individual subject, in which it practices a given capability (such as norm orientation or the articulation of needs), then the free character of the activities described in the earlier examples has not been adequately disclosed. For their distinctiveness consists in the fact that multiple subjects must act for one another for each to experience her activity from her own individual perspective as a common practice of freedom. There is indeed some overlap here with the idea of positive freedom, insofar as citizens or lovers or friends must orient themselves to certain ideals – such as the good of egalitarian popular sovereignty or the good of trusting intimacy – to act for one another in the appropriate sense. But it is this "for-one-another" that constitutes the entire difference between these forms of freedom and the traditional idea of positive freedom. For in democratic will-formation and intimate relationships, the good that is striven for can only be realized when multiple subjects carry out uncoerced actions, which reciprocally complement one another and thus enable free collaboration.

To be sure, this suggestion could also mean that the difference between positive freedom and the third form of freedom we have been searching for only consists in the kind of good pursued, rather than in the mode of

[6] On this spectrum of positive freedom, see Geuss 1995.

exercise itself. Whereas in the case of positive freedom, goods and values are searched for that are "individual," in the sense that they are only realizable on account of individual capabilities, these distinctive cases of freedom could be said to concern the pursuit of goods or values that have a "collective" character, because their realization is only possible through the united efforts of several subjects. Then we would take democratic will-formation or friendship or love as representing collective versions of positive freedom – a possibility that Berlin occasionally touches on in his famous essay, if only to discard it because of the inherent danger of its despotic misuse (Berlin 1969, pp. 145–54). The reasons for his rejection certainly make it plain that he conceives the collective exercise of positive freedom by precisely the same measure as its individual enactment: namely, that the members of a homogenous group must all perform the same action to realize in consonance those values and goods the achievement of which is the goal of freedom. But such a picture does not in any way correspond to the kind of freedom we have discerned in democratic will-formation or romance and friendship. The participants in these cases do not behave like the members of a group who have been forced into line. To the contrary, they must always renegotiate among themselves how they would like to apportion the responsibilities resulting from the shared value orientation, and thus assign reciprocally complementary contributions to the common project. The "We" that must be assumed between citizens or lovers or friends is therefore something totally different from the collective subject Isaiah Berlin had in mind with his idea of positive freedom. In the collective positive freedom Berlin described, one is committed to an ethical end that guides the action contributions of all individuals uniformly. In the cases we have considered, participants are indeed oriented toward certain values but must continually renegotiate the form in which common tasks are to be distributed in light of their ongoing reinterpretation of common aims. Alongside the limitation of his will with respect to that of others, the individual nonetheless retains a right to have a say in how the relevant activities should intertwine with and reciprocally complement one another. In democratic participation, it thus becomes clear that the participants in the cooperative production of a common will can always chose whether they want the role of speaker or listener, of demonstrator or spectator. Likewise, in the case of love or friendship, the participants recognize the possibility of motivating each other to take on a new distribution of tasks and obligations. The participants in these examples are involved in the commonly assumed "We" in a different way than the members of the collective that Berlin imagined as the bearer of a supra-individual process of realizing positive freedom. They retain a right to have a say in how they want their intentions intertwined with one

another in the pursuit of a goal that is constantly redefined collaboratively, and thus to behold in the freedom of others a condition of their own freedom. We can therefore provisionally conclude that the collective version of the concept of positive freedom is inapposite to capture the form of cooperative freedom that is evidently performed in the social practices of democratic participation or love and friendship. In these cases, my freedom is grounded on the unforced intermeshing of our activities. On this basis, I can envisage the other not as a limitation but rather as a requirement for the realization of my strivings, without thereby giving up the possibility of codetermining the goal to be achieved, and the form of this intermeshing. Before I pursue this train of thought further, I first examine whether one can find suggestions of such a third, social or intersubjective model of freedom in the philosophical tradition.

II

The thesis that the form of social praxis exemplified by democratic will-formation and personal relationships constitutes an independent category of freedom has been an undercurrent in political-philosophic thinking since Hegel. Hegel himself believed that the two forms of freedom, which Berlin would later label positive and negative, did not reach the highest level of freedom that ought to be available to members of modern society. Instead he conceived of a third stage of freedom, which he called "objective freedom," the meaning of which remains contested by scholars.[7] The basic thought Hegel proceeded from is weaved into the terminology of his philosophical thinking, but it can be rendered independent of this framework in a much simpler form: If a person's individual action is conceived of as free only in the negative sense that there can be no impediments to the exercise of the will in the external world, such a conception fails to consider that the intentions underlying the action can only truly be freely formed when they too are independent from causal force and thus anchored in self-posited reasons. Kant, following Rousseau, had similarly concluded that the will can be free only when its content is determined by rational considerations. Hegel argues that this Kantian view, however, leads to the equally peculiar consequence that there is no guarantee that self-determined intentions can actually be realized in the objective world. From the defects of these two concepts of freedom, Hegel developed a synthetic view, according to which the complete idea of individual freedom would only be achieved if the self-posited resolutions of the will can be

[7] On this reconstruction of the free will, see Hegel's exemplary discussion in Hegel PR §§1–32: 25–62.

thought of as furthered or "willed" in, or even by, reality. For Hegel this was possible in those "ethical" spheres of modern society in which the freely chosen intentions of participants intertwine with one another, complement one another, and thus find "willed" fulfillment within social reality.

It is not yet altogether clear from this rather formal, broad-brushed presentation what Hegel meant to convey with his idea of a third, "objective" freedom. Here the different interpretations of Hegel depend on how strongly Hegel is thought to remain influenced by Kant's conception of freedom. According to Robert Brandom, Hegel only "socializes" the Kantian idea of "positive" freedom, in that he makes the ability of individuals to bind themselves to norms dependent on the recognition of a community of others whose recognitive authority is also freely recognized by the individual herself. The resulting reciprocal recognition constitutes the normative horizon in which a subject makes use of his positive freedom to renew the shared cultural potential through her own "expressive" initiatives (Brandom 2009, pp. 72–7). This interpretation converges with the idea of social freedom I have hinted at so far, insofar as the core of the Hegelian idea is understood as connecting individual freedom to the assumption of the perspective of a "We." But the freedom that is realized through this participation in a community of subjects reciprocally recognizing one another's autonomy is, in Brandom's interpretation of Hegel, understood only as an individual exercise, as the expressive act of the individual who lends a new accent to the shared culture. In contrast I believe that Hegel understood the freedom made possible by reciprocal recognition as itself a common or cooperative practice. According to Hegel, it is only by complementing one another that the intentions of the individuals can achieve the individually (subjectively) desired conclusion. Thus freedom in its "objective" sense is not something an individual subject can perform on his own, but rather is something he is only able to achieve in regulated collective action with others.

I have similar reservations with regard to the profound interpretation that Frederick Neuhouser has given to the Hegelian idea of "objective" freedom, the subjective dimension of which he attempts to reconstruct as "social freedom." According to his interpretation, Hegel sets out in his *Philosophy of Right* from the idea that a complete concept of individual freedom must be composed of all the institutional requirements that allow the members of society to articulate their particular identities without coercion in the external form of social roles, and thus to accept institutionally established paths of self-realization (Neuhouser 2003, pp. 145–74). Here too individual freedom is linked with the assumption of the perspective of a "We," which makes it possible to understand

specific, freedom-enabling institutions as rooted in common interests. But, as for Brandom, Neuhouser understands the practice of "socially" conditioned freedom as an individual act that every participant should be able to perform for herself without requiring the reciprocal action of another subject.

In a similar vein, Robert Pippin interprets Hegel's concept of freedom as referring primarily to the rational agency of the individual subject, though he acknowledges that such freedom is for Hegel only possible in the context of social institutions that provide individual agents with the appropriate recognitive status (Pippin 2008a, pp. 121–209). According to my interpretation, however, Hegel is driving at a much stronger intersubjective idea with his conception of freedom: The individual can only realize the freedom that is available through certain institutions when he acts in cooperation with others whose intentions make up an element of his own. Not only is it necessary for Hegel that the exercise of individual freedom proceeds from the taking-up of the perspective of the "We," which either makes possible the constitution of a community of recognition or a common commitment to freedom-guaranteeing institutions; in addition, such an exercise of freedom must be undertaken with the expectation that the other members of the community will carry out actions that correspond to my intentions or needs. Only this doubled intersubjectivity, as both a condition and as an end to be produced from my free action, makes it possible to understand why Hegel again and again thought of love as the paradigm for his own idea of freedom. Here, according to the famous formula, one is *at home with oneself in the other* (PR §7Z) in the sense that one can understand the actions of the other as requirements for the realization of one's own, self-determined intentions.

As the famous formulation "to be at home with oneself in the other" already suggests, Hegel intended far more with his idea of "objective" freedom than to identify for therapeutic purposes certain possibilities of unforced and thus free collaboration in modern society (Honneth 2010, ch. 4). Ultimately he wanted to construe our entire relationship to the world in terms of the recognition of our own posited ends in the Other of objective reality, and thus also to underscore idealistically our freedom in relation with the natural environment. For our purposes, however, it suffices to limit ourselves to the accomplishment of freedom in the social world, since this is the context that would be elaborated by later authors, who would furnish it with new aims. Already in early French socialism's critique of market relationships, which were expanding at that time, there was an idea of freedom that can only be appropriately understood with reference to its roots its Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*. Unlike the understanding of freedom in classical liberal law, which is charged with the

legitimation of purely private interests in the capitalist market, freedom is understood in the writings of Fourier and Proudhon as a solidary activity of being-for-another, which both thought was manifest in the unforced cooperation between craftsmen. Just like Hegel, Proudhon suggests that individual freedom must be thought of not merely "as a barrier" but rather as a "help" to the freedom of all others (Proudhon 1969; see also Fourier 1996).

Hegel's concept of freedom appears even more starkly in the early writings of Marx (Brudney 2010). The young Marx sketches the image of a social community where the members no longer work "against each other" but rather "for one another." Here we find the guiding idea of socialism, namely, that one can speak of members of society having real freedom only when the actions of individuals complement one another in such a way that the freedom of the one is the precondition for the freedom of every other (Honneth 2015, ch. 4). As for his French predecessors, the playful interweaving of action in the cooperation of craftsmen serves as Marx's historical model. According to Marx's conception, the subjects in such interactions are "free" in a particular way, because each can learn from the other participants that his contributions to the coordinated plans for action are acknowledged and seen as necessary and welcome complements to the others' intentions. The idea of "reciprocally complementing" one another makes it clear how much Marx's cooperative model owes to the Hegelian idea of freedom. The attempt to imagine the social integration of a future society entirely according to the measure of such unforced economic cooperation, namely as a community of subjects working for one another, constitutes in my view the core ethical impulse of socialism. Here the social form of the exercise of freedom, which Hegel only saw at work in individual spheres of modern societies, is carried over without differentiation into the entire society, in which the members are thought of as cooperative partners who reciprocally strive to satisfy the needs of one another. I do not want to go further into the difficulties that attended this original vision of socialism, as it ignored the requirements of the functional differentiation of modern society. For my purposes, it is necessary only to recall an undercurrent of political-philosophical thought in which the idea of a distinctively social freedom was already thought of as valid in the nineteenth century.

In the following century, a similar thought was taken up by Hannah Arendt, who understood democratic action to express the original intersubjectivity of human freedom. Whereas for Marx labor itself was seen as a potential context for social freedom, for Arendt only in the political sphere, understood as a realm of public contestation over the common good, are we free, because there the individual sheds his private concerns

and must widen his previously egocentric perspective in collaborative activity (Arendt 1998, ch. 1).

While it is certainly not the case that Arendt's concept of social freedom was inspired by Hegel, his influence is clearly apparent in the last of the representatives of the philosophical tradition of freedom I will mention: John Dewey, under the direct influence of Hegel,[8] argued throughout his life that individual freedom is falsely understood if it is exclusively understood as a capacity or possession of a solitary subject. Rather, the degree of our freedom increases when we participate in socially cooperative activity, because we are better able to realize our intentions and wishes the more various the interactions in which we reckon with the responses and contributions of others. For Dewey as for Hegel, the true form for the exercise of individual freedom is represented in contributions to the distributed labor of realizing a common aim, because in such projects the realization of my "will" is also intended by others. I thus want to conclude my short reminiscence of the largely forgotten tradition of social freedom with a citation from Dewey, in which the underlying idea of social freedom is beautifully expressed: "Liberty," according to the American pragmatist, "is that secure release and fulfillment of personal potentialities which takes place only in rich and manifold association with others: the power to be an individualized self making a distinctive contribution and enjoying in its own way the fruits of association" (Dewey 1984b, p. 329).

III

Adherents of Berlin's conception would surely object to this plea for a third, social concept of freedom that it has the fatal propensity to confuse the value of freedom with other ideals shared by humanity. Just as little as we should surreptitiously smuggle the goal of social justice into the concept of individual freedom, we may not underhandedly furnish it with the aim of coexistence in solidarity, for both efforts would ignore the irreducible pluralism of our values and deny the possible conflicts between them (Berlin 1969, p. 167). In this last part of my essay, I want to forestall this objection by once more working out the aspect of freedom in the aforementioned patterns of interaction to prove, first, that these do in fact concern a separate kind of freedom. Next, I want to show that the exercise of this freedom in or through cooperative actions need not be bound to the common pursuit of the same aim but rather is compatible with the achievement of completely divergent values. For this reason, the constant factor in such practices is the particular form of social freedom,

[8] See Shook and Good 2010 and Dewey 1984a.

whereas the values that are pursued thereby can vary and thus ought not be confused with the underlying shape of freedom itself.

If we look back again at the previously presented examples of social freedom – democratic will-formation, love and friendship, and finally for socialists economic production – the first remarkable element is that the participating subjects must understand themselves as members of a "We" without, however, losing their individual independence. To be sure, the successful performance of actions is bound up with the assumption of complementary actions on the part of others, so that the participants reciprocally take up of the perspective of the "We." But this in no way suggests that they together constitute a collective that acts like a univocal, merely enlarged "I." With Philip Pettit, we can label the social ontological position in which this intersubjective exercise of freedom can best be grasped "holistic individualism." This concept assumes that the realization of certain human capacities requires social groupings and thus entities that can only be described holistically (Pettit 1993, pp. 271–2). But this does not in any way preclude the existence of independent individuals. Why, nonetheless, should individual actions that presuppose a community of cooperative subjects be understood as a particular class of freedom? What is so distinctive about such unforced intertwining of actions that makes it justifiable to introduce a new category of freedom alongside the existing models of negative and positive freedom?

Here, in my view, Hegel and Dewey point in the direction of an answer, because they each point to different aspects of the same phenomenon. Both are of the opinion that the distinctiveness of the reciprocal process of unforced intertwining of ends lies in the fact that the contribution of each is experienced as willed by the other. In contrast to all other actions, which can be understood as either "negatively" or "positively" free, this class of cooperative actions shows that we can each assume the consent of the other and thus can carry out our own action with a consciousness of unforced responsiveness. Not only is there no expectation of arbitrary interference from partners to the interaction; more than this, one can trust that what one freely does will also be freely wished by the other or all other participants. In more systematic terms, the uncoerced nature of a communicative action is here increased because both sides know of each other not only that they perform a freely chosen action but also that the carrying out of this action fulfills an autonomously generated intention of the other. Hegel emphasizes above all the cognitive side of the exercise of social freedom as it should exist in the reflexive structure of commonly shared knowledge. Dewey much more starkly stresses the affective side, in the enjoyment of experiencing how one's own actions are seen by others as preparing the way for completing their own ongoing actions.

The exercise of such a form of freedom certainly requires, as already indicated by the accompanying consciousness of a "We," that the participants pursue common aims or values, because these common aims and values require them, in forming their own intentions, to take the intentions of the others into consideration. Each participant limits herself to carrying out such actions that she knows will contribute to furthering their shared aims. Whereas positive freedom is related to the assumption of a reflexive act of self-determination or self-articulation, social freedom is bound to the assumption of the development of a common will. Where such a common will is not present and the perspective of a "We" cannot be taken up by the subjects, it is not possible to form in their consciousness an agreed-upon scheme of cooperation that would allow them to act for one another through their complementary contributions. To this extent, the idea of social freedom, unlike the concept of negative freedom, but like the positive concept, is a selective category of human freedom. It does not designate a general, unconditional capacity of subjects, but rather one that is bound to the existence of certain social conditions, namely, belonging to a community of ethically concordant members.

This assumption of membership in an ethical community cannot however be misunderstood to mean that the participants have completely lost their capacity for personal initiative and independence. Why this cannot be so can now be more precisely formulated because we have learned that in the case of social freedom, one's own contributory actions must fulfill the autonomously generated wishes or intentions of one's fellow participants. This assumption can remain valid only so long as I concede to the other the opportunity to place the negotiated scheme of cooperative action into question when her individual needs, interests, or positions have changed. Because such a claim must be reciprocally acknowledged, so that all participants can understand their contributions as fulfilling the autonomous wishes of others, the exercise of social freedom must be bound to the assumption of the recognition of the claim of every other to codetermine the commonly practiced schema of cooperation. Though social freedom can be exercised only in the pursuit of common aims, the determinate content of these aims always remains open for revision and contestation by the members of the "We."

This "right to have a say" – or better, this recognized claim – cannot itself be understood according to the standard of (so-called) negative or positive freedom, as though another form of individual freedom protruded from outside into the exercise of social freedom. What the participants invoke when they place the previously agreed-upon scheme of cooperation into question is the result neither of a purely private consideration of interest nor of purely individual self-determination, as Kant

had in mind. Rather they discover the content of their will against the normative background of jointly entered responsibilities in the course of checking whether their wills remain in agreement with the negotiated scheme of cooperation. The difference here is that the participants in this process of discovery do not proceed from an ethical null point, as suggested by the models of negative or positive liberty, but rather from the acceptance of responsibilities they already have with regard to others in the pursuit of common aims. Thus they will bring to the table only those suggestions for adapting the scheme of cooperation that appear necessary in light of their changed needs or interests, to the extent that these are compatible with collectively settled goals. The claim to have a say in determining the distribution of burdens and responsibilities in romantic relationships, friendships, or democratic communities is not externally imposed but is rather an intrinsic element of the social freedom that the participants together enjoy in such relationships.

These considerations lead to the last point of my essay, in which I come back to the question of whether the suggestion of a third, social model of freedom commits the mistake of confusing the value of freedom with the value of solidarity. Such a reproach immediately suggests itself because the participants can allow their intentions seamlessly to intertwine with one another only insofar as they together strive for the common goal of solidarity grounded in trust, whether this takes the form of sexual intimacy in love, the reciprocal support of friendship, or the egalitarian elaboration of a common will in a democratic community. The reason why this works for all contributors – so the objection runs – is the unified realization of the good of solidarity and not, as I would have it, the value of a particular kind of freedom. However, this objection requires more information about what the value of solidary cohesion should consist in. And thus one confronts the true difficulty, namely, that although one can identify such positive experiences as reciprocal trust or mutual aid, this does not serve to explain the special quality such solidarity has for us. What difference would it make if the various forms of solidary relationships drew their value for participants from the fact that they constituted different variants of social freedom? Then that which makes love, friendship, and democratic collaboration worth striving for could not simply be explained by reference to the good of solidarity. Rather solidarity would draw its value for us from the fact that it allows us to exercise in different ways a form of freedom in which others are not experienced, as in the usual case, as limitations, but rather as conditions of the possibility of forming and realizing our own intentions. We strive for solidary relationships not for their own sake, but rather for the particular kind of freedom they embody in various forms. What attracts us to solidary experiences,

and what makes these kinds of relationships worth striving for, is an experience that is precluded in other forms of social life, namely, to see, in the reflection of our own intentions and wishes in the complementary intentions and wishes of our counterparts, that we can only realize them by acting-for-one-another.

These considerations allow us to conclude that we are not able to assess the value of solidary relationships without reference to the positive experience of social freedom. But beyond this, the idea of social freedom represents the overarching evaluative concept for the special cases of solidary relationships. For what makes the experience of solidarity valuable for us can be explained only with reference to "finding-oneself-again-in-others," which is what is meant by the idea of social freedom. Social freedom is related to solidarity as type to token: The various forms of solidarity are empirical manifestations of that which makes "acting-for-another" into a human good. Then, however, the objection no longer obtains that the idea of social freedom falsely confuses the value of freedom with that of solidarity. Precisely the opposite is the case: We are totally unable to comprehend the value of certain social forms of being together unless, alongside the concepts of "negative" and "positive" freedom, we have at our disposal a third concept of freedom that makes it clear to us that we strive for such forms of being together for the sake of experiencing the complete absence of coercion. The distinctiveness of this third form of freedom is the complete withering away of all hindrances that the intentions of other subjects generally pose for me. Only here do I find in the social world a sort of "home," which Hegel already knew could exist only where I am at home with myself in others. Let me conclude therefore by noting that under the historical conditions of the increasing juridification and economization of our culture, and thus of the rise of a purely negatively understood freedom, it is high time to recover the buried tradition of the idea of social freedom.