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**Political Epistemology and Social
Critique**

basis for such normative evaluation of social meanings and the practices they enable. Ideology critique is an important part of efforts to promote social justice, but how is critique possible and how is it warranted?

In what follows, I will sketch three problems for ideology critique, drawing on the work of Robin Celikates (2016): the normative challenge, the epistemological challenge, and the explanatory challenge. Before attempting to address these challenges, I will situate the inquiry as a form of non-ideal social theory. My project, however, is not to define or develop non-ideal theory generally, but to sketch a form of critical theory that has emerged in the context of social justice movements—broad movements that include participation from activists, academics, artists, and ordinary folk attempting to live their lives with integrity and hope. Members of such movements engage in critique as agents of a set of unjust social practices. Critique of a practice is aimed at others who are engaged in the practice with us; the question is how we should go on together from here.

I argue that under conditions of ideology a standard model of normative political epistemology—using a domain-specific reflective equilibrium—is insufficient. (See also Haslanger Forthcoming.) Moreover, simply including diverse knowers as sources of situated knowledge, take2tu

certain conditions that I aim to specify, consciousness raising produces a warranted critical standpoint and a *a* claim against others through a process of inquiry.⁵ Even so, the political work remains: under conditions of collective self-governance, there is no guarantee that all warranted claims can be met simultaneously. There will be winners and losers even after legitimate democratic processes have been followed (Allen 2004). A warranted critique of society may not be politically successful; there are no guarantees. The political basis for conflict resolution between *a* claims is not my topic here.

2. Ideology and Subjection

To motivate the problem, it is important to say more about the epistemic impact of ideology.⁶ Althusser (1971) distinguishes *a* *a a* (RSAs) and *ca a a a a* (ISAs). RSAs include the “government, administration, army, courts, prisons” that “function by violence” or “massively and predominantly by repression.” ISAs include religion, education, the family, the legal system, the political system, trade unions, communications/media, and culture (“literature, the arts, sports, etc.”) that “function massively and predominantly by

about the content of their programs as a ‘curious “consciousness-raising” session’ with a Secretary of State” (147). (Note: the article (Brown 1974) actually says the meeting “was described by one who attended as a ‘consciousness-raising session’ on certain world issues that Mr. Kissinger believed deserved studious attention.”) If one opts for using it as a success term, then some practices that look a lot like consciousness raising are not genuine cases because consciousness isn’t actually “raised.” Sarachild (1978) and others insist that what defines CR is not a precise procedure, but results (147). As will become clearer as I proceed, I will use the term ‘consciousness raising’ to refer to a variety of practices that give rise to a paradigm shift in understanding one’s social circumstances; the new paradigm provides participants an “oppositional consciousness.” However, not all paradigm shifts are warranted and not all forms of oppositional consciousness provide us insight into justice. I will follow the feminist tradition, however, in assuming that consciousness raising is successful only if it yields a warranted critique.

⁵ There is a substantial literature in epistemology on the relationship between warrant, justification, and entitlement and there are substantive differences in how the terms are used. I am not going to delve into that discussion in this chapter. I will mostly use the term ‘warrant’ rather than ‘justification’ because I want to distance myself from the internalist and doxastic assumptions that tend to be associated with justification (Pollock and Cruz 1999). I do not, however, have a theory of warrant.

⁶ This section draws on (Haslanger 2019a), which also expands some of the points I make here.

ideology.” (No state apparatus is purely one or the other, and each depends crucially on the other, though in modern society, the ISAs are the dominant mode of social management.) A crucial difference between an ISA and an RSA is that individuals are hailed into a subject position by an ISA (Althusser calls this a process of “interpellation”), rather than violently forced into it. It is characteristic of those “good subjects” who respond to the hailing that they take up the norms as binding on themselves, so they don’t need to be coercively managed. For example, to maintain a division of labor, instilling literacy, numeracy, and other kinds of technical “know how” is not sufficient:

besides these techniques and knowledges, and in learning them, children at school also learn the ‘rules’ of good behaviour, i.e. the attitude that should be observed by every agent in the division of labour, according to the job he is ‘destined’ for: rules of morality, civic and professional conscience, which actually means rules of respect for the socio-technical division of labour and ultimately the rules of the order established by class domination. They also learn to ‘speak proper French’, to ‘handle’ the workers correctly, i.e. actually (for the future capitalists and their servants) to ‘order them about’ properly, i.e. (ideally) to ‘speak to them’ in the right way, etc.

(Althusser 2014/1971, 235–236)

The local ISAs interpellate subjects so that they perform the practices of their social milieu freely: this is how things are; this is what we do; this is who we are. As Althusser emphasizes, the good subjects “work all by themselves”! This conception of ideology (though not in these terms) is also a theme in Foucault’s work (e.g., 1979, esp. ch. 5, and for a feminist application see (Bartky 1990)).

My conception of ideology is Althusserian. We participate in social practices guided by a set of public meanings, scripts, etc. Particular practices are signaled and structured by features of the material conditions. A blackboard and desk or podium marks the front of a classroom. We organize ourselves in such a space depending on our role in that setting. The front of the classroom has a meaning that both students and teachers understand, and guides them in the activity of learning together.

The network of meanings that play a role in interconnected practices form a *c a c ē*.⁷ The boundaries of a cultural *technē* are not precise. The cultural *technē* of a philosophy classroom tends to be quite different from a gender studies classroom; the cultural *technē* of Harvard is quite different from the cultural *technē* of MIT. Those who are socially fluent in a particular setting have internalized its cultural *technē*—they are its “good subjects.”

We are “hailed” into practices in a variety of ways, e.g., we are hailed into speaking English by having English spoken to us; we are hailed into the role of student by being sent to school and finding ourselves responding to the teacher as an authority (nudged by coercion); we are hailed into adulthood by having to pay the rent (with threat of coercion in the background). We then develop ways of being and thinking so that we are (more or less) fluent English speakers, fluent students, fluent rent-paying adults. Ideology is not a set of beliefs, though it may produce belief about what is apt or inapt, right or wrong, and related desires, emotions, and other attitudes. As Althusser says, “Ideology always exists in an apparatus and its practice or practices. Its existence is material” (Althusser 1971, 259). The world around us is structured so that we typically embody a practice before we even know we are engaged in it (McGeer 2007; Zawidzki 2013).

Social practices organize us around things taken to have more or less value; let’s call these (assumed or constructed) *c* of value and disvalue.⁸ Some sources are material (such as medicine, traffic, toxic waste), and others not (such as time, knowledge, boredom). For example, the practice of attending an academic lecture organizes us around a presumptive source of knowledge. The cultural *technē* of academia,

⁷ In the past I have used the term ‘schemas’ both for public *c a* schemas and internalization of them as *c ca* schemas. This has caused confusion, so I now use the term ‘social meaning,’ and for webs of meanings, ‘cultural *technē*.’ ‘Social meanings’ include narratives, patterns of inference, default assumptions, symbols, and other cultural memes that one might not normally consider “meanings” in a narrow sense. See also (Haslanger 2018).

⁸ Following Giddens and Sewell, I originally employed the term ‘resources’ in this context. The term ‘resource,’ however, has a positive connotation and I’ve been urged to find another way of speaking of resources that more easily includes things taken to have negative value. (Thanks for this nudge to Jeffrey Stout.) Until I find something better, I will use ‘sources’ with the understanding that sources come in many different forms. Note that because we are not assuming that what we “take to be” of value or disvalue is correctly valued, we should not assume that a ‘source’ *ac a a* the value or disvalue attributed to it.

overall, has value, though some parts of it, or its manifestation in some settings, may be ideological. A cultural technē can go wrong in different ways. It may distort our capacity to value, i.e., to recognize what is truly valuable and what not (Anderson 1993, ch. 1); it may organize us in response to presumed value in unjust ways. For example, recent work on epistemic injustice argues that academic practices place unwarranted restrictions on who counts as a knower, what form knowledge must take, and the legitimate sources of knowledge. (See Tuana 2017 for a useful overview.)

Under conditions of ideology there is, by hypothesis, a range of unjust social practices that oppress a group; however, not everyone experiences the oppression as such. Those who are fluent in the practices may not even recognize them as social practices, e.g., a practice may be naturalized or taken for granted. The working class may not recognize their exploitation as such; women may not agree on what practices are sexist. And even a problematic practice may be experienced as valuable and produce something of value. At the very least, practices enable coordination; coordination, even on non-optimal terms, is valuable because coordination on any terms is important and can be difficult to achieve.

The epistemic position of the “good subject” is complicated. As just mentioned, some subjects embedded in unjust practices do not experience them as unjust; others may have a vague dissatisfaction; and others may have an articulated critique.⁹ Even being deeply critical of a practice does not prevent one from being fluent in it, and because resistance is often punished, many will have reason to comply with practices they abhor. Moreover, there may be no better live option. Because we depend on coordination with others, we are often just stuck with enacting an unjust system we are embedded in, for lack of better alternatives.

The term ‘standpoint epistemology’ emerged as an effort to address the problem of ideology: Where does one stand to critique ideology?

⁹ There is an important set of questions about the kind of knowledge gained by those who occupy a subordinated position and its relationship to critique. Patricia Hill Collins argues that “Black Feminist thought rearticulates a consciousness that already exists [among Black women]” (1989, 750). I am not denying that often the resources for critique already exist in the experience of the subordinate; my claim is that sometimes, for some groups or in relation to some practices, complicity in unjust practices is deeper than this suggests. See also Khader (2011).

Because ideology, when successful, recruits us into fluent participation in an unjust structure, some of those who are subject to subordination will not develop or accept a critique of it. This has two important conse-

insights of which agents—given that they usually do not constitute a homogeneous category—the critical theorist articulates.”

- (iii) *E a a c a* : If an ideology functions at the level of a system, “what exactly holds the rather broad conglomeration of partly psychological, partly social mechanisms—from implicit biases via stereotypes to looping effects—together and makes them into elements of one ideology”? And how does critique disrupt the systematic injustice sustained by the ideology?

To address these challenges, it would appear that we must provide a full-blown social theory, moral metaphysics, and moral epistemology. Fortunately, there is a narrower task that we can begin with.

3. Methodological Preliminaries: Narrowing the Task

a. Moral Truths

We are not starting the normative inquiry from scratch. Those engaged in justified political resistance cannot avoid the claim that there are moral truths. So it is not my task to argue for an objective basis for moral judgment. ⁰ Moreover, ideology critique *c c a*; it does not make Moreover, i

that slavery or rape is wrong and standard justifications of our moral theories depend on the adequacy of such judgments. Moreover, modal knowledge of what makes something just or unjust (which presumably is what a theory of the nature of justice provides) is not required to remedy instances of it. And finally, injustice may not be a proper kind, so attempting to construct a theory of justice may lead us astray, causing us to neglect forms of injustice that don't fit our theory (Young 1990, ch. 2).

The resistance to articulating an "ideal theory" of justice is methodologically deeper than this, however. In the case of some kinds worthy of our attention, there are pre-existing and projectible regularities that we have reason to identify and investigate (water is H₂O; the highest poverty rate in the US by race occurs among Native Americans (in 2018 = 25.4%)). But in the social world, the adequacy of our conceptual framework should not simply be judged by the facts it captures, but by *a* : the resources it provides for organizing and understanding ourselves. For example, how should we define ? Our chosen definition matters for people's lives. In the social domain, the direction of fit goes both ways: we aim to capture facts about the world, and our doing so can contribute to producing facts—sometimes facts we are trying to capture and sometimes new ones (Hacking 2002; Haslanger 2012). The social effects of a proposed definition (or theory, more broadly) is a consideration that tells for or against it;

we are able to specify a conception of justice that is fully determinate and applies generally (for current purposes), we are not in a position to grasp the full range of possibilities that we might face and decide in advance what would be appropriate under radically different conditions. The world poses challenges that our previous (or existing) understandings and sensibilities do not solve. Who could have imagined, even a century ago, the morally significant possibilities created by the biological sciences (assisted reproductive technology, cloning) and engineering (automobiles, space travel, cellphones, robotics)?⁶ Our sensibilities evolve in response to new conditions, and the evolving sensibilities—and critique of those sensibilities—is part of a process of determining what is just here and now. It may be that we should attempt to develop theories that are apt for our current conditions based on our current knowledge. But the point I am making is not just that we are fallible, i.e., that there is a truth about the nature of justice (for all times, all conditions) out there waiting to be found and we have only fallible access to it; the claim is that what is just or unjust does not float free of our sensibilities and our practices, and the relevant practices are, like other practices, open-ended and revisable (in the aims, procedures, and results), and depend on our collective and critical efforts to go on, together, from here.

A cultural *technē* is an evolving specification of our “inchoate and indeterminate” drive to evaluate in response to our material (biological, geographical, economic) conditions. To suppose that we can articulate an ideal that is not conditioned by our cultural *technē* and, even if we could, that it could speak to us is implausible. This does not leave critique without normative resources. Social critique can, at the very least, draw on our inchoate and indeterminate sense of justice and its articulation in other contexts to construct and demand a better alternative to the current practices. The fragmentation of our social practices and relative (but incomplete) autonomy of social systems generate tensions and contradictions that can prompt reflection and reconfiguration of our normative resources.⁷

⁶ For an excellent discussion of the impact of the invention of the car on our legal and moral judgments, see, e.g., Seo (2019).

⁷ There is an ongoing and important literature on intersecting systems of oppression that

c. The Social Domain

As mentioned before, the site of ideology critique is $c a a$. It is difficult to draw a clear line between the social domain and the political domain—and I won't attempt to do so here. But one mark of the political domain is its relationship to the distinctive coercive power of the state, a power that is leveraged in repressive state apparatuses, especially law and its enforcement. The social domain is characteristically structured by norms, expectations, and identities—developed within the ideological state apparatuses and the internalization of the cultural technē—with law serving, in many cases, only as a fallback. So the primary questions for social critique are not the appropriate structure and limits of the state, but rather what practices we should engage in, what social norms we should embrace, and how we should go on, from here, together.

As a result, the normative questions are not primarily whether an agent acts rightly or wrongly, or whether an agent is blameworthy. Nor are the normative questions about what is permissible for the state to regulate and enforce. Rather, the question is whether we (collectively) are warranted in creating, maintaining, or changing a practice or structure. An individual can be treated unjustly a individual by others, or by the state. But within the social domain individuals are vulnerable to perpetrating or suffering injustice by virtue of their social positions. The aim is to improve our social practices and social structures to eliminate this $a ab$.

A standard strategy for deciding whether a social practice is acceptable is to argue that the practice is in all participants' long-term self-interest, and proposals for change should be evaluated through a kind of collective cost-benefit analysis. In some cases, this answer is straightforward: some practices clearly and systematically deprive individuals of what's necessary for a minimally decent life, or the development of basic capabilities, and these should be changed for the familiar reasons. But there are several reasons why ideology complicates this answer.

in the contemporary social order? See, e.g., Carastathis 2014; Dawson and Katzenstein 2019; Haslanger 2020d; Sewell 2005. The tensions and contradictions between systems are relevant to my response to Celikates' explanatory challenge, as will become clearer below.

First, we cannot judge what is a minimally decent life in the abstract, as Adam Smith's classic comment about linen shirts makes clear.

By necessities I understand not only the commodities which are

by reference to a framework of social positions, then are the relevant interests we are aiming to protect the interests of a socially situated self? ⁸ It would be hard to deny that I—a white cis-woman—have an interest in identifying with and fluently occupying the position of white woman. Failing to do so brings with it substantial costs. But I also have an interest in overturning the local unjust race/gender regime so that race and gender as we know them are no longer imperatives. The problem, more generally, is that the very practices that shape us as social individuals are the ones that function ideologically and so are the targets of critique. But it would also be a mistake to think that the interests in question are those of an unsocialized human being, or a bare self not already embedded in a society and culture.

d. Critique as Emancipatory

Within critical theory, especially Frankfurt School Critical Theory, there is a tradition that insists that a successful ideology critique will be, itself, emancipatory. In his classic work on the Frankfurt School, Raymond Geuss (1981) claims that one of the three “essential distinguishing features of a ‘critical theory’” is that:

1. Critical theories have special standing as guides for human action in that:

(a) they are aimed at producing enlightenment in the agents who hold them, i.e. at enabling those agents to determine what their true interests are;

(b) they are inherently emancipatory, i.e. they free agents from a kind of coercion which is at least partly self-imposed, from self-frustration of conscious human action. (1–2)

Although I agree that a successful ideology critique should aim to provide the resources for individuals in the grip of an ideology to better

⁸ I articulate this concern in the language of ‘interests’; if one opts instead for the language of ‘preferences,’ then the problem is even worse.

understand their situation, not all agents will take up these resources or accept the proposed reconceptualization of their social milieu. And of course, thinking alone—or accepting a critical theory—does not free us

consensual interactions. The hard truth of democracy is that some citizens are always giving things up for others. (29)

In unjust societies, the problem is not that some groups lose out, are outvoted, or suffer substantial costs; this happens in just democracies.

the risk of paternalism or even despotism” (Honneth 2009, 44). Of course, the correlative problem is that if one can only rely on the locally entrenched value horizon, then it is unclear that one will have the resources to break through the grip of ideology (Honneth 2017, 2). One solution—that is designed to disrupt adherence to the existing practices and also avoid paternalism and vanguardism—is to challenge the formal or epistemic workings of the ideology, rather than imposing substantive values from “outside.” So, properly speaking, critique demonstrates that the ideology has epistemic flaws (e.g., is “self-contradictory”) and provides other epistemic resources (and practices) to unmask it, without taking a moral stand (Stahl 2017; Jaeggi 2018). This solution to the critical dilemma is often referred to as “immanent critique.”

Celikates addresses the critical dilemma by casting immanent critique as a “second-order” project that takes the form of “reconstructive critique” (2018, part III). Because ideologies “block the development and/or exercise of the reflexive and critical capacities” of the agents in question,

ideology critique can be understood as second-order critique: If ideologies hide the possibility of criticizing (and transforming) these very ideologies and the problematic first-order phenomena they mask, then the first aim of the critique of ideology has to be to identify these blockades of critique and to work towards their dissolution. In this respect, ideology critique can be seen as taking a procedural turn: Its task is not so much to replace a mistaken or distorted view of social reality with one that is correct (as Althusser implies), or to develop a substantial vision of how society should be organized (as mainstream political philosophy does); rather, its task is to make it possible for agents to ask these questions and collectively look for answers to them themselves. (Celikates 2016, 17)

The critic’s primary goal should be to open space for resistant voices to be heard and allow the community to determine its own collective values and the social practices to further them.

I am sympathetic to Celikates’ proceduralism, and to the fallibility of any such process. I agree that one crucial aim of ideology critique is to

identify and remove the epistemic barriers ideology creates. However,

an agent does not do justice to the phenomenology of consciousness raising. Rather, in the process of developing a critical consciousness, the agent undergoes a paradigm shift. This is compatible with being able to “see” the world through both paradigms, but the new paradigm illuminates social reality and brings with it a new sensibility. In doing so, it seems to carry authority. The questions I am asking are: Under what conditions should we trust this shift? When does the new paradigm legitimately carry authority? And can we make warranted claims against others based on the new paradigm, even if they have not embraced it? I’ll return to Celikates’ three challenges below.

5. The Epistemology of Consciousness Raising

a. Case Studies

Under ideological oppression, critique happens in a million ways every day (Scott 1990; Ewick and Silbey 1995, 1999, 2003; Collins 2002; Khader 2011). Some of it is explicit, some not; some of it is warranted, some not; some of it is empowering, some not. And sometimes it builds into a movement. Not all social movements begin in consciousness raising. Especially when repression is regular and obvious, there is often a broad consensus on the injustice and other moral violations; and when there is a longstanding tradition of critique, one can be brought up with a critical consciousness, even as one participates in ideologically shaped practices. However, as discussed above, critical consensus is more difficult to achieve under conditions of ideology.

In what follows, I will consider a particular form of critique that arises in and through a practice that is sometimes called “consciousness raising.”⁰

⁰ I am aware that the term ‘consciousness raising’ or ‘CR’ is dated. In my courses, students have teased me that “nowadays we call that ‘raising awareness’.” I want to hold on to the terminology of consciousness raising, however, at least for the time being, because I think there is an epistemic phenomenon worth considering that has been seriously neglected, and the term

Consciousness raising is a collective activity—done with others—and prompts a paradigm shift in one’s orientation to the world. (See, e.g., Mackinnon 1989, ch. 5; Bartky 1975; Redstockings 1978; Frye 1990; Crow 2000; McWeeny 2016; Crary 2015; Toole 2019.) This includes a shift in what facts become accessible, our interpretation of them, and what responses are called for. It is not easily reversed. The experience of such a paradigm shift is powerful, but its adequacy or warrant is not guaranteed. If a movement is to be built on such a paradigm shift, and if movements are to make warranted claims against others, then we need to think more about the conditions under which consciousness raising provides knowledge, and what sort of knowledge it provides. In the next sections, I will provide a sketch of some of the main features of an epistemology of consciousness raising, as I see it. There is much that needs further discussion and elaboration. I start with a brief description of two examples.

Combahee River Collective (1983) (“A Black Feminist Statement”)

In 1974 a group of Black women started meeting in response to their experiences in everyday life and in the Civil Rights Movement (CRM) and the Women’s Liberation Movement (WLM). Their frustration had roots in their situation: “the political realization that comes from the seemingly personal experiences of individual Black women’s lives” (266), and also the failures of both the CRM and the WLM to give them the tools to develop an adequate response: “there was no way of conceptualizing what was so apparent to us, what we was really happening” (266). Through a process of consciousness raising, they explored the cultural and political dimensions of their experience, and developed new terms and concepts. For example,

It has been difficult to find literature in philosophy on the epistemology of consciousness raising, which, I suppose, is not surprising. I am anxious in writing this section because the phenomenon is huge and multi-faceted, and has a meaningful history, with both strengths and pitfalls. I am vividly aware that my research has not been thorough, but in an effort to draw attention to the phenomenon and encourage others to work on it, I am offering what I have managed to put together thus far.

To find the published statement along with important interviews with some of the authors, see Taylor (2017).

We discovered that all of us, because we were “smart,” had also been considered “ugly,” i.e., “smart-ugly.” “Smart-ugly” crystalized the way in which most of us had been forced to develop our intellects at great cost to our “social” lives. (268)

Through CR, they reached the “shared belief that Black Women are inherently valuable, that our liberation is a necessity not as an adjunct to somebody else’s but because of our need as human persons for autonomy” (33) and “to be recognized as human, levelly human, is enough” (267).

The group that persisted through 1977—when the statement was written—

next day to protest the inadequacy of the school's response. Forty girls showed up. As a result, the school hosted a 2.5-hour discussion with all students, including those who produced the list. At this meeting, "Several girls delivered personal and impassioned speeches describing not only their presence on the list but also their previous experiences with sexual abuse, harassment and objectification, both inside the school and outside of it." After this meeting, the boy responsible for the list said, "When you have a culture where it's just normal to talk about that, I guess making a list about it doesn't seem like such a terrible thing to do... It's easy for me to lose sight of the consequences of my actions and kind of feel like I'm above something... [But] It's just a different time and things really do need to change." Collective action was then planned to implement policies and practices aimed to reduce similar behavior in the future.

the contrary, the ideas of the good and the just arise from the desiring negation that action brings to what is given.

Each social reality presents its own unrealized possibilities, experienced as lacks and desires. Norms and ideals arise from the yearning that is

ac , bridging divides in emotional commitments; and *c*
c a by activists, drawing on the traditions and practices of every-
day life. (Mansbridge and Morris 2001, 7-8)

individuals to be “good subjects” in a variety of practices. The process I am exploring involves a resistant reaction that can evolve into a complaint, and may result in a *a* moral claim.⁵ I use bullets rather than numbers below because the sequence of steps may not always occur in the order presented.

- There is a moral “gut refusal” to comply with or accept a practice, a “desiring negation” that yearns for and imagines other possibilities. Such a refusal may simply be a personal indication of displeasure, a whine, but does not rise to the level of a complaint against others. How do we transform whining or displeasure into a proper complaint?

I am assuming, for the purposes of the discussion, that whining just expresses a negative preference, a preference against something. Whining, in the sense I mean, is not characterized by tone of voice, but is characterized by failing to even provide a *a ac* reason for others to act differently.⁶ A child may whine when asked to go to bed, but this

group-based, and unwarranted and, most importantly, realizes that they are not the problem.

Another explanation of the mistreatment may be that one is dealing with a bad actor rather than a systematic phenomenon. A bad actor may have problematic, but idiosyncratic, responses to individuals in a particular group; but this is not the phenomenon social critique seeks to address. For example, if an individual fails to take seriously people who wear baseball caps—due, perhaps, to a personal association formed long ago—it is important to become aware of this. This individual's bias may become apparent in the context of consciousness raising, but the goal of consciousness raising is to identify systematic and structural vulnerability and provide a critique of social practices rather than individuals. There are, of course, cases in which an individual bias is caused by broader structural phenomena—perhaps the clothing in question is a marker of social (racial, ethnic, class) status—and the individual's behavior is a symptom of a systematic problem. These are the sorts of examples that social critique can build on.

Because the inquiry is into social—structurally produced—injustices, and because it is difficult as an individual to determine what the social patterns are and how to interpret them (note that being a target of negative behavior can give rise to shame and reluctance to share the experience with others), the process from here forward is collective. This is not to say that an individual cannot, working alone, identify systematic injustice and articulate a warranted critique. But the method employed by such an individual would not be, strictly speaking, consciousness raising; and in order to move forward as part of a movement, the critique would have to give rise somehow to a broader, shared, paradigm shift. So an essential part of consciousness raising is group participation.

- Articulate the concern to others within the same (affected) social group; test the reaction against the experience of others. Consider: Is the problem individual or social? Am I over-reacting? Are others treating me this way because I am acting badly? Is the agent simply a bad actor? Is this occurring because of a a ab ?
- o To achieve this, it is often important to create counter-publics where the subordinated can complain to each other without

being “corrected” by members of the dominant group, where they can be heard. (Mansbridge and Morris 2001, 7–8; Fraser 1990; Dotson 2011; Dotson 2014.)

- o The “testing” process—both articulating the concern and responding to it—should involve forms of *b a c* and *c a c c* of all sorts. Testimonial injustice and gaslighting are serious risks. As Elizabeth Anderson (forthcoming, 7) notes, there is compelling empirical evidence of systematic power biases: “Standing in a position of superior power over others tends to bias the moral sentiments of the powerful, in at least three ways: it reduces their compassion, activates their arrogance, and leads them to objectify subordinates.” Because of the diversity and power differentials within subordinated groups, one may need to narrow one’s community in order to adequately resolve whether there is a positional vulnerability and to identify the particular social position that renders one vulnerable to the harm or wrong in question.
- o The process allows for, even encourages, hermeneutical invention. Individuals within the group can sometimes rely on existing identities, but in other cases new “identities” are called for (Mansbridge and Morris 2001, 9). Shared identities (Black feminist, queer) allow for a cultivation of trust, new language, shared interests, etc. Patterns can then become more visible and new hermeneutic resources developed (‘smart-ugly,’ ‘White fragility,’ ‘mansplaining,’ ‘himpathy’ (Manne 2017)).

A distinction feature of consciousness raising is that it involves trying on different perspectives, vocabularies, sensibilities, to notice facts that have been occluded—empirical facts, morally relevant facts, facts about possibilities. Shifts in orientation can be prompted by historical inquiry, the idiosyncratic and creative suggestions by individuals, existing oppositional cultures (#MeToo), local narrative traditions, or comparisons made possible by participation in different practical domains, e.g., work/home. One of the most effective tools of ideology is the systematic maintenance of ignorance (Mills 2007). Serene Khader makes this point in relation to Western normative hubris:

inferior “by nature” and responsible for degrading European culture. Consciousness-raising groups are, by design, focused on the experiences and interpretations of those who participate in the group. But the evidence available to them is limited and efforts must be made to draw on whatever empirical knowledge is obtainable.

- *T* . Is the hypothesis generated from within the new paradigm empirically adequate? Is the hypothesis the best explanation of the injustices? Draw on critical social science. Revise the hypothesis, as needed.

Eric Olin Wright describes an emancipatory, or critical, social science:

science); and some of the claims may be irreducibly normative and constitute a fundamental moral disagreement (though see Moody-Adams 1997). But the process of epistemic validation is not foundationalist. The best that any inquiry—empirical or not—can achieve is a holistic balancing of considerations. And scientific inquiry has managed to weather paradigm shifts before without giving up all standards (Kuhn 1962).

Part of what'

psychology, empirical investigation, critical epistemologies, and the lived experience of those in the subordinate group. The resulting claim is made on behalf of a social group and warranted through their collective efforts. Although, as Celikates argues, changes to the epistemic practices are required in order to loosen the grip of ideology, critique sometimes emerges in the collective response to one

The difficult questions concern the critique of what we learn through being interpellated into practices, what becomes common sense to “good citizens.” Think of the organization of capitalist society and assumptions concerning wage contracts, “right to work” slogans, the division of labor in the family, and such. In the process of consciousness raising, we develop an alternative description and explanation of a phenomenon that reveals morally relevant aspects that ideology masks. Once these aspects are revealed, or diagnosed, the phenomenon is no longer viewed as innocent or as commonly represented. For example, once one sees wage labor as the extraction of value from workers that is pocketed as profit by capitalists, i.e., once one sees capitalism as founded on exploitation, one cannot regard capitalism as a benign economic system. Our gaze shifts so that we find parallels between cases that horrify us and ones we take for granted, e.g., “wage slave,” “private government” (Anderson 2017). Whether or not the parallels stand up to scrutiny is an open question. But if the parallels are sufficiently strong, or if we agree that the new interpretation better guides our practice, then we are entitled—epistemically and morally—to make a claim on its basis.

(ii) *Moral Critique*: From what standpoint does the critic speak?: “which insights of which agents—given that they usually do not constitute a homogeneous category—the critical theorist articulates” (2016, 4).

The critical theorist that I have described is embedded in a movement. She is not an “outsider” who is trying to convince the subordinate to rise up by providing them a theory. She is engaged with others in consciousness raising, and is articulating the insights that come from participation in it together. The claims that arise from the movement may not be ones that all members of the subordinated group support. But this does not show that the critique is misguided. It may be that the values the resistant rely on when making claims of being harmed or wronged are at odds with what others engaged in the practice value. But that does not delegitimize their claims. Social practices are cooperative enterprises, and if parties to the cooperation have reason to think that they are being treated unjustly, or their values are being undermined, there is a *prima facie* reason for all parties involved to reconsider the practice.

(iii) *E a a c a* : If an ideology functions at the level of a system, “what exactly holds the rather broad conglomeration of partly psychological, partly social mechanisms—from implicit biases via stereotypes to looping effects—together and makes them into elements of one ideology”? And how does critique disrupt the systematic injustice sustained by the ideology?

I don’t agree with the assumption that “ideology functions at the level of a system.” Although it is a common theme in Frankfurt School Critical Theory that the target of ideology critique is the socio-historical “totality,” this is not actually true of many critiques that arise in the context of social movements. I do agree that social justice requires systematic change, but I see no reason to think that unjust systems are sustained by a single ideology that is the proper object of critique; on my view, ideologies are a collection of social meanings that may well materially or accidentally coincide to produce the problematic effects. This fragmentation is not a bug, but a feature of my view, since it also allows us to find fissures for leveraging critique.

Celikates asks a further question, however: How do the multiple mechanisms of systematic injustice work together to sustain it? This is an important question for deciding how to intervene in systems in order to change them. However, I don’t believe that an account of ideology critique requires an answer to this question, or that requires us to provide identity conditions ideologies so that we can differentiate them.

I began the chapter by asking what entitles us to claim that a cultural *technē*—the set of social meanings that shape our practices—is ideological; in other words, how, under conditions of ideology, can we establish a basis for social critique? I’ve argued that given both the epistemic challenges posed by ideology and the historically situated task of challenging social practices, we should look for methods other than developing an ideal theory of justice to undertake critique. I have suggested that there are multiple ways of pursuing critique, and have described the process of consciousness raising as a method that yields an alternative paradigm for understanding and engaging in social life. Although I have not given a full defense of CR as a basis for normative knowledge, I’ve pointed to some of its epistemic credentials that can warrant groups to make *a* claims on others concerning the

injustice of shared practices. Very broadly, I hope I have opened up some space within moral inquiry to consider the pernicious effects of ideology, not only on the social systems we embody but also on our theorizing, and also provided some resources from critical theory to think together about how we might go on. ⁹

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