

**PRAGMATIC INCLUSION FOR A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY:
WILLIAM JAMES' SOCIAL ETHICS AND THE JUSTIFICATION OF BASIC
INCOME**

by

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Abstract

The most influential and dominant philosophical justification for basic income is Philippe Van Parijs' "real freedom for all," a classical-liberal argument premised on individual freedom. My thesis identifies and critiques problems in "real freedom for all," namely its abstract ideological foundation, limited conception of the self, and narrow understanding of valuable activity. As a superior justification of basic income, I propose William James' social ethics: it uses listening, experimentation, and revision as foundations for ethics; it acknowledges the personal, social, and cultural forces in selfhood; and it recognizes that all activity is valuable in the creation and maintenance of cultural norms and habits. I argue that the best justification for basic income is "pragmatic inclusion for an ethical democracy," in which basic income is an example of pragmatic inclusion that creates the conditions for an ethical democracy, wherein everyone has access to the decision-making processes that form a culture.

Keywords: William James, Philippe Van Parijs, basic income, Pragmatism, Classical Liberalism, freedom, inclusion, individualism, social ethics, economic morality, democracy

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Suppose that the world's author put the case to you before creation, saying: "I am going to make a world not certain to be saved, a world the perfection of which shall be conditional merely, the condition being that each several agent does its own 'level best.' I offer you the chance of taking part in such a world. Its safety, you see, is unwarranted. It is a real adventure, with real danger, yet it may win through. It is a social scheme of co-operative work genuinely to be done. Will you join the procession? Will you trust yourself and trust the other agents enough to face the risk?"

—William James

Introduction

At first glance, pairing basic income with William James seems odd. Basic income (BI) is a popular political proposal for reforming state-sponsored social assistance by providing a periodic cash payment to all citizens without a means test or work requirement. William James is a philosopher of the late 19th century best known for his work in experimental psychology, epistemology, and the philosophy of religion. There is a rich literature arguing for BI from different philosophical perspectives,¹ but a connection between BI and James, or even BI and pragmatism (the philosophical school James helped found), has never been established. For most of the twentieth century, scholars considered James' pragmatism apolitical and amoral, but recent scholarship on James' social ethics challenges this widely-held bias.² This thesis seeks to prove, through a social and political reading of James' social ethics, that James is an

¹ Cf. Steve Birnbaum, *Basic Income Reconsidered: Social Justice, Liberalism and the Demands of Equality* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Alex Gourevitch, "Labor Republicanism and the Transformation of Work," *Political Theory* 41, no. 4 (2013): 591-617; Louise Haagh, "Basic Income, Social Democracy and Control Over Time," *Policy & Politics* 39, no. 1 (2011): 43-66; Leticia Morales, "The Democratic Case for a Basic Income," *Law, Ethics, and Philosophy* 6 (2018): 120-37; Charles Murray, "The Social Contract Revisited: Guaranteed Income as a Replacement for the Welfare State," *The Foundation for Law, Justice, and Society* (Oxford, 2008); Philip Pettit, *On People Terms. A Republican Theory and Model of Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Robert Saxton Taylor, *Exit Left: Markets and Mobility in Republican Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); Philippe Van Parijs, *Real Freedom For All: What (If Anything) Can Justify Capitalism?* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995); Philippe Van Parijs and Yannick Vanderborght, *Basic Income: A Radical Proposal for a Free Society and a Sane Economy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017); Karl Widerquist, *Independence, Propertylessness and Basic Income* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

² Cf. Colin Koopman, "William James's Politics of Personal Freedom," *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 19, no. 2 (2005): 175-86; Alexander Livingston, *Damn Great Empires* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); José Medina, "James on Truth and Solidarity: The Epistemology of Diversity and the Politics of Specificity," in *100 Years of Pragmatism: William James's Revolutionary Philosophy*, ed. J. J. Stuhr (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009); Hilary Putnam, "Philosophy as a Reconstructive Activity," in *Pragmatism as a Way of Life: The Lasting Legacy of William James and John Dewey*, ed. D. Macarthur (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2017); David Rondel, *Pragmatist Egalitarianism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Andrew F. Smith, "William James and the Politics of Moral Conflict," *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 40, no. 1 (2004): 135-51; Trygve Throntveit, *William James and the Quest for an Ethical Republic* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

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ideal candidate for justifying the implementation of BI in the West, especially in contradistinction with its usual liberal and individualist defense.

In order to argue for a Jamesian defence of BI, I grapple with the most influential text and author in the philosophical debate on behalf of BI: *Real Freedom for All: What (If Anything) Can Justify Capitalism?* by Philippe Van Parijs. Nearly every academic text that mentions BI since *Real Freedom*'s publication in 1997 debates with or references Van Parijs. Troy Henderson is representative of BI scholarship when he says that Van Parijs' texts are "the most ambitious attempt within the literature to ground a justification of BI within a systematic normative framework."³ But Van Parijs' argument—although admirable in its goals—contains a liberal bias with unfortunate consequences.

Van Parijs does not explicitly outline a cohesive philosophical perspective, so this thesis seeks to unearth and evaluate his philosophical assumptions. While I agree with Van Parijs' overarching goals, namely his advocacy for implementing BI, I identify three aspects of philosophy which are insufficient: his point of departure, definition of the human self, and his judgement social value. I show that they are insufficient because they either neglect the human component of ethics, have likely consequences that contradict the egalitarian goals of BI, or do a combination of both. The first chapter of my text investigates Van Parijs' justification for BI and explains that it is ultimately based upon the absolutely good character of abstract freedom and equality. The second chapter explores the contrasting position I develop, namely the social ethics of William James, a philosophical argument in which morality originates in felt human

³ Troy Henderson, "Real Freedom for All Revisited—Normative Justifications of Basic Income," *Basic Income Studies* 12, no. 1 (2017): 1.

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experience and socio-ethical norms and practices structured by a fallible *common sense*. James explains that abstractions, created within a repressive common sense, are limited and, I argue, inadequate as the foundation of an argument for BI. I then explain James' ethical method for individuals and societies and argue that the precondition for ethical living is *pre-moral inclusion*, in which inclusion precedes any form of ethics. And when broadened to societal ethics, I argue that *radical inclusion* is the prerequisite for a representative common sense, i.e., one in which all voices are included and have influence.

The third chapter then exposes two troubling aspects of Van Parijs' argument, the first being the conception of the human self as an aggregate of essential talents, preferences, and choices that result from preferences. Through James' conceptions of habits and a further development of common sense, I argue that Van Parijs' limited individualism has the potential to place the responsibility of poverty on individual preferences and choices because it ignores the social aspects of selfhood and accepts the status quo as an adequate measure of good and bad. The second aspect of Van Parijs I critique here is his argument for a BI irrespective of employment. This component of BI has been widely criticized,⁴ and Van Parijs defends it by claiming that holding a job or making an income is partly possible due to a collective social inheritance from the past distributed unequally through income which ought to be distributed more equitably to every individual in society. This argument reveals a philosophy in which only activity with positive economic consequences (in the form of increased incomes and jobs for the future) is

⁴ Cf. W. Galston. "What about reciprocity?" in *What's wrong with a free lunch?* eds. P. Van Parijs, J. Cohen, and J. Rogers (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001); G. Van Donselaar, *The right to exploit. Parasitism, scarcity, basic income* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Stuart White, "Liberal Equality, Exploitation, and the Case for an Unconditional Basic Income," *Political Studies*, 45, no. 2 (1997); Stuart White, *The civic minimum* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

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considered valuable. But James shows that every action impacts the moral order and is therefore valuable, and I argue that BI is defensible because it creates the conditions in which all forms of activity are included and valued.

In the fourth chapter, I posit an alternative foundation for the justification of BI that avoids the pitfalls of Van Parijs' liberal individualism, namely "pragmatic inclusion for an ethical democracy" based in James' social ethics. First, I listen to the voices of people impacted by the contemporary welfare system and investigate which communities have the most influence in formal and informal decision-making processes in society. I conclude that social assistance programs require reform and that western democracies and societal common sense predominantly listen to the wealthiest and exclude everyone else, especially people in poverty, in the mediation of moral demands. These problems are minimized with a particular definition of BI, namely *an income that adequately provides for every individual's basic needs, irrespective of employment, funded by distributing the excessive wealth of the ultra-rich*, and a particular practical and philosophical end, namely an ethical democracy in which everyone has the means to participate in the ethical dialogue that forms common sense. Although there is literature that advocates for BI as a necessary component of democracy,⁵ I show that such a justification needs a coherent philosophical perspective, i.e. that of William James, to adequately defend BI. Finally, I suggest further political reforms that are pragmatically inclusive and would aid BI in the attainment of an ethical democracy.

⁵ Goodhart, "None So Poor that He is Compelled to Sell Himself;" Morales, "The Democratic Case;" Carole Pateman, "Freedom and Democratization: Why Basic Income is to be preferred to Basic Capital," in *The Ethics of Stakeholding*, eds. K. Dowding et al. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

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Although there is significant research arguing for BI from an economic paradigm,⁶ my thesis focusses on the *ethical* justification of BI. It argues that BI scholarship and advocacy should reject the classical liberalism of Van Parijs and consider the Jamesian pragmatic inclusion for an ethical democracy as its foundation. Van Parijs' real freedom for all and the philosophical worldview that real freedom for all cultivates urgently require revision, and this thesis does so with a Jamesian foundation, a democratic goal, and by investigating the practical outcomes of current political policies and practices. This text draws upon work I have presented⁷ and from the social ethics of William James, primarily found in his texts *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy* (1896) and in *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* (1907). BI is a subject of broad current research and has the potential to change the socio-political climate in Europe and North America. I hope this text helps move the philosophical debate away from individual freedom and toward inclusive democracy.

⁶ Charles M.A. Clark, "The Economics of Poverty in the United States of America," *Oikonomia: The Journal of Ethics and Social Sciences* 4, no. 3 (2005): 6-19; A. B. Atkinson, *Public Economics in Action: The Basic Income/Flat Tax Proposal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Thomas Straubhaar, "On the Economics of a Universal Basic Income," *Intereconomics* 52, no. 2 (2017): 74-80; Karl Widerquist and Michael Anthony Lewis, *The Ethics and Economics of the Basic Income Guarantee* (London: Routledge, 2005).

⁷ Nathan Little, "The Ethical Republic in Practice: Societal Implications of William James's Moral Philosophy" (paper presented at the 45th Annual Convention, Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy, Indianapolis, Indiana, 8-10 March, 2018).

Chapter One: Understanding Van Parijs: The Basics of Basic Income

1.1 Introduction

For the last three decades, Philippe Van Parijs has been the leading thinker and defender of basic income (BI) in the West. Throughout his highly influential and controversial career, he argues for the implementation of a BI, unconditionally paid to all on an individual basis, without means test or work requirement, subject to the protections of formal freedom, with extra allocations to persons with disabilities, and paid at the highest sustainable level. Van Parijs justifies BI by arguing that it will create the ideal of a free society, namely what he calls “real freedom for all” or real-libertarianism. This ideal is a particular type of world that is neutral on the question of the good life and maximizes the minimum level of *real freedom* for individuals, or “the genuine capacity to do whatever one might wish to do.”¹ BI creates a society of real freedom for all by eliminating poverty, ending involuntary unemployment, and liberating workers by making work meaningful for more reasons than the necessity of an income. This type of society is ultimately justified because it is structured in such a way that (maximum) freedom and (relative) equality can coexist.

Van Parijs’ justification for BI is based in maximin real freedom, an abstract principle that presumes that the best world is one in which everyone is as free and equal as possible. This chapter will explain Van Parijs’ practical model of BI, its philosophical justification in real freedom for all, and reveal its “ideal-theoretical” foundations, namely that Van Parijs’ BI is based in the purely abstract virtues of freedom and equality. The purpose of BI for Van Parijs is

¹ Philippe Van Parijs and Yannick Vanderborght, *Basic Income: A Radical Proposal for a Free Society and a Sane Economy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 104.

to prove that freedom and (relative) equality are not mutually exclusive, but that these abstract ideals can exist simultaneously. By examining Van Parijs' BI argument, this chapter seeks to lay the groundwork for the rest of the thesis, wherein I argue that advocating for BI from a position that privileges principles (such as freedom and equality) over context (felt, human experience) leaves Van Parijs' method of social assistance—one with which I am very sympathetic—open to theoretical and political collapse. Before this critique is possible, however, this chapter seeks to explain Van Parijs' argument for BI in his own words and in doing so identify his philosophical point of departure.

1.2 Van Parijs' Basic Income Model

State-sponsored universal payments have a history of over 200 years and have gone by many names: territorial dividend, state bonus, minimum income guarantee, citizens' wage, and universal benefit; but most recently and significantly, advocates call it *basic income*. Van Parijs' most recent formulation of BI is as follows: “a regular income paid in cash to every individual member of a society, irrespective of income from other sources and with no strings attached.”² This definition has five components: first, BI is an income distributed *regularly*—either weekly, bi-weekly, or, the interval supported by Van Parijs, monthly—as opposed to a one-off endowment given to all at the beginning of adulthood. Second, BI is paid *in cash*, which contrasts to an in-kind benefit such as a food stamp or voucher program. Third, BI is paid to every *individual* member of a society, instead of a benefit paid to households and based upon

² Van Parijs and Vanderborght, *Basic Income*, 4.

household composition. Fourth, BI is paid *irrespective of income* from other sources—rewarded without a means test—to rich and poor alike, rather than a targeted social assistance program that only provides benefits to those with incomes under a stipulated minimum.³ The rich repay the sum of their BI (and more) through taxation, but no one loses their BI payment. And finally, BI is paid with no strings attached, i.e. it is obligation free. While other welfare schemes are conditional upon its beneficiaries searching for a job and their willingness to take any job available, BI is distributed to all *irrespective of employment status*.

Van Parijs' BI has three qualifications—it cannot be implemented in an absolutely unrestrained manner. He advocates for a BI always subject to the protections of formal freedom, with extra allocations to persons with disabilities, and pitched at the highest sustainable level. Formal freedom is of a negative kind in which people are free exclusively when they are *not* prevented from acting according to their will and are *not* forced to act in a way inconsistent with their desires. A society of people with formal freedom must have “a well-enforced structure of property rights which includes the ownership of each by herself.”⁴ With the formal rights of property, security, and self-ownership, people are in theory capable of living formally free lives because they cannot be enslaved, i.e. forced to act in a way inconsistent with their desires, and they are able to purchase and sell commodities, i.e. engage in the free market according to their will. Protection of formal freedom is a necessary precondition to BI according to Van Parijs

³ Van Parijs' BI is unconcerned with income from other sources, but it is not universal as such; age is considered. Children receive a reduced BI and the elderly receive an increased one, and internal endowments, or talents, are considered as well, as will be explained below.

⁴ Philippe Van Parijs, *Real Freedom For All: What (If Anything) Can Justify Capitalism?* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 4.

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because formal property rights and self-ownership precede the actual exercise of real freedom, which is the main priority of BI, as is explained in the next section.

The second constraint regards people with disabilities and falls within Van Parijs' notion of dominated and undominated diversity. The theory of "undominated diversity" comes from Bruce Ackerman, another contemporary thinker and advocate for a new type of social assistance.⁵ Ackerman's theoretical goal is to explain differences between people based on the aggregate of individual's talents, i.e. vectors of talents, as a method for distributing income to attain equity. Either person A genetically dominates—i.e. has a "preferable" vector of talents to—person B, or A and B have a relation of undominated diversity, in which they have different *but not unequal* vectors of talents. The criterion of that which is a preferable vector of talents is the reasonable and absolute agreement⁶ by everyone in a large community that any single person is better endowed than another: domination between two people only occurs "if and only if every person (given her own conception of the good life) would prefer to have the former than the latter."⁷ If person A has a vector of talents preferable to person B's, he or she is in a state of dominated diversity, and is justified in demanding compensatory assistance, while undominated diversity, the ideal of a liberal society, affords no assistance.

For example, if I am a slow reader or particularly bad at playing the oboe, I might feel dominated by a virtuoso oboist with a photographic memory. But in this case, I am not entitled to a unique transfer because at least one person would judge my other internal endowments as

⁵ Ackerman is an advocate for a type of BI that is distributed in a lump sum at the beginning of adult life. See Anne Alstott and Bruce Ackerman, *The Stakeholder Society* (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1999).

⁶ See footnote 8 below.

⁷ Van Parijs, *Real Freedom*, 73.

preferable to those of the oboist's. Maybe I am a better painter, mathematician, or listener, and based on the variations of conceptions of the good life in my society, these talents may be preferential to some in my community. If *everyone* preferred the talents of the oboist to my own, only then would I be entitled to a differentiated transfer. But in reality, almost every individual in a given society lives in a state of undominated diversity, because every person's conception of the good life is different, and the talents that are valuable are diverse.

But Van Parijs argues that everyone will reasonably agree—as long as their opinions are genuine and generally available—that there are people in society who have vectors of talents that are preferable to those of people with physical and mental disabilities, and therefore people with disabilities are entitled to more compensation than the rest. If BI is absolutely universal, without consideration of undominated diversity, it will not support those with serious disabilities, and therefore Van Parijs argues that is not a fair system for all. Van Parijs eliminates domination through BI because with an increased BI for people with disabilities, there are no pairs of preferable comprehensive—i.e. internal plus external—endowments. In other words, although my vector of talents is reasonably preferable to a blind man's, his financial endowments will be preferable to my own, and consequently we exist in a state of undominated diversity. Therefore, BI should be reduced overall in order to create a society of undominated diversity. Van Parijs explains that in a society of diversity, affluence, and general health, “a

⁸ Although “weird characters” exist, i.e. those who would rather be blind than see, Van Parijs adds prerequisites to the types of opinions that ought to be considered when rationalizing (un)dominated diversity: “What is crucial is that the preferences of the weird character should be genuine—she must be fully aware of what life is like when one is crippled and not pretend to prefer being crippled just in order to block redistribution—and also that they should be generally available—not restricted, for example, to members of a small sect whose outlook is totally unknown or unintelligible to the rest of society” (Van Parijs, *Real Freedom*, 60).

small minority of ‘handicapped’ people will be entitled to differentiated tagged transfers, but the majority consisting of ‘normal’ people will remain entitled to a universal grant at a level that now falls short of the average external endowment but remains positive.”⁹ BI’s universality remains uncontested and differentiated transfers are unrelated to income, but the state of dominated vectors of talents is considered for extra compensation.

The final condition of Van Parijs’ BI is that it must be sustainable, or more specifically, that “under a given type of socio-economic regime, the optimal choice, in terms of tax rates and basic income differentiation, is the one that can durably sustain, as far as one can predict, the highest average basic income.”¹⁰ There are a few reasons for this constraint, most notably the ethical justification in real freedom for all, which will be explained in the following section. But for now, it is enough to say that a sustainable, predictable, and high BI will bolster the economy in order to ensure its continuation. BI needs to be sustainable because if it destroys the economy, it undermines its sole source of revenue; predictable because an unpredictable BI will cause market stagnation; and at the highest level because if BI is too low there will be little impact on those in poverty (who are meant to be impacted most positively by BI) and if it is too high the right to make an income and acquire wealth would be impossible or disincentivized. BI relies on a healthy, growing economy for its existence and survival.

But it ought not be so high that other welfare services are dismantled. Van Parijs argues that “a basic income is by no means an alternative to publicly funded education and health care. Nor

⁹ Philippe Van Parijs, “Equal Endowments as Undominated Diversity,” *Louvain Economic Review* 56, No. 3/4 (1990): 354.

¹⁰ Van Parijs, *Real Freedom*, 39.

is it meant to provide a full substitute to earnings-related social insurance benefits funded by workers' contributions."¹¹ He acknowledges that social benefits would be reduced in any BI scheme, but only insofar that BI substitutes "for existing benefits that are lower than it."¹² This looks different in different contexts, but subsidized education, healthcare, infrastructure, and most other government services will not be disassembled in the name of Van Parijs' BI. This is because these services have "positive externalities on everyone's opportunities"¹³ or they consist of items "that no one in her right mind might not want to buy."¹⁴ They are social goods that benefit everyone, and ought to be excluded from the individualized BI.

1.3 The Economics of Basic Income

Van Parijs' suggests a level of BI that is consistent with the conditions explained above, namely, the allocation of one fourth of a country's GDP per capita to BI. In the United States that would amount to \$1,163 per month, or \$135 above the official poverty line according to 2015 World Bank estimates.¹⁵ Van Parijs does not suggest that this estimate is the best or only way to implement BI—this amount is only offered because it is "convenient" to have a number in mind. As such, this amount is somewhat arbitrary, but it sits "on the border between 'modest' and 'generous' versions of the idea."¹⁶ This level is high, predictable, and sustainable according to Van Parijs, but it is only one suggested level amongst many.

¹¹ Philippe Van Parijs, "Basic Income and Social Democracy," *Social Europe Journal* (2016), 4.

¹² Van Parijs and Vanderborght, *Basic Income*, 11-2.

¹³ Van Parijs, *Real Freedom*, 43.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Van Parijs and Vanderborght, *Basic Income*, 11.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

Charles M.A. Clark (2005) argues that the US government could finance current government spending and a BI large enough to eliminate poverty (more than \$13,000 per year in today's dollars) with a flat income tax rate of only 32%.¹⁷ And Van Parijs is unconcerned with the type of taxation utilized in funding BI, as he says, "any type of taxation can be used—on bequests, donations, labor income, capital income, transactions, consumption, carbon emissions, value added, whatever—and any tax profile can be chosen—linear, progressive, regressive, or any combination."¹⁸ Further, the costs of administering the current social support systems would be significantly reduced with any type of universal and unconditional welfare alternative, which creates another stream of revenue for BI's funding.

A regular income, paid to all individuals in cash, without a means-test or work requirement is the basic definition of Van Parijs' BI. But it has qualifications, namely the protection of formal freedom, consideration for those in situations of dominated diversity, and its successful assimilation in the economy by being at a high level, predictable, and sustainable. The exact method and amount of BI's funding is debatable, but its economic justification is not a subject of concern here. The ethics of BI is what is at stake, and Van Parijs' ethical justification argues that BI, subject to the constraints explained above, is a means toward and is justified by a theoretical conception of the ideal of a free society, namely, *real freedom for all*, the explanation of which follows.

¹⁷ Charles M.A. Clark. "The Economics of Poverty in the United States of America." *Oikonomia: The Journal of Ethics and Social Sciences*, 4, no. 3 (2005): 6-19.

¹⁸ Van Parijs and Vanderborght, *Basic Income*, 107.

1.4 Real Freedom for All: Van Parijs' Ideal Society

There are two aspects to a society of real freedom for all according to Van Parijs: neutrality in the face of differing conceptions of the good life and the maximization of the minimum amount of real freedom for individuals. The latter develops from the former. Van Parijs is explicitly neutral about—or gives equal respect to—diverse conceptions of the good life. As he states, “what counts as a just society should not be determined on the basis of some particular conception of the good life.”¹⁹ Maximizing the minimum amount of real freedom promotes a society where the members are all as free as possible, that which realizes *real freedom for all*, which Van Parijs defines as a “conception of social justice as the fair distribution of the real freedom to pursue the realisation of one’s conception of the good life, whatever it is.”²⁰ And Van Parijs argues that only a society with his BI can realize real freedom for all.

Van Parijs argues that a society cannot be theorized to explicitly support one type of life because a plurality of conceptions exists about that which constitutes a good life. According to Van Parijs, the factor that decides this conception is individual taste, want, or preference. For example, there is nothing ethically different between my conception of a good life, which consists of a preference for reading books in solitude and pennilessness, and my cousin’s, who has more expensive tastes and prefers a life of social prestige and excessive wealth, and therefore, a just society cannot privilege one conception of the good life over the other. At the same time, people must be held accountable for their preferences: “except in special cases of

¹⁹ Van Paris, *Real Freedom*, 28.

²⁰ Philippe Van Parijs, “Basic Income: A Simple and Powerful Idea for the Twenty-First Century,” *Politics & Society* 32, no. 1 (2004): 18.

addiction and the like, people must bear the consequences of the preferences or tastes they have on their level of welfare or preference satisfaction.”²¹ Preferences involve activities; I cannot say I am oppressed in a society that allows me to follow my interests, even if it does not provide me with the golden toilet and personal chef that my cousin has. Taste cannot figure into the theoretical foundation of a society’s method of redistribution because the ideal of a free society is neutral about conceptions of the good life.

The ethical justification for BI for Van Parijs is real freedom for all, or real-libertarianism, which provides a defensible conception of a just society, namely one with *real freedom*. While formal freedom incorporates security (freedom from threats) and ownership (freedom to own oneself and one’s property), Van Parijs suggests that there is something missing in this idea, because “doing anything requires the use of external objects which security and self-ownership alone cannot guarantee.”²² Real freedom goes beyond merely negative freedom and adds *opportunity* to the necessary components of freedom; it consists in “not only a matter of having the right to do what one might want to do, but also a matter of having the means for doing it.”²³

Troy Henderson explains why this conception of freedom is so radical and expansive:

Real freedom does not privilege *current* preferences over *future* preferences, or even *actual* preferences over *possible* preferences. Rather, it is centred on the principle of keeping the doorway to autonomous decisions and activities permanently ajar for all individuals throughout their lives.²⁴

²¹ Ibid., 50.

²² Ibid., 21.

²³ Ibid., 4.

²⁴ Troy Henderson, “Real Freedom for All Revisited—Normative Justifications of Basic Income,” *Basic Income Studies* 12, no.1 (2017): 2.

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Real freedom considers current preferences and preferences one *might* have and defines freedom as existing only when people have the means to follow their preferences now and in the future. For example, I am *formally* free in the present if I have the right to purchase an island in the Mediterranean, but I am not *really* free to do so because I do not have the resources to do so. And in the example above, if my preferences change and I want to escape the life of a lonely philosopher—perhaps to advocate for the oppressed through law or politics—and I cannot follow this future preference, my real freedom is again restricted. The important consideration of real freedom is the material means of following one’s preferences throughout time. Formal freedom is not enough: I am not really free if what I might want to do is out of reach because of a lack of material possessions.

The societal solution that Van Parijs suggests is to *maximin* real freedom. Van Parijs takes the term maximin directly from John Rawls’ “general conception” of justice, which consists of one central idea, that “all social primary goods—liberty and opportunity, income and wealth, and the bases of self-respect—are to be distributed equally unless unequal distribution of any or all of these goods is to the advantage of the least favored.”²⁵ In a society that maximins real freedom, the person with least opportunities has opportunities no smaller than the person with least opportunities would have in *any other feasible arrangement*, and if this condition is satisfied, the second person up the scale of opportunity must have no less opportunity than her equivalent. In other words, a free society is one that maximizes the opportunity of the minimum,

²⁵ John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 303. See Philippe Van Parijs and Yannick Vanderborght, *Basic Income: A Radical Proposal for a Free Society and a Sane Economy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 109-13. Van Parijs considers himself a “liberal-egalitarian” philosopher and much of his work is based in Rawlsian ideas.

or worst off, position (hence the term maximin). The maximin condition is the site of relative equality in Van Parijs' system. Material opportunities must be at their highest level for those in the worst material poverty, but also for everyone else in the society. It is a theory that argues that the highest level of equality, unless unequal distribution of real freedom is "to the advantage of the least favored," should be sought. This does not mean that everyone needs to have absolutely equal material resources—if inequality helps those with least opportunity, i.e., creates general economic growth which can fund a higher BI for the least-advantaged, inequality is permissible. Maximin real freedom seeks to distribute real freedom in a way that is most favourable to those with the least amount of real freedom, thereby creating a society with relative (not absolute) equality.

1.5 Real Freedom and Van Parijs' Basic Income

Inherent to Van Parijs' definition of BI (and its constraints) sketched above is a method of providing the means to live the way one desires, or a method that maximins real freedom. By defining BI insofar that the income is administered with regularity, Van Parijs protects one's opportunity to follow their conception of the good life throughout their lifetime. This long-term consideration is essential because as Van Parijs states, people change over time: "The resources of the person I shall be at 50 must be protected against the risk of being given away by that other person I was at 20."²⁶ The definition's distribution in cash gives beneficiaries the opportunity to use their money in whatever way they choose, rather than being restricted by in-kind vouchers.

²⁶ Van Parijs, *Real Freedom*, 46.

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BI's commitment to individual payments frees people to change living situations if they so desire, which is especially significant in situations with abusive and controlling partners. Further, individuals in traditional welfare schemes are allocated a reduced income if they decide to live with others because traditional payments decrease per individual proportionate to the increased number of people living in a household, which creates what Van Parijs calls the "loneliness trap." On the other hand, BI does not penalize people who choose to live together through a reduction of benefits but actually encourages cohabitation compared to traditional social assistance schemes because living situation is unrelated to BI.

Concerning the constraints on Van Parijs' definition and justification for BI, the condition of formal freedom is a precondition for *any* real freedom, undominated diversity gives extra opportunity to those with internal disabilities so that they have the means to live according to the life they might want, and BI's condition of being at the highest sustainable level allows the economy to continue, because real freedom for *all* cannot give away all of today's wealth with no consideration given for the people (including ourselves) of the future. The people in the current and future economy are given the means to pursue the life they desire—and the life they might someday desire—with BI.

But arguably, the ways that BI achieves real freedom for all most radically is the way it impacts poor and working-class people. Van Parijs' BI eliminates poverty, ends involuntary unemployment, and makes work meaningful. People in poverty do not have the real freedom to do much beyond that which is necessary for basic survival. When people are trapped in lives they despise with little to no opportunity for following their desires, real freedom does not exist. But with BI, no one can live in poverty because everyone receives an income which (in most

cases) guarantees survival. And once survival is expected, people can choose the life they want to live. This is a simple enough point, but it is fundamental to the type of society that justifies BI, namely real freedom for all.

Van Parijs argues that people in poverty and those in the working class have very little freedom in current economic and political conditions. He demonstrates that the welfare systems in the West are antithetical to real freedom for all because they create involuntary unemployment and make work impossible to escape and generally unenriching. Beneficiaries in these welfare systems are excluded from entering the workforce because to do so is financially risky and irrational. This problem is called the “unemployment trap,” or that which forces people into involuntary unemployment. The unemployment trap exists because the jobs that employ people with low incomes are notoriously precarious and because, in a means-tested welfare system, benefits decrease as earnings increase. As Van Parijs states, “Under a means-tested scheme, even precarious earnings cancel the entitlement to part or all of the benefits.”²⁷ If beneficiaries are uncertain about any aspect of a prospective job—whether it is their earnings, their capacity to cope, or the stability of their position—it is risky to take a job and receive lower, or eliminated, benefits. As Wilder points out, welfare reforms in the 1990s tried to avoid this trap in order to enhance work incentives “by gradually phasing out welfare benefits as personal income increased, as opposed to ceasing benefits outright.”²⁸ But this does not solve the problem that

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.

²⁸ Matt Wilder, “Debating Basic Income: Distributive Justice and the Normative-Technical Nexus,” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 51, no. 2 (2018): 281.

any reduction in social assistance caused by employment disincentivizes the desire to earn extra income and live the life one desires.

Instead of such a welfare structure, BI benefits are never reduced or withdrawn, so all the earnings people produce directly increase their net incomes. Above the BI “floor,” income will be taxed, but the agreed-upon minimum income is never lost. The difference between means-tested schemes and BI, according to Van Parijs, is clear: “The former provides a safety net that fails to catch a great many people it should catch, and in which many get trapped; the latter provides a floor on which they can all safely stand.”²⁹ Van Parijs’ BI makes people free to enter the workforce (if they desire) by cancelling the unemployment trap and its subsequent involuntary unemployment.

The second way that BI maximizes real freedom concerns employment. In today’s world, people on social assistance must be employed or must prove that they are searching for employment. But if everyone on welfare is required to say “yes” to any job, the employers have all of the bargaining power in the employer-employee relationship, or as Van Parijs puts it, work-conditionality in welfare systems amounts to “subsidies to the employers.”³⁰ When everyone in poverty needs a job or needs to be searching for a job in order to qualify for welfare assistance, employers can exploit their employees because they are effectively entitled to any worker on welfare. This means that despite the quality of work, workplace, or wage (within legal limits), people are effectively “trapped” in jobs because their benefits rely on entering the

²⁹ Van Parijs, *Real Freedom*, 20.

³⁰ Van Parijs and Vanderborght, *Basic Income*, 22.

work-force. While means-tested welfare creates the unemployment trap, work-tested welfare creates the *employment trap*, which forces people to always say “yes” to a job, even if it pays little and is unattractive.³¹

Alternatively, Van Parijs’ obligation-free BI gives workers the bargaining power with the ability to say “no” to a job that is unattractive or disconnected to that individual’s desires. Being in the job market or *wanting* to join the job market has nothing to do with qualifying for benefits. Work-unconditionality has ramifications beyond people receiving social assistance. If any worker can quit her job at any time without financial repercussions, or at least repercussions that threaten general well-being, employers are responsible for attracting and keeping employees. The freedom to say “no” results in a culture wherein lousy jobs may not attract workers, and employers would be forced to automate or pay their workers better. Speaking to his fellow academics, Van Parijs states that “those lousy, poorly-paid jobs which you would not dream of doing will need to be paid better—perhaps even better than yours (and ours), and this is a good thing.”³² The ability to say no rather than being forced to work fundamentally changes what it means to be employed. With BI, people work because they *want* the benefits that accompany work such as meaning, friendship, good pay, etc., instead of working because the other alternative is poverty.

1.6 Freedom and (Relative) Equality: The Foundation of Van Parijs’ Basic Income

³¹ As Wilder points out, being forced to work in this way is fundamentally opposed to the ideals of a free market, i.e., the “exchange between free, consenting parties” (Wilder, “Debating Basic Income,” 282).

³² Van Parijs and Vanderborgh, *Basic Income*, 22.

Van Parijs argues that BI achieves a society of real freedom for all by eliminating poverty and shutting the (un)employment traps, essentially freeing people to choose to work or not to work based on personal taste and preference, and by giving everyone an equal economic floor on which all are able to live freely. Real freedom for all is Van Parijs' method for ethically justifying BI, that the best ethical republic maximizes opportunity for the individuals with the least opportunity in society to choose the lives they might want to live. But the fundamental foundation for Van Parijs' philosophical worldview is contained within two abstract conceptions: freedom and equality found in his principle of maximin real freedom. Van Parijs states his point of departure in the inaugural paragraph of *Real Freedom*:

One: Our capitalist societies are replete with unacceptable inequalities. Two: Freedom is of paramount importance. This book is written by someone who strongly holds these two convictions. And it is primarily addressed to those who share them with him. One of its most central tasks, therefore, is to provide a credible response to the libertarian challenge, that is to the claim that these two convictions are mutually exclusive, or that taking freedom seriously requires one to endorse most of the inequalities in today's world—and more.³³

The purpose of BI for Van Parijs is to prove that freedom and (relative) equality are not mutually exclusive—that these abstract ideals can exist simultaneously. His career has been built on proving that a society that includes BI is the best policy mechanism to fulfill these conditions, but he does not qualify why these conditions are so essential to a just society. Van Parijs presumes that freedom and equality are abstract virtues, good in themselves, and provides no further argument as to their grounding or acceptability. This presumption invokes a liberal conception of the good, where priority is given *first* to correct moral principles and *then* applied

³³ Van Parijs, *Real Freedom*, 1.

to given contexts. It is in line with Kantian moral absolutism, where “All politics must bend its knee before the right.”³⁴ Abstract ideals precede contextual practice in this account; Van Parijs asserts that freedom and (maximin) equality, abstract ideals beyond the realm of human experience, are absolutely good. He suggests that a particular moral ideology, namely classical liberalism, is the best ethical philosophy, irrespective of the moral ideologies of other individuals and communities, without justification. And his BI is only defensible if his moral ideology and the abstract ideals it defends are correct. Other thinkers, such as Rawls, have defended the liberal conception of justice, but Van Parijs assumes a particular worldview from which he develops his BI argument without engagement with the problems of liberalism. This chapter does not seek to assess the value of such liberal ideals but reveals them as assumptions in Van Parijs’ argument.

1.7 Conclusion

Henderson calls Van Parijs’ texts “the most ambitious attempt within the literature to ground a justification of BI within a systematic normative framework,”³⁵ and I do not disagree. But that does not mean it is a sufficient attempt. This chapter explained in detail the definition of Van Parijs’ basic income, namely a regular cash income, paid to every individual, without means-test or work requirement. It further explained that BI has three major constraints: protection of formal freedom, which is the precondition for real freedom, extra allocations to people with

³⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Political Writings*, trans. H.B. Nisbet, ed. Hans Reiss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991): 125.

³⁵ Henderson, “Real Freedom for All Revisited,” 1.

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disabilities in order to create undominated diversity, and implementation of BI at the highest sustainable (and predictable) level in order to maintain a healthy economy. The method for justifying BI and its constraints is real freedom for all, an ideal of society we ought to strive toward because it maximizes freedom and in doing so creates (relative) equality. Van Parijs' BI creates real freedom for all by eliminating poverty, involuntary unemployment, and the employment trap, in which workers are able to say "no" to unattractive and unfulfilling jobs. The ultimate foundation for BI is in the liberal presumption that freedom and equality are absolute goods in every context. I explained that Van Parijs' justification ends in abstract normativity, but the philosophical case for BI is not over. The next chapter will explain a socio-political ethical philosophy that rejects abstractions as possible foundations for ethics in order to show the deficiencies of Van Parijs' liberal belief in freedom and equality as absolutely good ideals.

Chapter Two: William James' Pre-Moral Inclusion: An Anti-Foundational Foundation

2.1 Introduction

In the first chapter, I explained Van Parijs' justification for basic income (BI), the foundation for which is ultimately based in freedom and equality. Most explicitly, individual freedom is the motive of real freedom for all, while relative equality is its limit. Freedom and equality seem to be uncontroversial ideals to endorse. But they are part of the larger system and history of liberalism, defined by Van Parijs as a theory "truly committed to an equal concern for all and to non-discrimination among conceptions of the good life."¹ Van Parijs considers himself a "liberal-egalitarian" philosopher,² but his justification for BI is closer to Rawls' procedural liberalism and classical liberalism because his measure of freedom is economic and his measure of ethics is (primarily) utilitarian.³ Although there are many important critiques of liberalism, a structural critique of the foundations of this ethical account is most warranted for this project.⁴

¹ Philippe Van Parijs, *Real Freedom For All: What (If Anything) Can Justify Capitalism?* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 102.

² Philippe Van Parijs, "Basic Income and Social Justice: Why Philosophers Disagree," *Joint Joseph Rowntree Foundation/University of York Annual Lecture* (Toronto), 2009.

³ See Philippe Van Parijs and Yannick Vanderborght, *Basic Income: A Radical Proposal for a Free Society and a Sane Economy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 109-13. There is a great amount of literature on classical liberalism, all of which originate in John Locke and Adam Smith. Cf. Eamonn Butler, *Classical Liberalism – A Primer* (London: London Publishing Partnership, 2015).

⁴ There are critiques of liberalism in every dominant political philosophy. For a critique from conservatism, see Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (London: Everyman's Library, J. M. Dent & Sons, 1967); from Marxism, see Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question" in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert Tucker (New York: Norton & Company, 1978); from communitarianism see Michael Walzer, "The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism," *Political Theory* 18, no. 1 (1990): 6-23; and from feminism, see Martha Nussbaum, *The Feminist Critique of Liberalism* (The Lindley Lecture, University of Kansas, 1997).

Will Kymlicka states that, at their cores, liberals “believe in a wishy-washy mixture of equality and freedom.”⁵ This is the case with Van Parijs’ classical liberalism: he proposes an ethical philosophy based in pre-existing conceptions of good and bad, i.e. that freedom and equality are absolute goods, that are meant to encapsulate all of experience. This is problematic because, as I will show through the philosophy of William James, any theory that proposes an abstract, intellectual answer to a human question fails to understand what constitutes human belief and human morality. As James says, “There can be no difference which doesn’t make a difference—no difference in abstract truth which does not express itself in a difference in concrete fact, and of conduct consequent upon the fact, imposed on somebody, somehow, somewhere, and somewhen.”⁶ Philosophy, for James is always practical. Through James’ ethical philosophy, I will show that by privileging some ideals, ultimately based in particular human perspectives, Van Parijs’ liberal foundation ignores the constitutive factors of morality and contradicts its supposed “neutral” assessment of the good life. His faith in liberal abstractions is a single ideological perspective within a universe of millions of perspectives, all of which should be considered in a case for BI. James’ social ethics, on the other hand, transcends ideological differences and advocates for inclusion as the condition for the possibility of an ethics.

In James’ essay, “The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life,” he argues that, “there is no such thing as an ethical philosophy dogmatically made up in advance.”⁷ He demonstrates that

⁵ Will Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Introduction. Second Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 1.

⁶ William James, “Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results,” in *The Writings of William James: A Comprehensive Edition*, ed. J. J. McDermott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 349.

⁷ William James, “The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life,” in *The Writings of William James*, 610.

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good and bad are based in practical, felt human experience. Ethics, for James, is neither a pre-existing structure nor in any way transcendental, but instead is an intimately human *method* of resolving conflicting moral claims. In this chapter, I will explain James' social ethics to critique Van Parijs' abstract argument and to propose an alternate foundation for BI: instead of beginning with abstract ideals with definite ends, I demonstrate that ethics begins with the inclusion of different felt human experiences with ends decided through human interaction. In other words, ethics is always already *human* ethics and demands originate in human feeling, are mediated in the social sphere, and fall into an equilibrium in "common sense." The ethical method through which individuals engage with moral standards, or common sense, is threefold: experimentation, listening, and revising beliefs and actions (based on the human response heard through listening). But experimentation requires other humans and an accurate common sense requires *as many humans as possible*. That a representative ethics follows from the inclusion of other humans is the basis of what I call James' "pre-moral inclusion" condition, which I will argue is a better foundation for BI than is Van Parijs' classical liberalism. Because the ethical republic is fallible and incomplete, and many voices are repressed in everyday common sense, radical inclusion precedes the possibility of a truly ethical society. This chapter will argue for a new foundation for BI, namely the anti-foundational (i.e., not based in abstract ideals) ethical theory propounded by James—pre-moral inclusion—and shows that inclusion, not ideals, is the best place to ground an argument for BI.

2.2 William James and the Origin of Morality

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James' point of departure for explaining morality is contained in a thought experiment: he asks his reader to imagine a world without any human beings. In this material world, consisting of only physical and chemical facts, James states, "there is no *status* for good and evil to exist" because "goodness, badness, and obligation must be *realized* somewhere in order to really exist."⁸ This realization is the felt, *human* experience of good and bad in relation to the physical world. Without human life, good and bad have no relevancy—only in felt human experience does activity gain moral or immoral status. A forest fire, for example, has no moral character; unless people will be engulfed within it, fire is simply an amoral fact. There cannot be moral principles without human existence because morality is always already *human* morality. Trygve Throntveit summarizes James' perspective by stating that moral principles "*become* good (or evil) only in consciousness; while, conversely, good and evil exist wherever consciousness exists."⁹ A world without humans is necessarily a world without ethics.

To continue the thought experiment, James adds a single human being to this universe, and instantly personal goods and evils come into existence; that being's consciousness gives moral status to relations in the world. In the universe of this lone sentient being, or what James calls "moral solitude," morality, or more appropriately *potential*-morality, originates in the realization of that being's feelings of pleasure and pain and their accompanying demands. By feeling something as good or bad, the human *makes* it good or bad, because outside of her experience there is no foundation for morality. Hedonistic origins do not explain *all* human

⁸ Ibid., 614, (emphasis added).

⁹ Trygve Throntveit, "William James's Ethical Republic," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 72, no. 2 (2011): 263.

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interests; moral (dis)interest may also be generated by personal or intellectual feelings void of physical pleasure or pain, or as James states, “directly felt fitnesses between things.”¹⁰ For example, “the passion for poetry, for mathematics, or for metaphysics—no one of these things can be wholly explained by either association or utility, [...] a vast number of our moral perceptions also are certainly of this secondary and brain-born kind.”¹¹ But even “fitness” is impossible without a human—even a solitary one—who is capable of realizing or interpreting her experiences as good or bad.

Claims of ethics in a world of potential-morality are not true as such because, “In such a [moral solitude] it would of course be absurd to raise the question of whether the solitary thinker’s judgments of good and ill are *true* or not. Truth supposes a standard outside of the thinker to which he must conform.”¹² Felt human experience is the beginning of morality; feeling something as good or bad, either from pleasure, pain, or fitness, is what creates the *potential* of morality, but is not morality as such. For example, if our human in moral solitude burns her hand on a flame, that action causes pain, she has demands to avoid pain and feel pleasure, and therefore she concludes that putting one’s hand into the flame is not good.¹³ Burning one’s hand in this manner is a personal ill, but such a claim is not moral *per se* without a standard outside that experience; personal experiences create the potential for morality, not morality’s actualization.

¹⁰ James, “The Moral Philosopher,” 612.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*, 615. For more on pragmatic epistemology, see ch. 3.4.

¹³ James makes the case for a “reflex” that children develop as a method to distinguish good and bad based on pleasure and pain through an example of a baby who burns her fingers on a candle and habitually avoids future burns. See William James, *Principles of Psychology Vol. 1* (New York: Dover Publications, 1980), 24-5. The habitual nature of human activity is explained in ch. 3.2.1.

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A universe such as ours is nothing like moral solitude. There are billions of human beings on earth, all with personal feelings, experiences, and demands. Although every demand is a potentially moral one for James, the standard of truthfulness by which one may judge a demand can only be found through negotiating with the existence and demands of *other human beings*. Individuals foster the potentiality of morality (felt human experience), and the social realm allows for its actualization (including and responding to the impact of activity on other people). James explains the profound impact of other minds on morality by adding a second human to his hypothetical moral solitude:

Wherever such minds exist, with judgments of good and ill, and demands upon one another, there is an ethical world in its essential features. Were all other things, gods and men and starry heavens, blotted out from this universe, and were there left but one rock with two loving souls upon it, that rock would have as thoroughly moral a constitution as any possible world which the eternities and immensities could harbor. [...In that world] there would, in short, be a moral life, whose active energy would have no limit but the *intensity of interest* in each other with which the hero and heroine might be endowed.

We, on this terrestrial globe, so far as the visible facts go, are just like the inhabitants of such a rock. Whether a God exist, or whether no God exist, in yon blue heaven above us bent, we form at any rate an ethical republic here below.¹⁴

Relationality between two humans, human *from whom morality originates*, allows for the formation of an “ethical republic” through dialogue and mediation. With only two humans, James states, “there would be real good things and real bad things in the universe; there would be obligations, and expectations; obediences, refusals, and disappointments; compunctions and longings for harmony to come again, and inward peace of conscience when it is restored.”¹⁵ It is an empirical fact that all individuals have “unique ideals, requiring cooperation or

¹⁴ James, “The Moral Philosopher,” 618-19.

¹⁵ Ibid.

acquiescence from other individuals for realization,”¹⁶ and as such, morality in a world such as ours is always social.

What James is elucidating is that ethics begins in human experience and ends with the conflict, mediation, and resolution of different personal moral demands. There are no abstract foundations or ideal ends in ethics without particular humans expressing their unique experiences—the social nature of reality is morality’s beginning and end. Ethics does not come from reason, God, or the mean between excess and deficiency. Instead, ethics comes from human beings included in a social world with individual and collective feelings about that which is good and bad. These feelings generate practical demands and abstract beliefs and ideals which are never independent of individual human beings’ experiences. Ethics is a human and a social endeavour.

2.3 Jamesian Morality: Common Sense, its Fallibility, and an Anti-Foundational Prescription

The thought experiment outlined above is necessary in order to explain the basis of Jamesian social ethics, i.e., that the interaction of human beings (rather than an abstract ideals) is the source of ethics. In the practical world, ethics is far more advanced than one or two individuals in ethical dialogue and conflict. Throughout history, cultures have all settled into norms and practices that structure laws, cultural institutions, and internalized ideologies. These practices are the lived experience of social ethics which James calls “common sense.”¹⁷ Common sense is a cultural set of beliefs and interests that are accepted (usually uncritically) as

¹⁶ Throntveit, “William James’s Ethical Republic,” 259.

¹⁷ William James, “Pragmatism and Common Sense” in *The Writings of William James*, 420.

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normal, right, and good both in individual and collective belief systems. Common sense is developed and normalized through experiments in past generations that have continuously “worked.” As James states,

*our fundamental ways of thinking about things are discoveries of exceedingly remote ancestors, which have been able to preserve themselves throughout the experience of all subsequent time. They form one great state of equilibrium in the human mind’s development, the stage of common sense.*¹⁸

The ideologies that make up the common sense of a culture today exist because successful experiments from the past have “preserved themselves” through continuing to be successful. While James’ point of departure for ethics lies in human beings and their interactions, the practical state of ethics is conceived in common sense. Rather than searching for a transcendental condition for everyday ethics, James describes common sense as the mechanism that *creates* ethics. When a practice “works,” or is conventionally accepted through time, it adds to the stock of norms that define common sense. Rather than searching for an absolutely true good or bad, James maps the way that good and bad are historically defined, namely by that which is included and excluded in common sense.¹⁹

The truth, according to James, is encompassed in “what works,” or “*True ideas are those that we can assimilate, validate, corroborate and verify. False ideas are those that we cannot.*”²⁰ As such, moral truth is fluid and changes with context, problems, and people; it is based on what

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Cf. James, “Pragmatism and Common Sense.”

²⁰ James, “The Moral Philosopher,” 430.

is useful, and utility changes throughout time and through who is included in the designation of what works. As James says,

there is nothing final in any actually given equilibrium of human ideals, [...] as our present laws and customs have fought and conquered other past ones, so they will in their turn be overthrown by any newly discovered order which will hush up the complaints that they still give rise to, without producing others louder still.²¹

This is a central aspect of James's moral thought: the truths of worlds are fallible; the world is unfinished and uncertain. And we, the people inhabiting these societies, are the ones who maintain or change moral orders, not toward some pre-existing goal, but towards ends defined by human interaction and mediation. But we, whether we are included in the construction of common sense or not, are all impacted by the norms of (fallible) common sense.

For many things, human understanding is successful in its reliance on common sense. But common sense makes intuitive a certain worldview which privileges some felt experiences, and the ideals that are established on their behalf, above others. Every system of common sense excludes some ideals—for better or for worse—by that which stands the tests of time. But experiments and ideas that succeed in the past are not necessarily right, they have merely been judged triumphant by those *already included* in the ethical dialogue that maintains common sense. For hundreds of years, the experiment in which women could not vote “worked,” but only because the common sense of the time excluded the voices of women in the experiment's evaluation.

²¹ Ibid., 624.

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This ethical dialogue is ongoing: the ethical equilibrium in the 21st century is not the end of ethical growth and discovery, so James instructs us, “Retain, I pray you, this suspicion of common sense!”²² Suspicion is warranted because moral norms have never completely encompassed every human demand. An ethical republic that fulfils every demand in most cases is impossible because many demands fundamentally conflict with others. This is the tragic aspect of James’ ethics upon which most scholars agree.²³ But more importantly, common sense is neither absolute nor final because its categories are only a “collection of extraordinarily successful hypotheses”²⁴—hypotheses that have only worked for those included in its constitution.

Therefore, common sense is dangerous because its norms dictate a singular right way to be ethical, and it is fallible because it changes throughout time. In fact, common sense *blinds* us to the felt experience of people who do not fit into its paradigm: “Pent in under every system of moral rules are innumerable persons whom it weighs upon and goods which it represses; and these are always rumbling and grumbling in the background and ready for any issue by which they may *get free*.”²⁵ As James says, the conventional ideology of a society “encourages us not to be philosophers but partisans.”²⁶

James is an anti-foundationalist, or a thinker who rejects a fundamental principle as the ground for knowledge. Theories are instruments, rather than answers; James’ method engages

²² Ibid., 428.

²³ Cf. Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory* (Oxford University Press: 1999), 116; Robert B. Westbrook, *Democratic Hope: Pragmatism and the Politics of Truth* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2005), esp. 72–73.

²⁴ James, “Pragmatism and Common Sense,” 428.

²⁵ Ibid., 624 (emphasis added).

²⁶ James, “The Moral Philosopher,” 622.

with a particular anti-intellectualist attitude, or “*The attitude of looking away from first things, principles, ‘categories,’ supposed necessities; and of looking toward last things, fruits, consequences, etc.*”²⁷ Moral truth cannot be set before an experimental action in the social realm; it is only solidified after one sees what the action does in the world. And since the truths of common sense change with time and changing societies, there can be no foundation for ethics, and no goal towards which such a foundation directs. Ethics is only discovered through individual and social practical contexts within the norms of an imperfect and changing common sense. And common sense *should* change, James argues. There are few qualities as vile to James as complacency; he says that the highest ethical life “consists at all times in the breaking of rules which have grown too narrow for the actual case.” Therefore, the best experiments are those that push the boundaries of common sense.

2.4 James’ Ethical Method

Even though the morality of common sense is worked out in an ethical dialogue through history, James’ ethical method explains the way individual and societal action is judged on a smaller scale, most notably how to judge one’s own individual actions personally good or bad and collective action as collectively good or bad. His ethical method is simple: *experiment* (perform an action), *listen* to the impacts of said experiment, *revise* beliefs and actions based on the voices to which you listen, and repeat *in perpetuum*.²⁸ This cycle is the way that everyone understands that which is good and bad in their own lives, and the way societies develop the

²⁷ Ibid., 380.

²⁸ James, “Moral Philosopher.”

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norms of common sense. James' ethical method begins with practical *experimentation*, which is synonymous with every action that is ever undertaken; to act is to experiment. In the preface to *The Will to Believe*, James writes that ideals that people believe, practically enacted, "are the experimental tests by which they are verified, and the only means by which their truth or falsehood can be wrought out."²⁹ Because there is no tablet on which good and evil is secure, activity becomes the plane for moral negotiation. To experiment is to believe in and test a moral hypothesis. Because every belief and experiment can be proven wrong (through the following step in James' ethical method), the consequences of actions define the ethical quality of each act. Experimenting is what humans do, but there are better and worse ways to experiment, and their value can only be judged after the fact.

Moral experimentation requires literal *listening* to the results of one's actions, and this listening is the standard by which one can judge whether one's hypothesis is correct. James says that these experiments can only be judged after their enactment, through "how much more outcry or how much appeasement comes about."³⁰ It is through the actual "cries of the wounded"³¹ that one knows if they made a bad mistake. A secluded and emotionless person cannot know if they are living a moral life, even if equipped with some categorical imperative or abstract commonsensical liberal ideal. The only force that appeals to us, James says, is "found in the 'everlasting ruby vaults' of our own human hearts, as they happen to beat responsive and not irresponsive to the claim [of another]."³² What shows the success or failure of an experiment

²⁹ William James, *The Will to Believe and other essays in popular philosophy* (New York: Dover, 1956), xii.

³⁰ James, "The Moral Philosopher," 624.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 626.

³² *Ibid.*, 618.

is its impact on people in the world and on the self that one becomes. Humans can ignore everything else when they are serving an abstract principle, whether it be utilitarian, deontological, liberal, or tyrannical, but when an ethics is based on the human response to one's action, one's heart will beat differently after a wounded cry.

The final step in James' moral system is *revision*. After an action, and judging its rightness or wrongness after the fact, that judgement requires a revision to one's moral beliefs about the ethical republic, about oneself, and most importantly, a revision to future actions. To fail and to learn from one's failure is a virtue, according to James: "We want people who are willing to espouse failure as their vocation."³³ If I believe that my action is correct, but after the fact I learn that I have failed, I can no longer maintain that belief. As individual beliefs and ideas—based on experiences—change throughout history, common sense is revised. Humans always experiment and, at least potentially, listen and revise their actions and worldviews, but in most situations, individuals come to their own ethical equilibrium which works in their environment. Experimentation is the basic mechanism of morality in James' theory; but humans can do better, and if they want to be ethical, they must include and listen to voices outside of their moral paradigm.

2.4.1 *Pre-Moral Inclusion*

Common sense is the production of everyday humans and every human is conditioned by this constructed common sense. It is necessarily exclusive because not everyone's perspectives

³³ William James to Josephine Lowell, Dec. 6, 1903, *James Papers* (Houghton Library), quoted in Coon, Deborah J. "“One Moment in the World's Salvation”: Anarchism and the Radicalization of William James," *The Journal of American History* 83, no. 1 (1996): 91.

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can be represented, but common sense is always more exclusive than it *could be*. While everyone has desires that cannot both be satisfied in a personal or collective common sense because they are inherently self-contradictory, such as “spending our money yet growing rich; taking our holiday yet getting ahead with our work; shooting and fishing yet doing no hurt to the beasts,”³⁴ there is a plethora of perspectives that are not necessarily contradictory within common sense but are still excluded, or “repressed” as James states. The reason for this exclusion is a practical question to be taken up in chapter four, but that the exclusion exists is a problem for James’ ethical method because voices excluded from common sense are not part of the feedback loop that revises common sense. And because common sense dictates even the lives of those excluded from impacting it, common sense has dictatorial qualities. It impacts everyone in a society but is constructed only by those already inside of it, i.e. those with institutional influence and power. As James says, under every system of moral rules are “innumerable persons whom it weighs upon and goods which it represses.”³⁵ These people and goods can “get free,” i.e. become part of common sense, but first, the voices of repressed people need to be included in the ethical dialogue that creates common sense. Inclusion in collective common sense precedes a representative (or democratic) common sense. And until all voices are included in the ongoing ethical dialogue in a society, the norms of common sense will be dictated only by those with the privilege of not being repressed—in particular those with conventional power, status, and wealth.

³⁴ James, “The Moral Philosopher,” 621.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 624.

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The Jamesian solution to the exclusive nature of common sense is *radical inclusion*, i.e., to include as many voices as possible in the ethical dialogue in order to create the conditions for a social ethics that accurately represents the perspectives of the social; as he proclaims, “Since victory and defeat there must be, the victory to be philosophically prayed for is that of the more *inclusive* side.”³⁶ Ethics is an experimental, methodological process (act, listen, revise), and while actions and revisions are individually enacted, listening requires the inclusion of other people in an individual or collective paradigm. To make a common sense that accurately reflects the felt human experiences of people in a population, everyone’s voice—not just those who fit into the current paradigm (repressive common sense)—must be included. Inclusion as the necessary precondition to ethics is a simple yet profound point at the core of what James adds to moral philosophy.

In order to clarify the anti-transcendental nature of James’ perspective, I call the foundation of Jamesian ethics “pre-moral inclusion” because ethics *requires* the inclusion human voices, and an ethics that resists totalitarianism requires expanding the number of voices included in common sense.³⁷ The alternative to pre-moral inclusion, i.e. the status quo, is an oligarchical ethical order dictated by those with power and influence. Pre-moral inclusion is the condition for ethics, not a transcendental ideal such as freedom and equality, because it does not state that any particular ideal is better than others and has neither a supernatural ground nor idealized end, it merely elevates the experiences of every person in the society in which ideals are debated, enacted, and normalized.

³⁶ James, “The Moral Philosopher,” 623.

³⁷ The basis for pre-moral inclusion is fundamentally democratic. Cf. ch 4.

A legitimate objection against pre-moral inclusion could be argued as follows: “James condemns ideal abstractions as the basis for morality, so what distinguishes freedom and equality from inclusion? Inclusion sounds like another abstraction.” If inclusion is an *a priori* principle, James’ anti-foundationalism falls apart. But inclusion is drastically different than freedom and equality. Inclusion is not (first) a human ideal, it is the practical condition for the creation of human ideals. It is not an *a priori* ethical principle, but that which precedes and ultimately maximizes the possibility of ethics. Inclusion is not the core of an ethical ideology or political philosophy, but the practical condition for ethical ideology. Pre-moral inclusion is prior to every ethical debate. Without inclusion, there is no ethics, and without maximum inclusion, common sense—i.e. the status quo—cannot reflect the moral demands of a culture. Inclusion has the capacity to transcend the dualism of ethical ideologies, in particular the debate between liberalism and socialism:³⁸ On this reading, liberalism and socialism are incommensurable because they have different points of departure, namely equity and equality respectively, so debates between these schools of thought go on without resolution or productivity *ad infinitum*. As an alternative, pre-moral inclusion rejects an abstract foundational principle of morality and gives the authority of defining good and bad to an actual ethical republic and the necessary social dialogues within it.

James is a master of overcoming dualisms between incompatible philosophies. He argues that pragmatism provides a method to transcend the following philosophical problems: the one

³⁸ For an overview of the deep conflicts between liberalism and socialism, see James Alexander, “The Major Ideologies of Liberalism, Socialism and Conservatism,” *Political Studies* 63, no. 5 (2014): 980–994.

and the many, freedom and determinism, materialism and spiritualism, optimism and pessimism, and more.³⁹ In each of these cases, James examines the practical implications of each theory if that theory is true and finds a third way to overcome their deficiencies. In the same way, Jamesian pre-moral inclusion transcends the divide in academic and political debate by prioritizing the practical importance of inclusion. The divisions of political philosophy are insignificant as long as there are actual voices being repressed by the status quo. Without every perspective represented in the mechanisms that create and maintain common sense, individual philosophers cannot seek an absolute principle that is the basis of ethics. They can either assume that their perspectives are absolutely good (which seems close to the experience of Jamesian “moral solitude”) or advocate for the practical expansion of the condition of ethics, namely inclusion, and participate and listen to the ethical dialogue that ensues.

Pre-moral inclusion *first* starts with human beings with practical experiences in the world, feeling things as good and bad, and making demands that require the response of others. This directly negates the possibility of abstract moral standards that precede actual human experience. *Second*, in the social realm different moral demands are mediated through a myriad of ways—including public opinion, politics, and generally, moral dialogue—that settle into an equilibrium of normalcy called common sense, which typically guides most of human action. There are different instances of personal interpretation and exercise of common senses based on social group, geography, and history. Because common sense, like all truth, is fallible and

³⁹ Cf. William James, *Pragmatism* (New York: Dover Publications, 1995).

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represses some voices, when individuals and communities act, their actions are not always already either good or bad, in fact, every action is an experiment.

The experimentation process is the *third* aspect of pre-moral inclusion. Experiments succeed or fail in the practical world, and the only way to judge an experiment is through listening to other people about the impact that one's action has on them. This requires listening and revisions to our perspectives and ultimately, revising common sense. But the experimentation process cannot adequately fall into an ethical equilibrium without the inclusion of as many people as possible. Therefore, inclusion is a prerequisite to any robust moral system. Before one can be moral, there must be other people, and a moral common sense requires *as many people as possible*—radical inclusion if possible—in a moral universe. The maximum quality of morality for individuals, and common sense for collectives, comes from the inclusion of the maximum number of voices and perspectives in a moral sphere.

Radical inclusion is the experimental or social end (not ideal or transcendental) of pre-moral inclusion, but such inclusion requires qualification. Radical inclusion means an inclusion of every *individual*, not every perspective. Trygve Throntveit shares this interpretation of James. When James says the victory to be “prayed for” is the “more inclusive side,” Throntveit argues, “it was people, not ideals, on whose behalf he pleaded.”⁴⁰ This is because (based on felt human evidence) not all demands are equal; moral inclusion is not merely about fulfilling the highest number of demands. The quality of demands is also considered.⁴¹ All people should be included

⁴⁰ Trygve Throntveit, “William James’s Ethical Republic.” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 72 (2011): 270.

⁴¹ See James, “The Moral Philosopher,” 613, wherein James argues that it would be a “hideous thing” to accept a “utopia” in which millions are kept permanently happy on the condition that one person “on the far-off edge of things should lead a life of lonely torture.” As such, he distances himself from pure utilitarian (or majoritarian) calculations about happiness and demand-satisfaction.

in the ethical dialogue, but some perspectives need to be restricted, namely hate speech, i.e. that which undermines the practical (pre-moral) requirement of ethics: every human demand has potentially-moral quality. As James says, “The practical consequence of such a philosophy is the well-known democratic respect for the sacredness of individuality,—is, at any rate, the outward tolerance of whatever is not itself intolerant.⁴² Therefore, radical inclusion means the inclusion of every human, but not every perspective; intolerant, exclusive hate speech is not part of pre-moral inclusion.⁴³

2.4.2 *James’ Individual Morality*

Philosophers, James says, “cannot rule out any ideal from being heard” and should vote always for the good which seems “most apt to be a member of a more inclusive whole.”⁴⁴ This means that individuals ought to seek out new and diverse perspectives and always be open to revision based on these viewpoints. In his text, “On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings,” James explains that without an “intensity of interest,” humans are often blind to what is meaningful to others. He famously explains this through a personal anecdote. While journeying in the mountains of North Carolina, James passes what he calls “coves” where settlers built log cabins and kept small farms. Upon seeing these, James says “the impression on my mind was one of unmitigated squalor,” and that “No modern person ought to be willing to live a day in

⁴² William James, *Talks to Teachers on Psychology: and to Students on Some of Life’s Ideals* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1899), v.

⁴³ Cf. ch. 4.6.

⁴⁴ James, “The Moral Philosopher,” 622, 626.

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such a state of rudimentariness and denudation.”⁴⁵ But when he asked his driver, a mountaineer, what sort of people would live in such a way, the mountaineer responded, “All of us, [...] Why, we ain’t happy here, unless we are getting one of these coves under cultivation.”⁴⁶ Through the eyes of a Cambridge academic, James confesses, “the clearing, which to me was a mere ugly picture on the retina, [but the clearing] was to them a symbol redolent with moral memories and sang a very pæan of duty, struggle, and success.”⁴⁷

James was blind to the meaning of these coves to mountain settlers, he did not include their perspectives in his personal moral order, and how could he? Before *listening* to his mountaineer companion, he had fallen into a common human trait: humans feel their own duties and feelings as immediately and intensely significant, and often cannot see and do not listen to that which is meaningful, or moral, to others. We need others to support our moral demands, and often, in the same way we are blind to others’ perspectives; James writes,

others are too much absorbed in their own vital secrets to take an interest in ours. Hence the stupidity and injustice of our opinions, so far as they deal with the significance of alien lives. Hence the falsity of our judgments, so far as they presume to decide in an absolute way on the value of other persons’ conditions or ideals.⁴⁸

Without including the plurality of voices, moral perspectives, and felt experiences of others, individuals are destined to have erroneous opinions and faulty judgements. Because common sense, and therefore, moral truth changes with people, context, and culture, the only way to best grasp the totality of competing truths is through constantly expanding one’s moral universe. And this expansion only occurs through including and listening to as many voices as possible.

⁴⁵ James, “On a Certain Blindness,” 630, 631.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 631.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 629-30

2.4.3 *James' Societal Ethics*

The central problem of any moral life is that not all voices are actively heard; individuals cannot include every voice in their worldview. They can seek out new and different perspectives through dialogue, literature, and research, but one person cannot expect to understand every single ideology in any culture. This is where the personal prescription expands to the societal. An individual requires other voices to have any standard of ethics, and if he or she seeks to be an ethical person, he or she ought to perpetually expand one's conception of the plurality of perspectives and voices. In the same way, an ethical republic comes into existence through the interaction of various human demands, which come from felt experiences, and in order to be a *better* ethical republic, with a common sense that reflects the people it impacts, that society ought to expand its moral boundaries as much as possible. Unlike individual humans, collectives *can* include all of their members' voices in decision-making. The decision-making process that is (in theory) governed by all its constituents is called *democracy*. Everyone can partake and communicate in the process of ethical deliberation and decision-making in a democracy. And if a society truly follows the decision-making processes of an ideal democracy and includes everyone in ethical deliberations, the common sense will adequately reflect that society's perspectives and demands.

In the West, of course, the largest venue in which collective ethical rulings are made is in the political arena. Politicians literally write the rules around what is good and bad. Through legislation, regulation, and initiatives, national, provincial, and municipal governments make large-scale rulings on what is acceptable in society. These governments have the capacity to

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change common sense; for example, when the US government, through the supreme court, ruled that gay marriage was legal, that which was acceptable changed. But the formal political arena is not the only way that ethics are decided. Arguably, common sense around gay marriage had been changing for decades because the LGBTQ+ community was heard in informal social settings, and thus the governments unequivocal legalisation *followed*, rather than *changed*, common sense. I do not seek to settle this debate here; what is important is that there are more actors in the process of revising common sense than solely the government. The legitimization of common sense is a socio-political activity. Sites of employment, unions, social movements, clubs, religious organizations, neighbourhood associations, schools, and families all contribute to the norms about good and bad. Each of these groups maintain and perpetuate certain norms and practices through what is accepted as normal and through the vision, focus, and perspectives represented within them.

But common sense can also be changed through changing that which is common within these smaller associations. Families with gay children can either cast them out or reform their worldviews. Schools with new refugees can either reject or embrace these children, and in so doing, revise their ideologies. Neighbourhood and religious organizations can maintain the status quo through discriminatory requirements for entry or change because of encounters with new people. And workplaces can either ignore women who complain about sexual harassment and unfair treatment or listen to and believe women and change their norms and practices. Each of these choices is between maintaining a repressive status quo—contemporary common sense—and revising their ideologies based on encounters with human beings. And these

revisions spread, sometimes all the way to the law, economics, politics, and generally, a revised common sense.

2.5 The Critique of Van Parijs' Abstract Foundations

Thus far, I explained James' argument that morality begins and ends in human experience rather than absolutist or transcendental ideals; the source of moral beliefs and norms is felt, not intellectualized. I then showed the structure of this moral methodology, namely its anti-transcendental and fallible foundation in common sense, which is a constructed social sense of right and wrong based on that which "works" throughout time. The judgement of "what works" is made by the voices included in common sense, but there are many voices excluded from common sense with perspectives different from the included ideals. I explained that when more voices are included, common sense becomes more democratic and representative of the populace it governs and that when it is more exclusive it becomes more dictatorial and oligarchical. I then explained James' ethical method on individual and collective levels, namely experimentation, listening, and revising those experiments and beliefs. And I showed that inclusion, or pre-moral inclusion, precedes an ethical ideology because to use any common sense that is exclusive will always be less representative, and more oligarchical, than an absolutely inclusive common sense. As such, inclusion precedes ethics.

In the first chapter, I explained that the foundation for Van Parijs' BI argument is in the abstract ideals of freedom and equality. These are unquestioned, absolutist goods in Van Parijs' argument. Van Parijs' BI argument is not connected to human experience or demand at all. Instead of starting ethics in human experience, Van Parijs bases his ethical argument in two

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liberal abstractions which are good irrespective of context or individual and community perspectives. But as I have shown, in conjunction with James' theory of the moral life, abstract principles are rendered good by people in particular circumstances within a particular historical and cultural common sense. The liberal belief that freedom and equality are the basis for ethical philosophy is merely a felt experience, one—if a prevalent one—amongst billions of human ideals. As James points out, “The sense for abstract justice which some persons have is as eccentric a variation, from the natural-history point of view, as is the passion for music or for the higher philosophical consistencies which consumes the soul of others.”⁴⁹ Since believing in a moral ideal propounds a particular conception of the good life, Van Parijs contradicts himself when he claims that “what counts as a just society should not be determined on the basis of some particular conception of the good life.”⁵⁰ *His* conception of the good life is the basis for his “ideal society,” i.e. real freedom for all. Van Parijs bases his ethical defence of BI in a specific conception of common sense, namely liberal individualism. Pre-moral inclusion, on the other hand, does not presume a correct moral ideology. Instead it is an unavoidable condition that acknowledges the human source of ideology and trusts that, if everyone is included in the discussion of good and bad, common sense will reflect that which is good and bad for everyone.

Van Parijs' ethical argument is based on a group of particular moral ideals that does not and cannot encompass all moral perspectives. It shrinks before the vast moral universe of ideals and feelings. His approach to a just society encapsulates what David Rondel calls “ideal-

⁴⁹ Ibid., 612-3.

⁵⁰ Van Paris, *Real Freedom*, 28.

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theoretical' first principles" wherein "one *first* discovers the correct moral principles (a purely 'normative' enterprise) and *then* asks how they may be applied to this or that context."⁵¹ As I have expressed, there are no correct moral principles without radical inclusion, merely exclusive ideologies dominated by powerful peoples' perspectives. Common sense dictates that which is good and bad in a society for everyone, but not everyone is included in the constitution of common sense; therefore from a Jamesian perspective, everyone should be included in the decision-making processes which create the norms of common sense.

In contemporary Western cultures, some voices do not matter (or have no influence), and this is antithetical to James' theory. Even though America, the "land of the free," is a country heralded for its belief in the abstraction of freedom, many people are not included in this freedom. Although people excluded from influence on common sense still realize moral ideas and make moral demands, their voices do not impact the common sense. There are practical prerequisites for freedom, including wealth, education, status, and free time, or generally, inclusion in the decision-making processes that determine common sense. Without inclusion, the social norms that govern ethics, values, and ideologies work for some (especially people instrumental in the norms' maintenance) but are not the best norms for everyone. For example, homelessness and poverty are tolerated because the voices of the homeless and the poor are excluded from the ethical dialogue, and therefore from the norms of common sense.⁵² The overall perspective of James' ethical theory is that the morality of common sense grows with the number of voices included in it, because it is through people, and nothing else, that demands

⁵¹ David Rondel, *Pragmatist Egalitarianism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 8.

⁵² Cf. ch. 4.3.

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are validated and normalized. Only through a process of inclusion can a better universe be attained. And for the time being, people who are excluded from the status quo are impacted by a system of norms that do not reflect their demands. Inclusion, not freedom, is the beginning (and end, as will become clear in future chapters) of ethics.

2.6 Conclusion

It may not be controversial that freedom and equality are worthy ideals, but to base a moral system on *any* abstract ideal ignores the way that morals function. Morality is not based in first principles but is the consequence of human experience and human experiment in the world. But some perspectives are more influential than others; common sense embraces some voices and represses others. Morality cannot and should not remain fixed and rigid. Morals are a part of a common sense that is fallible, and therefore the possibility of defining a system on the back of two abstract moral ideals—ideals that are fixed, static, and not amenable to experimentation—is impossible and disconnected with the real activity of human moral development and the demands of an ethical common sense. Van Parijs’ foundation for BI caters to the current way he (and classical liberalism) sees good and bad, rather than something that is necessary for a more accurate formation of good and bad. It is both presumptuous and incorrect to believe that one has found the best ethical ideals that will ever exist. Humility in the face of billions of moral perspectives, rather than certainty in a particular position, is what is missing in Van Parijs’ account. Instead of assuming that humanity has reached its ethical apex, I argue that philosophers ought to take a step back and trust that, through including the voices repressed by the weight of contemporary common sense, our culture will inevitably become a better one with

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fresh ideas, new perspectives, and unique viewpoints that Western thinkers, a group in which I include myself, cannot envision.

The case for BI requires a conception of morality as a consequence of human life, not one that precedes it, and a structural understanding of social ethics as the production of whatever group has influence on it. This chapter explained how William James' pre-moral prescription of inclusivity better explains the process of ethical deliberation and the ways that his anti-foundational foundation is a better basis for BI than Van Parijs' ideals. Since the origin of morality and the mediation of common sense is solely found within the realm of felt human experience, abstract ideals formulated in a particular context cannot be the basis for an ethical argument. Van Parijs is biased towards a particular perspective and contradicts his neutrality principle. But this perspective is only one in an ethical republic of billions, and as James states, the task for a philosopher is to study the ideals and practices existing in the world, and at the outset of his inquiry, "he ought to have no other ideals."⁵³ Van Parijs justifies his BI because, he claims, freedom and equality are abstract ideals, good in all circumstances. In order to discover the justification for BI, we must look at the ethical republic without the bias of our ideals and advocate for the creation of the conditions for a broader scope of ethical mediation and deliberation. Only inclusion of many and different voices in the process of ethical dialogue creates the possibility for an ethical republic.

⁵³ James, "The Moral Philosopher," 611.

Chapter Three: Critiquing Van Parijs: The Self and the Value of Activity

3.1 Introduction

In chapter two I explained through an investigation of William James' social ethics that inclusion is a stronger foundation for ethical philosophy than Philippe Van Parijs' liberal and abstract principle of freedom. James argues that ethics originate in human experience and become entrenched through a politico-socio-ethical dialogue in which ethics are akin to scientific experiments. When an action has positive consequences, i.e., when the voices of other people appraise such consequences, that action "works" in a Jamesian sense, and is perpetuated until the voices of other humans reject that action, at which point such an action (and belief in that action) requires revision. The problem with such a moral system is that not everyone in a society has the same influence on the ethical dialogue that structures their social ethics, in fact, many people have little to no influence. As such, I extended James' social ethics to its experimental conclusion, namely that inclusion precedes ethical dialogue as such because human reaction is the standard by which one knows if an action is good or bad. And because common sense—the culmination of a vast number of human experiments and human responses to said experiments—influences and controls that which is good and bad for everyone, everyone should be included in the ethical dialogue (radical inclusion) in order to create democratic, rather than dictatorial or oligarchical, social ethics.

"Pre-moral inclusion," what I call the Jamesian ethical account, is a better philosophical ideology than the liberalism of Van Parijs because morality is not prescribed by philosophers. Van Parijs advocates for an ethical philosophy that posits freedom and (relative) equality as goals worthy of striving towards without and beyond justification, as necessary goods, but James

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shows that norms in common sense such as freedom are the result of repressive and exclusive ethical dialogues, and instead of advocating for an ethics based on contemporary norms, I argue that inclusion is the practical prerequisite to a representative social ethics. Abstract ideals remove the human being from the actual experience of ethical experimentation and posit particular perspectives as the absolutely good and right ones. James shows why philosophers need humility—a philosopher’s perspective is merely one of billions, and all perspectives have moral content that should be included in the ethical republic.

This chapter further develops the argument that Van Parijs’ BI justification is unacceptable for two reasons, both of which reflect his classical liberal foundation. First, Van Parijs’ conception of the self is based in an individualism that is limited and embraces the repressive status quo as is evident in his argument that the value of traits can be defined based on current preferences (without reference to structural reasons for such preferences). Second, Van Parijs’ definition of valuable human activity is capitalistic and ignores “non-productive” labour because his philosophy of inheritance, that which defines what is valuable throughout time, does not account for unwaged activity.

Classical liberal economists have theorized an individual independent from society for hundreds of years; as John Stuart Mill claims, “Human beings in society have no properties but those which are derived from, and which may be resolved into, the laws of the nature of individual men.”¹ The whole is always dependent on the attributes of the parts, according to

¹ John Stuart Mill, *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, ed. J. M. Robson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), 879; cf. Jeremy Bentham: *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, eds. J. H. Burns and H. L. A. Hart (London: Athlone Press, 1970).

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classical liberalism, and Van Parijs utilizes this sort of self in his argument for BI. I will argue that Van Parijs' classical liberal conception of selfhood presupposes an isolated, economic individual that is inconsistent with the welfare reforms for which Van Parijs advocates. This form of individualism suggests that individuals are disconnected from the social experience of selfhood and further, responsible for their own poverty because choices are based in innate preferences, rather than in systems of societal power. I will counter these aspects of Van Parijs' individualism with William James' psychology and philosophy. James argues that (social) habit is the primary basis of action, rather than inherent individual preferences; he defends an expansive sense of the self which shows the limits of Van Parijs' *homo economicus*; and James' structural and fallible common sense demonstrates Van Parijs' bias toward contemporary norms. To punctuate James' point, I will use disability studies as an example that shows the social and marginalizing nature of the status quo's common sense.

The second problem with Van Parijs' philosophical worldview is his conception of value, which is clearest in his defence against the "free-rider" objection, i.e., that it is unfair that people receive a BI if they do not work. Van Parijs argues that BI is just because the value of historical inheritance creates the ability to hold jobs or (depending on the year in which Van Parijs writes) make high incomes. The structural forces that created the ability to have wealth and work for which no one today worked is the definition of inheritance for Van Parijs. Currently, he claims, this inheritance is distributed unequally through incomes, in which the wealthy have salaries that include a vast amount of inheritance and the poor have wages that contain much less. Van Parijs argues that everyone should be equally endowed with this inheritance because it is a collective inheritance to which no one particularly entitled and therefore BI is the solution

because it can distribute this inheritance. But I will demonstrate that Van Parijs' argument results in a philosophy in which the only activity that can be described as valuable is activity that has economic consequences. The Jamesian alternative I provide is again based in common sense: common sense is the measure of value, all activity is involved in the production of common sense, and therefore all activity is valuable. A great deal of the actual norms and practices in common sense cannot be constrained to economic consequences, and the outcome of Van Parijs' argument, I demonstrate, is that the actions without economic consequences are worthless. To conclude, I posit a Jamesian defence of an obligation-free BI, namely that it distributes resources that creates the conditions for any and all activity, which is inherently valuable to the creation and maintenance of common sense. Irrespective of employment status, people should be included in the ethical dialogue that creates common sense, and every form of activity impacts common sense. To sum up, this chapter shows that Van Parijs' philosophy has unreconcilable problems, namely in the realms of individualism and non-economic activity, and that it requires amendments that James can provide.

3.2 Van Parijs' Individualism and its Deficiencies

Van Parijs understands the self is an aggregate of traits, namely talents, acquired through "nature or upbringing,"² individual tastes or preferences, and the choices that these preferences generate. He admits talents are both natural and social, but does not acknowledge the same for taste (or preference). Every mention of "self" and "individual" in Van Parijs' *Real Freedom* is

² Van Parijs, *Real Freedom*, 61.

framed in language of freedom, ownership, self-interest, self-respect, employment, individual choices, and individual preferences.³ He never establishes a philosophy of *why* individuals have the preferences they do. Preferences merely appear as part of a human constitution. This component of Van Parijs' philosophy of self is deeply problematic but is a good example of the way that his liberal bias seeps into his argument for BI.

Another aspect of the Van Parijs individualism is the way that individual traits are designated as good or bad. This designation is a social process, but a short-sighted and purely majoritarian one: if the majority currently believes a trait is good, then it is good. The utilitarian valuation of traits is clearly exhibited in Van Parijs' argument for "undominated diversity." Van Parijs acknowledges that "some people have serious handicaps relative to others" and that justice "requires compensation for unequal internal endowments."⁴ Internal endowments are another term that means "talents." The way that Van Parijs defends that people with "serious handicaps" require compensation is through the idea of "undominated diversity;" that distribution in a society is unjust "as long as there are two people such that everyone in the society concerned prefers the whole endowment (both internal and external) of one of them to that of the other."⁵ When everyone in a society agrees that one person has preferable traits compared to a second person, there is "dominated diversity." And "undominated diversity" exists when no person in a society has internal (talents) and external (income) endowments preferable to another's. In other words, people with "bad" traits, i.e. talents plus income, should

³ The only exception to this rule is when Van Parijs writes that "no human individual could reach adulthood in the absence of innumerable goods and services she is treated to throughout her childhood" (Van Parijs, *Real Freedom*, 103). Otherwise, there is no philosophy of selfhood beyond an assumed liberal individualism.

⁴ Ibid., 58.

⁵ Ibid., 59; cf. ch. 1.2.

be given extra compensation through BI. This majoritarian valuation based in status-quo morality is the standard by which Van Parijs measures good and bad traits.

Van Parijs argues that *everyone* values (or has a preference for) that which is conventionally accepted as “ability:” “there are general talents (say, sight) everyone firmly values, whether or not one possesses them.”⁶ And as such, Van Parijs argues that people with physical or mental disabilities require a higher BI. The internal endowments, or talents, plus external endowments, or the increased BI, of persons with disabilities would then be more preferable to some in society than an able body with the regular BI (based on a conception of the good life where income is the most important). As long as one person prefers the whole endowment of a deaf or blind person, then undominated diversity is attained.⁷ Van Parijs posits that some talents are (de)valued by everyone, and in particular, talents associated with disability, and undominated diversity solves this problem. Therefore, not only are preferences individual rather than social, but their ethical quality is based in 1) the morality of the status quo and 2) absolute human preferences.

The final trait of individuals (after social talents and individual preferences) is the choice that results from preferences. Individual preferences and tastes have consequences, which according to Van Parijs are the sole responsibility of the individual: “people must bear the consequences of the preferences or tastes they have on their level of welfare or preference

⁶ Ibid., 69.

⁷ This extra allocation cannot be so high that *everyone* in a society would reasonably prefer the endowments of a person with disability to another’s endowment, merely that *not everyone* would prefer the combination of internal and external endowments in all respects of one person compared to another. See ch. 1; Van Parijs, *Real Freedom*, ch. 3.

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satisfaction.”⁸ Preferences or tastes are what motivate people to act; action is the rational end of taste, and therefore, actions are an individual’s full responsibility. As Van Parijs states, “I have no objection to people ending up with different amounts of compensation as a result of differences in the actual choices they make on the basis of their tastes.”⁹ Therefore, since individual taste has no structural explanation, neither does action.

Van Parijs’ conception of self views individuals as connected to a broader society only as the source of utilitarian moral decision-making. His understanding of the individual is primarily an isolated one who enacts inherent preferences, and as such, I conclude that Van Parijs’ individualism is based in to classical liberalism, wherein individuals precede society, have inner preferences that impact society, but are not impacted by society.¹⁰ Of course, this conclusion is based in the fact that Van Parijs is *missing* an explanation of the ways in which individuals develop or acquire habits. I acknowledge the difficulties surrounding any attempt to prove a negative, but this chapter seeks to unpack the implicit philosophy and biases of Van Parijs, and different examples of ways he writes about the human being and about activates that have value is evidence that his liberal biases render aspects of his philosophy insufficient. His lack of engagement with human selfhood on a structural level and lack of critical evaluation of social inheritance are problems that William James and the pre-moral inclusion explained in chapter two can help rectify.

⁸ Van Parijs, *Real Freedom*, 50.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 59.

¹⁰ Other scholars have acknowledged this individualism in Van Parijs texts, cf. Leticia Morales, “The Democratic Case for a Basic Income,” *Law, Ethics, and Philosophy* 6 (2018).

3.2.1 *The Responsibility of Poverty*

The first outcome of Van Parijs' individualism is that Van Parijs' conception of the self as a taste-based actor who is responsible for his or her tastes and actions has dire consequences for people in poverty. The likely hypothesis that results from an essentialist understanding about human preferences and action is that if someone is poor, their condition is their responsibility; Van Parijs' conception of the self has the likely consequence that poverty is a personal failure. Van Parijs never says this and would reject the claim that his individualism results in entirely blaming those in poverty for their situations, but by exclusively writing about the human as an isolated individual with inherent preferences and ignoring the social mechanisms that help fabricate the self and its situation, his texts lend themselves to a reading in which people are born with the preferences that determine their economic outcomes. Such a reading excludes other factors that contribute to poverty such as systemic failures, generations of discrimination, and trauma.

A popular quote from contemporary historian and BI advocate Rutger Bregman is that “poverty is not a lack of character, but a lack of cash.”¹¹ In his most recent text, Bregman draws upon a breadth of sociological, historical, and anthropological research to prove that poverty is not a personal failure. An example of such research is Anandi et al.'s examination of cognitive function among Indian farmers before and after their harvest, which corresponds to relative poverty and affluence respectively. The same farmers show diminished cognitive performance before the harvest—on average 14 points of IQ—compared to after the harvest. This

¹¹ Rutger Bregman, *Utopia for Realists: How We Can Build the Ideal World* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2017).

phenomenon is called the “scarcity mindset,” in which people in poverty are unable to make long-term decisions because of short-term crises. This study, along many other examples of similar empirical research, suggests that poverty is not inherent to a person’s biology or selfhood, but is tied to larger systems that make poverty nearly impossible to escape.¹²

Resistance to placing the whole responsibility of activity and one’s social situation on the individual is a core aspect to Jamesian social ethics. In James’ psychological works, he calls the human tendency to follow particular patterns *habit*, which, beyond physical patterns, best explains “such functions as the associations of ideas, perception, memory, reasoning, the education of the will, etc., etc.”¹³ Echoing Aristotle’s maxim that excellence is not merely an act, but a habit, James says that habit is the “enormous fly-wheel of society,” or that which “keeps us all within the boundaries of ordinance.”¹⁴ Humans *learn* to live, think, and act according to the world they inhabit. We *acquire* habits about what is good, bad, preferable, and pathological.¹⁵ Therefore, when people are born into an impoverished household, their habits (and physiology) develop differently than those who grow up in a wealthy home. Being born in a particular social and cultural context is not the fault of the person in poverty, but the fault of a socio-economic system that tolerates such desperate forms of poverty. As such, a foundational

¹² Anandi Mani, et al. “Poverty Impedes Cognitive Function” *Science* 341, no. 6149 (2013), 976-80. Cf. Simon Pemberton, Eldin Fahmy, Eileen Sutton, and Karen Bell, “Navigating the Stigmatised Identities of Poverty in Austere Times: Resisting and Responding to Narratives of Personal Failure,” *Critical Social Policy* 36, no. 1 (2016); David Farrugia and Jessica Gerrard, “Academic Knowledge and Contemporary Poverty: The Politics of Homelessness Research,” *Sociology* 50, no. 2 (April 2016).

¹³ William James, “Habit,” in *The Writings of William James: A Comprehensive Edition*, ed. J. J. McDermott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 9.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁵ Even Jamesian temperament, fundamental to the character of a person, comes from physiology and psychology, and is not free of social forces. See Francesca Bordogna, “The Psychology and Physiology of Temperament: Pragmatism in Context,” *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 37(1), 2001, 21.

philosophy that ignores that all activity, and in particular, poverty, is not the exclusive fault of individuals—as does the liberal individualism of Van Parijs—is indefensible, while the social ethics of James can better explain the human phenomenon of poverty as a product of personal, social, and cultural habits.

3.2.2 *The Critique of Homo Economicus: James' Understanding of Self*

Van Parijs' individualism, although never fully developed, is liberal in its assessment of the human self as a *homo economicus*, or economic man, a term that originates in John Stewart Mill's work on political economy.¹⁶ This type of individualism conceives of the self as a pre-formed being, exclusively personal, which always acts in a rational, tastes-based manner. A few examples of the liberal *homo economicus* in Van Parijs' works are found in the ways he justifies BI theoretically. He puts three (liberal) thinkers into conversation in order to see the best way to justify why BI is good for everyone. They are John Rawls, Ronald Dworkin, and John Roemer, who all use rational, individual preference as the basis for political policy. If a *homo economicus* behind a Rawlsian veil of ignorance—or in similar thought experiment such as Dworkin's insurance scheme or Roemer's exploitation—would vote to put a BI in place, then it is good.¹⁷ Further, Van Parijs only speaks about humans in the abstract, whether in terms of human capital, labour, or dignity¹⁸ and does not include the complex and messy character of human beings that everyone encounters in the actually experienced world. Beyond colloquial

¹⁶ John Stuart Mill, "On the Definition of Political Economy, and on the Method of Investigation Proper to It," in *Essays on Some Unsettled Questions of Political Economy*, 2nd ed. (London: Longmans, Green, Reader & Dyer, 1874).

¹⁷ Van Parijs, *Real Freedom*, ch. 3-5.

¹⁸ Van Parijs, *Real Freedom*, 39, 46, 96.

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human encounters, empirical research shows the *homo economicus* is mythological; in many traditional societies, anthropologists find that individual choices are based in reciprocity, not rational self-interest,¹⁹ and many economists in the field of behavioural economics have demonstrated that people often do not act according to rational, self-interested calculations.²⁰

Therefore, relying on a *homo economicus* as a foundational part of a social philosophy opens Van Parijs to significant criticism. William James can succinctly make this criticism because he grapples with the question Van Parijs ignores: from where do individual preferences originate? James' understanding of the self is wide and complex, and it solves the problems outlined above; in brief, "*a man's Self is the sum total of all that he can call his.*"²¹ There are many constituents of the self according to James, notably the material, the social, and the spiritual.²² The material self is made of the body, clothing, immediate family, property such as a home, and material made through one's labour. The social self is the recognition one gets from his or her friends: "*Properly speaking, a man has as many social selves as there are individuals who recognize him and carry an image of him in their mind. To wound any one of these his images is to wound him.*"²³ Van Parijs' individualist self is closest to the James' spiritual self, in which psychic faculties correspond to talents and dispositions are similar to tastes. Virtually

¹⁹ See Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972).

²⁰ See Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, "Advances in Prospect Theory: Cumulative Representation of Uncertainty" *Journal of Risk and Uncertainty* 5 no. 4 (1992): 297–323; Richard H. Thaler and Cass R. Sunstein, Cass, *Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth, and Happiness* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

²¹ William James, *Principles of Psychology Vol. 1* (New York: Dover Publications, 1980), 291.

²² The fourth aspect of James' self is called the "pure ego," i.e., that which provides the thread of continuity between our past, present, and future selves. See James, *Principles*, 296.

²³ *Ibid.*, 294.

no one argues that there is *no* personal aspect of the self; what James shows is that the personal self is never independent from the material and social. Humans always know themselves in a personal, social, and cultural world.

And the socio-cultural aspects of the self are connected to James' "common sense;"²⁴ the ethical equilibrium established by "what works" throughout human history and that which culturally defines social ethics through norms, laws, and habits. While Van Parijs relies on a *homo economicus* throughout his text, James argues that the human self is much richer than a rational and self-interested aggregate of internal traits. The self is always social, and always social in a particular common sense and status quo, and that environment greatly impacts his or her preferences and choices. He shows that preferences are social habits normalized in common sense, not internal traits for which humans are entirely responsible or always rational and self-interested.²⁵ Again, James' understanding of the self is superior to the problematic and simplistic characterization of Van Parijs' liberal subject. The responsibility of activity and the definition of that which is human both make Van Parijs' argument for BI difficult to endorse. They contradict the lived experience of what it means to be human and the empirical research regarding the same question.

3.2.3 *An Example from Disability Studies and the Repression of Common Sense*

²⁴ Ch. 2.3; cf. William James, "Pragmatism and Common Sense" in *The Writings of William James*, 418-28.

²⁵ James *does* want people to take responsibility for their actions, but acknowledges the social forces involved in the creation of selfhood. See William James, *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1907); ch. 8.

In order to demonstrate that preferences are social and that the preferences of the majority are a reflection of common sense, I turn to practical examples from disability studies. In Van Parijs' defence of undominated diversity, he argues that "there are general talents (say, sight) everyone firmly values, whether or not one possesses them,"²⁶ and concludes that persons with disabilities therefore deserve extra compensation through a BI. The first problem with the presumption of a universal preference for the talents of ability is that it is objectively incorrect: many people with disabilities live happy lives and would not choose to be "able-bodied" if they had the chance.²⁷ The individualist mistake that Van Parijs makes is to assume that no one prefers a life without all "abilities." This reflects the arguments I problematize in the above two sections: Van Parijs believes that inherent preferences are a necessary part of the human self and everyone rationally has similar, self-interested, economically-maximizing preferences. This assumption is particularly egregious when examined from the perspective of disability studies.

Dan Goodley, a prominent author in disability studies, states the following, which applies especially well to utilitarian economics of Van Parijs: "Disability is understood as an act of exclusion: people are *disabled by* contemporary society."²⁸ Disability studies encapsulates a matrix of theories, pedagogies, and practices, but at its core is the study of socially constructed barriers that disable people. I will use disability studies to demonstrate the problematic nature of Van Parijs' individualism. Disability studies shows that the preference for ability exists

²⁶ Ibid., 69.

²⁷ See Gary L. Albrecht and Patrick J. Devlieger, "The disability paradox: high quality of life against all odds," *Social Science & Medicine*, 48, no. 8 (1999). The disability paradox is that people with serious and persistent disabilities report that they experience a good or excellent quality of life, in many cases, a higher quality of life than able-bodied people.

²⁸ Dan Goodley, *Disability Studies: An Interdisciplinary Introduction* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2010), 8.

because of a particular society where physical differences have negative social meaning. The (under)valuation of disability is part of an ableist worldview; people with disabilities lack “preferable talents” because of a world formed without their perspectives considered. According to the dominant voices in disability studies, disability is only negatively valued because of the exclusion of persons with disabilities from civic and political life.

To further understand the ways that preferences are constructed and the ways common sense excludes particular perspectives, consider Vic Finkelstein’s famous thought example of a “disability village” wherein wheelchair-users are in the majority and the society is designed accordingly. Able-bodied people (or the ‘able-bodied disabled’) are marked by aching backs and bruises from banging their heads on low doorways and ceilings, so in response, doctors and specialists design aids for the ‘impaired.’

All the able-bodied are given special toughened helmets (provided free by the village) to wear at all times. Special braces are designed which give support while keeping the able-bodied wearers bent at a height similar to the wheelchair-users. [...] one person even goes so far as to suggest amputation to bring the able-bodied down to the right height!²⁹

This hypothetical situation demonstrates that preferences change based on social setting. In this world, the negative aspect of disability is neither natural nor inevitable. Instead, representational and institutional structures that constitute normalcy are designed in such a way that they exclude and pathologize differences of ability. Preferences are not purely individual. Talents may be internal to people, i.e. some are better at running, others are better at math, but the *meaning* of these talents are social and contextual.

²⁹ Val Finkelstein, “To Deny or Not to Deny Disability,” *Physiotherapy* 74, no. 12 (1988), 650.

As disability studies and James demonstrate, meaning is part of an inevitably imperfect common sense.³⁰ And when Van Parijs judges that which is preferable based in a majority or an imaginary consensus, he ignores common sense's fallible nature. James claims that, "Pent in under every system of moral rules are innumerable persons whom it weighs upon and goods which it represses; and these are always rumbling and grumbling in the background and ready for any issue by which they may get free."³¹ Common sense, as exhibited through the example of disability studies, is not *de facto* correct or even good. Common sense represses certain voices while it acknowledges—and makes common—others', which is why an ethics based in James not interested in particular moral ideology, but on pre-moral inclusion. Pre-moral inclusion, or in a political, practical sense, "pragmatic inclusion," transcends the divisions of ethical philosophy and allows inclusive dialogue to discover the confines of good and bad. Ethics is not about equal or equitable treatment, but the expansion of who is included in ethical dialogue. The impact of inclusion on BI will become apparent in the final chapter, but the impact of common sense on the self, preferences, and choices is clear: the traits of the self are always influenced by common sense, and without radical inclusion, the common sense impacting these traits is necessarily exclusive and imperfect. Talents associated with ability are only absolutely preferred when the voices of persons with disabilities are not influential in its ethical dialogue.

³⁰ For more on the relationship between James and disability studies, cf. Jill Marsden, "Adventures at the Fringe of Thought," *William James Studies* 13, no. 1 (2017), 92-116. Marsden, a literary scholar, argues that James' conception of the "stream of thought" found in his *Principles of Psychology* widens the definition of consciousness in order to include people with intellectual disabilities as legitimate conscious beings. The "fringe" of thought in James' (re)definition of (con)sciousness forces us to "rethink consciousness beyond self-reflective norms" (Marsden, 105).

³¹ William James, "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life" in *The Writings of William James*, 624.

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Giving people with unique challenges extra compensation is admirable, but the reason provided by Van Parijs is insufficient and incomplete. He does not explain *how* taste is developed or *where* it originates. He merely claims that people have tastes, and these tastes dictate whether a talent is bad enough for extra compensation. There is no systemic understanding in his texts. Van Parijs' understanding of the self, namely an aggregate of independent talents, tastes, and choices, misses the social context inherent in the self, and it excludes the voices of the "other." I explained that his individualism blames the poor for their poverty and considers majority preferences the judge of good and bad, which accepts the perspectives of common sense, or the status quo. If the voices of marginalized people are part of the dialogue defining good and bad, perhaps our society would look more like the "disability village," or at least it would be more accessible for people with disabilities.

Simply put, Van Parijs' liberal and utilitarian perspective regarding the self renders the status quo as a suitable method for making ethical arguments by making individual preferences the arbiter of ethics. Such a conception of selfhood cannot withstand basic empirical and philosophical scrutiny: BI needs a different philosophy of the individual. James' pragmatism shows that many perspectives are repressed by contemporary common sense, that current preferences are a component of a fallible common sense, and that pragmatic inclusion is the best foundation to develop or acquire ethical habits and ethical individuals. Every moral perspective, and especially those currently repressed, need to be considered when arguing for a just distribution of wealth. And if we listen to the voices of those outside of the boundaries of common sense we will hear that people with disabilities often do not value "ability" the way that able-bodied people do. A better way to argue for an ethical method of redistribution uses

an expansive view of the self, one that includes family, friends, work, and generally, everything that impacts a human being. Traits are not inherent, and individuals are not entirely responsible for them; traits are developed through habits and are deeply connected to the social world. Family, property, the product of one's labour, and the recognition of friends all are part of the subjective experience of living, always encapsulated by a society that dictates common sense. This unfinished self is open to experiment, growth, and new perspectives, unable to be defined by internal aspects of Van Parijs' selfhood. Van Parijs' conception of the self is fundamentally deficient and should be replaced by James' expansive and structural understandings of the self. An ethical argument like BI requires a broad understanding of ethics, and the way that repressive common sense dictates the boundaries of good and bad cannot be reduced to utilitarian preferences.

3.3 The Free-Rider Problem: Van Parijs and Economic Value:

Van Parijs' philosophical worldview involves his understanding of value, and I will demonstrate the ways it, like his conception of the self, is too limited and therefore deficient as a method for justifying BI. The value of a resource, according to Van Parijs, depends on "competitive market prices," i.e., that "the weight ascribed to each resource reflects the cost to others of not being able to use it."³² Resources are therefore priced based on the number of people that have preferences for them, i.e. through the principle of supply and demand. Prices

³² Ibid.

in real freedom for all “emerge from free choices on the basis of equal entitlements.”³³ In the same way that the moral character of talents and traits are determined by majority moral preferences, competitive market prices are determined by majority preferences of the market, which Van Parijs assumes are adequate in determining economic value.

Van Parijs’ perspectives about valuable *activity* is expressed in his argument against the “free-rider” objection to BI. He argues that people inherit historical value through income, and since no one worked for the extra value inherited from their past, it should be distributed through BI.³⁴ This philosophy of value is a method to defend against BI critics who argue that “free-riders,” i.e. those who choose not to work should not be entitled to a BI. Van Parijs summarizes this problem by proposing another two identically-talented but differently disposed characters (i.e. characters with different tastes): Crazy and Lazy. The story is as follows: “Crazy is keen to earn a high income and works a lot for that purpose. Lazy is far less excited by the prospect of a high income and has decided to take it easy. [...] Does not the high grant justified by our criterion illegitimately discriminate against Crazy in favour of Lazy?”³⁵ The “free-rider” problem

³³ Ibid., 32. It is important to note that this analogy again uncovers Van Parijs’ liberal-economist tendencies. Not all external endowments can be owned like property, such as clean air and social myths, but private property is used as a metaphor for everything that allows people to flourish.

³⁴ This explanation of “inheritance” has nothing to do with the practice of passing on property or wealth upon the death of an individual. Van Parijs’ inheritance is much broader in scope; everything accessible to an individual that he or she did not personally earn but has a positive impact on their ability to make money is Van Parijs’ inheritance. Further, Van Parijs’ inheritance does not free him from my claim that his point of departure blames the poor for their poverty. Inheritance is a socio-historical phenomenon in which societies of the past provide “gifts” to present societies that enhance productive potential. It is explicitly positive and does not include the inheritance of hardship or intergenerational trauma.

³⁵ Van Parijs, *Real Freedom*, 92-3.

is the loudest moral objection to BI.³⁶ Richard Musgrave, a critic of BI, makes this argument succinctly:

Implementation of maximin³⁷ thus leads to a redistributive system that, among individuals with equal earnings ability, favors those with a high preference for leisure. It is to the advantage of recluses, saints, and (nonconsulting) scholars who earn but little and hence will not have to contribute greatly to redistribution.³⁸

Why should those who make an income in the formal economy subsidize those who are voluntarily unemployed? Within Van Parijs' "neutral" paradigm, BI seems to punish those who prefer work and income and reward those who would rather avoid formal work.

Van Parijs defends his proposal by continuing with the Crazy-Lazy thought experiment: in order for Crazy to generate the level of income she desires, she needs "certain assets external to her talents, say a plot of land."³⁹ It is certainly fair (from a real freedom perspective) to give Crazy and Lazy equal plots of land, but according to Van Parijs, it is fair only if the plots of land are tradeable. Crazy wants more than her plot, and Lazy is indifferent about losing some of his in exchange for part of Crazy's product. This leads to the following suggestion: "There is a non-arbitrary and generally positive legitimate level of basic income that is determined by the per

³⁶ Stuart White, "Liberal Equality, Exploitation, and the Case for an Unconditional Basic Income," *Political Studies*, 45, no. 2 (1997); G. Van Donselaar, *The right to exploit. Parasitism, scarcity, basic income* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); W. Galston. "What about reciprocity?" in *What's wrong with a free lunch?* eds. P. Van Parijs, J. Cohen, and J. Rogers (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001); Stuart White, *The civic minimum* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

³⁷ See ch. 1.4 for the explanation of maximin.

³⁸ Richard A. Musgrave, "Maximin, Uncertainty, and the Leisure Trade-off," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 88 (1974), 632.

³⁹ Van Parijs, *Real Freedom*, 98

capita value of society's external assets and must be entirely financed by those who appropriate these assets."⁴⁰

This analogy holds up in a hypothetical sense, but the essential question is, "what constitutes Van Parijs' collection of external assets?" His first answer is striking: what is relevant, he claims, is "the whole set of external means that affect people's capacity to pursue their conceptions of the good life, irrespective of whether they are natural or produced."⁴¹ *Everything* "endowed" involved in the pursuit of the good life comprises external "wealth" to be distributed. Examples include "factories," "public bridges," "nursery rhymes and computer programmes, the work ethic and nuclear technology."⁴² Van Parijs calls this wealth "our inheritance," "mainly in the form of technology in the broadest sense."⁴³ This acknowledges that production relies on much more than individual effort: capital, fertility of soil, and efficiency of tools are all examples of external conditions that make labour more "productive." And as such, people do not have as high a claim on their "creations" as it may seem. Nearly everything necessary in earning an income or holding a job is based in value not created by one individual's activity, but created by, in general, the development of modern societies throughout history.

3.3.1 *Jobs as Assets: Van Parijs' 1995 Defence Against the Free-Rider Argument*

⁴⁰ Ibid., 99.

⁴¹ Van Parijs, *Real Freedom*, 101.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., 90.

Where Van Parijs' "inheritance" is located in his argument changes throughout his career. In his 1995 *Real Freedom for All*, the text with his most expansive normative argument for BI, he argues that we should "give each member of the society concerned a tradable entitlement to an equal share of [...] jobs."⁴⁴ This is because jobs—a scarce asset in capitalism⁴⁵—are the locus of socio-historical inheritance. With jobs, people are able to pursue real freedom, and jobs (with the salaries they generate) are only available because of a history in which no one alive had any part. Therefore the voluntarily unemployed give up their share of job-assets (high salaries) and trade them for employment rent (taxation on the employed distributed through BI). This trade is non-exploitative, Van Parijs argues, because "income should be an increasing function of effort or [...] there should be a positive correlation between effort and income,"⁴⁶ and this is still possible with BI. If I want to make a lot of money, I can still do so in a world with BI, and it will take personal effort and labour to succeed in this way. A positive correlation between labour and income—a condition of justice for Van Parijs⁴⁷—is maintained with a BI, and as such, Van Parijs avoids the indictment of exploitation.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 108.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 107. This is either because of the insider-outsider approach, in which the costs associated with hiring, firing, and training cause employers to pay more to workers, or, Van Parijs' preference, the efficiency wage approach, which states that there is a positive causal link between wages and labour productivity. There are other reasons for this fact of capitalism (ex. Marx's reserve army of labour), but Van Parijs takes this job scarcity as an established fact of capitalism.

⁴⁶ Van Parijs, *Real Freedom*, 167.

⁴⁷ This relationship between labour and income is a condition of justice for Van Parijs, but only with the addition of undominated diversity as a constraint: "alienable assets should be transferred so that all could achieve [...] a quality of life that would not be unanimously considered as worse [...] than that achievable by others" (ibid., 184).

3.3.2 *The Gift-Distribution Machine: Van Parijs' 2017 Defence Against the Free-Rider Argument*

In 2017, Van Parijs uses a slightly different argument against the free-rider objection. Although the Van Parijs of 1995 flirts with the way that gifts and inheritance straddle society (i.e. “the whole set of external means that affect people’s capacity to pursue their conceptions of the good life” and external means make labour more “productive”), 1995’s *Real Freedom for All* only examines jobs as the assets necessary to pursue a good life. In Van Parijs’ most recent text, *Basic Income*, he makes no mention of “jobs as assets.” The justification for BI against the “free-rider” problem broadens; Van Parijs reiterates that *everything* is a gift from previous generations, and that distributive justice does not maximize real freedom as such, but it maximins “the gifts that form the substratum of this freedom.”⁴⁸ Van Parijs argues that people benefit unequally from what has been freely given by (lucky) social heritage, and these gifts (not exclusively jobs) are best distributed in the form of state-sponsored financial benefits.

Much of what humans inherit is not of their own making, Van Parijs argues, and a basic income ensures that “everyone receives a fair share of what none of us did anything for, of the huge present very unequally incorporated into our incomes.”⁴⁹ The Van Parijs of 2017 credits most of what people earn not to their individual efforts, but to externalities: the economy functions as a massive “gift-distribution machine”⁵⁰ that distributes our common inheritance in the form of *income*. And beyond this, the actual opportunities people experience are created

⁴⁸ Van Parijs and Vanderborgh, *Basic Income*, 105.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 106.

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through the unpredictable interactions between innate capacities and innumerable other circumstances “such as happening to have a congenial primary school teacher or an inspiring boss, to belong to a lucky generation, to a native language in high demand, or to get a tip for the right job at the right time.”⁵¹ These gifts, currently disseminated unequally and arbitrarily (the consequences of which are inherent in the lucky party’s income), are better distributed, Van Parijs argues, through BI.

The most immediate and most important reaction to this justification (and his previous one) goes as follows: “But I was the one who did the work to get and keep my job! How can any of my income be considered a gift? I worked hard to be where I am today!” Van Parijs responds to this retort by arguing that activity does not necessarily entitle an individual to all the earnings associated with it. If I am required to politely attend my boring aunt’s tea parties in order to be included in her will, this action does not ethically entitle me to her multi-million-dollar inheritance. Similarly, going to the office every day and “busying oneself” does not mean that one’s entire salary is deserved because that salary exists “by virtue of a combination of circumstances most of which are no less arbitrary, ethically speaking, than the fact that one happens to have a rich aunt.”⁵² Van Parijs suggests that the circumstances that allow for the creation of a business, being born at the time and place that allows for such a profession, and even getting the job itself has more to do with other circumstances than with personal effort and responsibility. The gifts that people are given, i.e. the “material substratum of their real

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., 107.

freedom,” are currently unequally distributed through luck, but are equalized with BI, and what people do with these gifts is merely an indirect consequence of what they are given.

3.3.3 The Problem of an Economic Inheritance

The shift from a job-based inheritance to one in which inheritance is located in the activity that creates income is an encouraging one, but it does not go far enough. Van Parijs acknowledges two important things that plagued his earlier text: that gifts are not only distributed through holding a job, and that the correlation between activity and income is not only the result of hard work, but mostly because of luck and the contributions from human history. He shows that distribution from those with incomes to those without is fair because it distributes that which all ought to inherit. No one worked for their socio-historical inheritance, so everyone has an equal claim to it. But this argument remains entirely within the realm of the economic. Beyond his measure of economic value being decided upon by the individual preferences of supply and demand, a problem explained in section three, the value of social inheritance is only passed along through economic jobs or income. Since inheritance in Van Parijs’ conception is only bestowed through the economic realm, only those activities that create growth in the economic realm are part of an individual’s socio-historical inheritance. And because inheritance is the sole source of historical value, only activity that creates economic growth—and the inheritance that this growth endows upon people of the future—is valuable at all. Non-economic activity is not considered in Van Parijs’ understanding of historical value, merely the activity that adds money to a wage or salary. Therefore, the likely hypothesis that can be abducted from this claim is that contemporary activity is only valuable, according to Van

Parijs, if it adds to the future of economic inheritance in the form of an increased wage or salary. So, contemporary activity is only valuable when it has economic consequences, which means that non-economic activity (any unpaid activity) is unrelated to value.⁵³

This understanding of value being only within the economic realm is a common idea throughout Van Parijs' texts (as well as in most economics texts throughout Western history). To explain the way that he privileges the economic over all other forms of value, I present an example he uses when investigating whether publicly-owned goods should be added to the privately-owned goods used for taxation. In this example, he invokes a public park:

the value of such a public good may be incorporated in the increased value of the surrounding land and buildings, whose value is already up for redistribution. In the case of other public goods, such as a toll-free bridge, one must be careful not to focus exclusively on direct beneficiaries. You may never have crossed the bridge, but the tomatoes you eat are cheaper or fresher or both because the bridge exists.⁵⁴

Value for Van Parijs is exclusively measured through a capitalist lens. He disregards the meaningful relationships people build in the public park, the beauty that such a space brings to a city, and the impact on mental and physical health that parks offer. Clean air and water, healthy habitats for pollination and ecological health, and a connection to nature cannot be measured through this economic, capitalist definition of value. Van Parijs measures value only in purely economic terms—in this case in nearby housing prices. And in the case of the construction of historical vale, Van Parijs measures value only through the activity that creates economic

⁵³ Or, unpaid labour is unrelated to the value that can be inherited (the only form of value he considers in his economic analysis). I admit that Van Parijs never argues for such a position, but by privileging paid labour above unpaid labour in his argument against the “free-rider” he falls into the liberal trap in which activity that does not contribute directly to economic growth is assumed not only unproductive, but worth-less. Devaluing unpaid activity is a hypothesis inherent in Van Parijs' philosophy, not an explicit end of his argument.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 103.

impacts. This economic bias is not the way value ought to be understood, especially through the lens of James' social ethics.

3.4 The Value of Non-Economic Activity: A Critique of Economistic Value

Although James is usually considered an individualist philosopher,⁵⁵ it is clear from his understanding of common sense, social habits, and the social and cultural dimensions of the self, that everything that makes an individual is deeply in debt to the social world. In fact, even truth itself, according to James, is contextual. In James' *Pragmatism*, he offers a conception of truth that purports to being practical and dynamic. Instead of a static and objective sense of true reality, James claims that truth "is simply a collective name for verification-processes [...] Truth is *made*, just as health, wealth and strength are made, in the course of experience."⁵⁶ Through the experimentation process (experimental action, listening, and revision), humans come to understand that which is true, and *what works* within a particular social reality is defined as true. That means that not only morality, but truth itself, is context-dependent.⁵⁷ True beliefs are always proven true or false in practical, social, and contextual experience. James says that

⁵⁵ Cf., Ralph Barton Perry, *The Thought and Character of William James, 2 vols.* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1935); James Campbell, "William James and the Ethics of Fulfillment." *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 17, no. 3 (1981).

⁵⁶ William James, "Pragmatism's Conception of Truth," in *The Writings of William James*, 436.

⁵⁷ There are three limitations to James' conception of truth. First, agreement with matters of fact, such as the existence of Japan or that the object on the wall is a clock, lives "for the most part on the credit system. Our thoughts and beliefs 'pass,' so long as nothing challenges them, just as bank-notes pass so long as nobody refuses them" (ibid., 433). Second, for relations of ideas such as mathematics and abstract ideas, truth is that which *leads*: "Our ideas must agree with realities, be such realities concrete or abstract, be they facts or be they principles, under penalty of endless inconsistency and frustration" (434). As long as the "truth" of Japan's existence or that $1+1=2$ are expedient in practical world, they are *proven* true. The process of truth thirdly must correspond to "the whole body of other truths already in our possessions" (434).

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individuals have a “stock of truths”⁵⁸ that have worked in the past which resists change until modifications are necessary, and only occur through interaction with new practical experiences. Truth—that ideal that humans hold so dear—is made through encounters with the world, and these encounters come in every realm of life, social, political, economic, and personal. This understanding of truth is another example of the necessary social relationship between the self (and all of its components) and the world in which it develops. Social reality impacts individual stocks of truth, and when enough individuals are changed, common sense follows.

The pragmatic conception of truth shows us that preferences in an individual are only true in a specific set of other social truths in a particular society of habits and common sense. The point that overturns Van Parijs’ economistic conception of value is that social meaning, that which allows the world to function, is dependent on interdependent humans inside *and* outside the economy. As Throntveit says, James believes that “freedom, wisdom, and virtue are realized through participation in society’s running discussion of its goals.”⁵⁹ The realization of these virtues is not found within mere preferences, but at the end of a process in which participation in ethical dialogue precedes the social habits and norms of reality. The root of James’ conception of truth is that being with others precedes being *at all*.⁶⁰ Our conceptions of self, truth, ethics, and everything in existence today are thanks to the contributions of other people. Not all of that can be subsumed under an economic worldview. The language mothers use when soothing their babies, recipes required for a family dinner, and the stories we tell each other for laughter, joy,

⁵⁸ William James, “What Pragmatism Means,” in *The Writings of William James*, 382.

⁵⁹ Trygve Throntveit, *William James and the Quest for an Ethical Republic* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 139.

⁶⁰ As such, inclusion is a prerequisite not only for morality, but also for (any conception of) truth.

and community form people and societies *as a whole*, rather than simply as economic agents in an economistic ideology. Much of what creates human beings and is valuable in their development is not represented in an income or a job. And therefore, activity that does not impact the economy is valuable too.

A useful way of understanding the difference between that which creates value and economic value is Marx's between "use-value" and "exchange-value." Something has use-value because it can be used to satisfy human needs, while exchange-value only is meaningful because it can be traded for other things with use-values.⁶¹ Every action, belief, and relationship has a use-value in the ethical republic and has the potential, through ethical deliberation, to change common sense (i.e. truth) in the world. Only activity that produces exchange-value in a capitalist society is considered in Van Parijs' understanding of value. Van Parijs' self needs expansion to include the influence of imperfect common sense, and Van Parijs' conception of value and argument for BI should include the activity that is useful and valuable *outside* of the economy.

There are advocates of BI that acknowledge non-economic value. For example, Michel Bauwens and Rogier De Langhe state that "Even though it is unconditional, a basic income is not 'money for nothing,' but rather a lump sum compensation for participation in the commons."⁶² Therefore, they argue, "the plea for a basic income is not a plea for an alternative social security, but rather a plea for an alternative funding of civil society."⁶³ The essential point, made most presciently by James, is that everyone in society impacts their society in a way that

⁶¹ Karl Marx, *Capital, Volume 1*, trans. Ben Fowkes (Toronto: Penguin Books, 1990), ch. 1.

⁶² Michel Bauwens and Rogier De Langhe, *Sauver le monde: Vers une économie post-capitaliste avec le peer-to-peer* (Les Liens Qui Libèrent Editions, 2015). Quoted in Van Parijs and Vanderborght, *Basic Income*, 280-1.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 281. This perspective will be further analyzed in the next chapter.

cannot be quantified. By explaining the ways that meaning and truths are created through individual and social experiments, based on human needs and ideals, James calls forth the way that *every* action and demand follows from and contributes to *social value*. A social conception of valuable activity that broadens Van Parijs' economic value renders human activity necessarily meaningful, and therefore, human inheritance is found within language, relationships, belief systems, volunteer work, nature, leisure, and everything in between. The capacity to live in a society, which precedes life as such, is in debt to active communities of the past, and activity in present communities reinforces or revolutionizes society, both of which are valuable without reference to economics.

As we see, Van Parijs, through arguing that the gifts of the past are distributed through that economy, makes BI misunderstands the location of value in a society. He limits the scope of that which is valuable by philosophizing socio-historical inheritance, i.e. the location of value, exclusively as activity that is economically productive, i.e., that which increases salaries and wages. He may refer to this economistic method of thinking in order to be persuasive in a world dominated by capitalism—which is an admirable pursuit—but his arguments contain inherent flaws and unconvincing assumptions about human activity. Since he argues that activity is only valuable when it impacts the economy, Van Parijs ignores the foundation of human life: the interaction and activities of diverse people inside and outside the economy.

3.4.1 The Pragmatic Defence Against the Free-Rider Objection

Ethics, selves, and values (or preferences) are constructed through rich and complex cultural processes. The basis of life is a culture in which humans, with acquired habits within social

common sense, make demands, and as James says, “the essence of good is simply to satisfy demand.”⁶⁴ Demands make a culture, and the satisfaction of *more* demands than does the status quo is the precondition to a common sense that reflects the perspectives of those that it impacts. Thus, satisfying and listening to demands is the responsibility of an ethical republic—the economy is not the only factor in cultural meaning and ethical responsibility. Individuals who do not engage in the formal economy *still engage in their culture*, and their activity should be valued irrespective of its impact on the economy.

Instead of a defence against the “free-rider” objection based in liberal individualism and a value system that presumes value in an economic paradigm, a pragmatist argument for an obligation-free BI begins with the recognition that the meaning of human activity is historically inherited and presently embodied in everyday activity. Therefore, value is inherent and integral in activity with “exchange-value,” such as the activity of a factory worker or a CEO, *and* in activity with pure “use-value,” such as the care of a single mother for her children, intellectual growth of an unemployed student, or community created through activism, civic associations, volunteering, or a shared love of sport, creativity, or ideals. All activity creates meaning in the world and is made valuable by its place in the creation and maintenance of common sense. That means that much of the valuable activity from the past is *not* inherited through the economy, and therefore Van Parijs’ argument relies on a limited set of valuable activities in arguing why “non-productive citizens” or “free-riders” ought to receive BI. A Jamesian justification of BI accepts that all activity is valuable, and therefore a work-obligation in BI is nonsensical.

⁶⁴ James, “The Moral Philosopher”, 621.

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In order to include more voices in the process of creating a more ethical society, there cannot be theoretical discrimination between waged, “productive” activity and unwaged, “non-productive” activity. The foundation of a Jamesian BI is pre-moral inclusion, and this condition is disinterested in the types of activities in which people engage; instead it advocates for radical inclusion and allows the ethical dialogue to determine what is good and bad. James investigates that which is *meaningful*, namely all activity, rather than a predetermined set of valuable or worthless actions. By existing, people add to their world, and their voices ought to be involved in the ethical republic, and therefore, BI is necessarily universal. Economic activity is not activity’s only valuable form, as Van Parijs assumes. A richer explanation of why BI succeeds in expanding the ethical republic will be proposed in the final chapter, but to summarize, participation in the ethical republic requires enough resources to survive, and BI provides these resources; BI is the substratum, not for “real freedom,” but for democracy.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter exposed two problems with Van Parijs’ philosophical ideology, namely the conception of self and societal value, and used James as the thinker to solve these problems. I argue that, because Van Parijs’ conception of self assumes preferences and choices are inherent traits of individuals, he positions the responsibility for poverty in inherent traits of the poor; that his conception of the self is based in *homo economicus* and is therefore disconnected with the social nature of human existence; and that his individualism exposes that good and bad in his liberal philosophy are based in fallible norms in common sense, as explained through the example of disability studies. And his conception of valuable activity only accounts for the

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activity that produces economic gain, thereby reducing the value of non-economic activity to zero, which results in a theory that either accepts that economic activity is superior in every way to care-giving, volunteering, community-building, and other non-economic activity, or a theory that is unsalvageable.

James, on the other hand, shows that the choices made by individuals are always made in particular social contexts influenced by habits and common sense, and therefore there are structural factors which create social conditions such as poverty. Common sense is influential in the social and cultural aspects of the self, as James shows, and the social realm precedes the possibility and the meaningfulness of individuals. And the example from disability studies demonstrates the impact of cultural norms and habits in the production of individual preferences. Regarding the value of activity, James shows that non-economic activity is a necessary, and therefore valuable, part of the creation of common sense. As such, I suggested a Jamesian argument that overcomes the “free-rider” problem, namely that all activity is valuable, and therefore the humans who hold perspectives and act in ways that help form (or should help form) the ideology of common sense (always fallible, social, and personal) ought to be given the means to perform their actions. Inclusion, rather than an ideology based in freedom, is BI’s best defence. And in the case of the philosophy of the self and of valuable activity, inclusion again overcomes the limitations of Van Parijs’ liberalism. An argument for BI does not need to be a project of individualism or economism, as applying James’ social ethics demonstrates. BI can avoid philosophical deficiencies by adopting pragmatic inclusion as its basis.

Van Parijs’ philosophical perspective lacks a structural conception of the individual and the historical and contemporary impacts on society’s norms and practices. As James shows,

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common sense is impactful in the production of selfhood, individual preferences, and social meaning. But also, every action of every individual impacts common sense, either by transgressing it or maintaining it. And the biggest problem with a lack of structural understanding in Van Parijs is that he deems current norms as sufficient for judging the ethical value of preferences and actions. A Jamesian conception of the systemic nature of reality not only acknowledges empirical facts, such as the reality that context impacts individuals, but it also recognizes that common sense is dictated by those who are heard. The power of creating social reality lays in the hands of everyone, but not everyone has the means to impact common sense in the same way. In the next chapter, I will investigate the contemporary state of people on welfare and who has the most influence on formal and informal decision-making processes. All of this will be done with a backdrop that recognizes the ways that societies impact individuals and that social norms, that without political and economic systems that broaden the boundaries of who has influence on these norms, are imperfect and incomplete.

Chapter Four: Reconstructing Basic Income: From Real Freedom for All to Pragmatic

Inclusion for an Ethical Democracy

4.1 Introduction

Van Parijs' basic income (BI) argument has significant flaws, but it is the single most influential case for BI in the literature. The previous chapters demonstrated these weaknesses, namely, Van Parijs' abstract foundations of freedom and equality (chapter two), his reliance on a limited conception of the individual, and his depreciation of the value of social, non-economic activity (chapter three). William James' foundation for ethical philosophy is practical rather than abstract, wherein inclusion is the ethical prerequisite (hence my designation of Jamesian ethics as "pre-moral inclusion"), and ethics is a method of activity with three cyclical moments: experimentation, listening, and revising one's experiment. James' conception of the individual is a vast expanse of personal, social, and cultural forces, instead of an aggregate of individual preferences and choices. And James shows that the social and cultural forces that are part of human identity—and part of human meaning and ethics—are the production of a collective common sense, ultimately constructed by the mediation of felt human experiences in the social realm. Through James' social ethics, I showed that Van Parijs' justification was inadequate, but rather than rejecting Van Parijs' entire argument based on these flaws, this chapter reconstructs an ethical justification of BI with a pragmatic and Jamesian foundation, structure, and goal.

Western welfare systems, like all experimental ethical activity, are fallible and can only be properly judged after their enactment. My first argument, in section two, investigates the actual impact of welfare and poverty on human beings by listening to their voices and their stories. In this section, a brief summary of the impacts of BI is provided as practical evidence that BI can

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“appease” the “cries of the wounded.”¹ Section three argues that contemporary Western democracies are deficient, not only in the ways that people in poverty are excluded, but in that the structure of political influence is currently exclusive. And because expanding inclusion is the prerequisite for an ethical society, I argue that the best method to solve the problem of welfare and the problem of democracy is *pragmatic inclusion for an ethical democracy*, which substitutes for Van Parijs’ ideal, real freedom for all. Pragmatic inclusion for an ethical democracy is the Jamesian principle in which inclusion is foundational and democracy (as an inclusive decision-making process) is its goal.

Section five investigates existing literature that justifies BI as a core component of democracy, but I will show that the arguments provided are insufficient to attain pragmatic inclusion, so in section five, I provide my definition and argument for BI as an example of a policy that creates pragmatic inclusion. The definition I provide is an income, paid at a level that covers basic needs, irrespective of employment, and funded by the ultra-rich. This definition is less specific than Van Parijs’ (“a regular income paid in cash to every individual member of a society, irrespective of income from other sources and with no strings attached”²), and I argue that this type of BI is appropriate to the goals of pragmatic inclusion, namely, that poverty cannot exclude communities from engaging in decision-making and common-sense-making activities, and that wealth cannot buy extra influence in these processes. Finally, in section six, I suggest supplemental policies that could further the goal of BI, i.e. pragmatic inclusion, with special

¹ William James, “The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life,” in *The Writings of William James: A Comprehensive Edition*, ed. J. J. McDermott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 626.

² Philippe Van Parijs and Yannick Vanderborght, *Basic Income: A Radical Proposal for a Free Society and a Sane Economy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 4.

attention paid to the “social virtues” of William James. Overall, this chapter shows that the contemporary state of welfare and democracy in the West requires revision and new experiments, such as BI, that create pragmatic inclusion for an ethical democracy. Poverty and unequal levels of socio-political influence exclude felt human experiences from impacting the status quo, and BI is a necessary step to rectify this problem in democracy.

4.2 Experimentation, Listening, and Welfare Reform

Pragmatists such as William James use the pragmatic method to understand the world and to identify problems. James defines this method as “*The attitude of looking away from first things, principles, ‘categories’, supposed necessities; and of looking towards last things, fruits, consequences, facts.*”³ Rather than beginning with an ideal such as freedom, the best way to judge a human experiment is through its impact on human beings, specifically by “how much more outcry or how much appeasement comes about.”⁴ Thus, in order to determine whether the current welfare system—the structure BI aims to reform—has a problem that ought to be solved, the voices of people, or “the cries of the wounded,”⁵ need to be heard. There have been many BI experiments and trials where people previously in the welfare system were given a BI instead, and listening to their experiences of poverty and the changes caused by BI shows that the status quo is deeply problematic.

³ William James, “What Pragmatism Means,” in *The Writings of William James: A Comprehensive Edition*, ed. J. J. McDermott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 380.

⁴ James, “The Moral Philosopher,” 624.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 626.

4.2.1 *Basic Income Pilot Projects*

Contemporary welfare systems in the West do not create the conditions for people in poverty to thrive. In Ontario, Canada, the Conservative provincial government abandoned a BI pilot project in 2018, but before it was cancelled, reporters asked people previously on welfare how their lives changed with BI. The experiences of three residents of Hamilton, Ontario are particularly interesting: Wendy Moore had been homeless for nearly two years, Alana Baltzer grew up on welfare and lived in social housing for most of her life, and Kathy Mahood fell into poverty after a work-related back injury and the death of her husband. With the current welfare system, they were unable to live happy, healthy lives, despite receiving state-funded welfare. Moore said she was “barely surviving”⁶ on \$330 a month from Ontario’s welfare program. But with the BI, Moore—and all participants—received \$1,416 a month, which Moore said impacted her in the following ways: “It is giving me back my independence, I don’t feel so backed into a corner. If I want to eat, I can afford to buy something instead of going to a food bank or a soup kitchen.”⁷ Baltzer said that she could only afford clothing at thrift stores and developed chronic teeth problems caused by years of poor eating and that BI was “a huge life-change for me, I have a full fridge. I am eating more healthy food.”⁸ And Mahood, after falling into poverty, could not pay her bills with income supplements and was going to lose her apartment. But with BI, she said that “I feel healthier and I am not stressed all the time about

⁶ Laurie Monsebraaten, “From ‘barely surviving’ to thriving: Ontario basic income recipients report less stress, better health,” *Toronto Star* (2018).

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

money.”⁹ When the pilot project was cancelled, participants were devastated; the Hamilton Spectator interviewed other participants, many whom say they will now return to homelessness, lose affordable housing, cancel plans to return to school, or return unwillingly to a life of sex trade work.¹⁰ The contemporary welfare systems in the West appear problematic, as exhibited through the “outcry” from the voices of those most impacted. The voices of people living in poverty—about one in seven Canadians¹¹—are not acknowledged by the social norms and habits of the status quo, or as James calls it, “common sense.”¹² Common sense represses the voices on its periphery, as is exhibited by the tolerance people in the West have for marginal poverty.¹³ These negative outcomes are what I call the “problem of welfare” but another welfare method, namely BI experiments, has been overwhelmingly positive.

A pilot project in Dauphin, Manitoba, found significant health benefits and increased enrolment in education.¹⁴ In the Netherlands, experiments with BI resulted in participants keeping a larger percentage of earnings relative to welfare and a general increase to wellbeing.¹⁵ In Finland, a BI experiment found betterment of wellbeing for the participants compared to the

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Natalie Paddon, “Basic income: Life before, after and, once again, without,” *The Hamilton Spectator* (2018). For more research suggesting that the welfare system in the West causes undue suffering, cf. Karen A. Curtis, “‘Bottom-Up’ Poverty And Welfare Policy Discourse: Ethnography To The Rescue?” *Urban Anthropology and Studies of Cultural Systems and World Economic Development* 28, no. 2 (1999): 103-40.

¹¹ Statistics Canada, “Table 11-10-0015-01,” *Before-tax and after-tax low income status (census family LIM) by family type and family composition*, 2019.

¹² See ch. 2.3. Jamesian common sense is an ethical equilibrium established by “what works” throughout human history that culturally defines social ethics through norms, laws, and habits. See William James, “Pragmatism and Common Sense” in *The Writings of William James*, 418-28.

¹³ Implicit acceptance of poverty is a cultural phenomenon; if the social ethics prohibited poverty, there would be mechanisms to prevent and eradicate it.

¹⁴ Evelyn L. Forget, “The Town with No Poverty: The Health Effects of a Canadian Guaranteed Annual Income Field Experiment.” *Canadian Public Policy* 37, no. 3 (2011): 283-305.

¹⁵ Robert van der Veen, “Basic Income Experiments in the Netherlands?” *Basic Income Studies* (2019).

control group on welfare: “Those in the test group experienced significantly fewer problems related to health, stress and ability to concentrate. [...] [They were] more confident in their own future and their ability to influence societal issues than the control group.”¹⁶ In North Carolina, a BI trial in the Cherokee nation that equally distributed profits from a casino found similarly encouraging results: beyond the reduction in poverty, “behavioral problems among children who had been lifted out of poverty went down 40%, [...] juvenile crime rates among the Cherokee also declined, along with drug and alcohol use, while their school scores improved markedly.”¹⁷ These experiments show “appeasement” and a general positive impact on people in poverty when they receive BI. There are health benefits, more educational involvement, the growth of personal and social confidence, and reductions in crime. In other words, BI creates conditions in which marginalized populations are included in the informal decision-making processes of society. It decreases the features of poverty that exclude: ill health, lack of education, the possibility of imprisonment, along with many others. BI is a clear possible solution to the problem of welfare, and as I will show in the following sections, a method for solving another great contemporary ill: the problem of democracy.

4.3 Democracy and Inclusion

¹⁶ Olli Kangas, Signe Jauhiainen, Miska Simanainen, Minna Ylikännö, “The basic income experiment 2017–2018 in Finland: Preliminary Results” *Reports and Memorandums of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health*, 9 (2019): 20. The Finland experiment is particularly interesting to this thesis because an explicit purpose of the pilot was “to find out whether the introduction of a basic income could make the social security system in Finland *more inclusive* and further increase the labour supply” (Ibid., iv, emphasis added).

¹⁷ Rutger Bregman, *Utopia for Realists: How We Can Build the Ideal World* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2017), 99.

As explained in chapter two, inclusion is a prerequisite for the growth of an ethical republic. Since ethics, meaning, and ideologies are built through the mediation of felt human experience in the social realm, the greater the number of beings who contribute to this dialogue, the better common sense reflects the perspectives of the people it impacts. The more inclusive the culture, the more common sense aligns with the demands of that culture. As James says, “the victory to be philosophically prayed for is that of the more *inclusive* side.”¹⁸ Everyone in a society is subject to cultural norms and laws, but not everyone can influence them. Western democracies give every citizen the formal right to vote, organize, and speak up about issues, but as I will explain, the practical outcomes of democracy are far from inclusive.

Statistics Canada and the US Census Bureau have found that economic wellbeing is positively related to voting.¹⁹ In other words, the wealthier someone one is, the more likely they are to vote. Voting is the main institutional method of democratic decision-making (although not the only one), and since people in poverty rarely vote, their voices are less included in Western democracies. A recent study supports these findings: “[t]he higher (lower) individual income is, the higher (lower) individual engagement in conventional and unconventional political activities is.”²⁰ This study argues that “income may be considered the most important individual-level determinant of political participation; all political activities are costly because

¹⁸ James, “The Moral Philosopher,” 623.

¹⁹ Statistics Canada, “Factors Associated with Voting,” *Perspectives on Labour and Income*, Minister of Industry, no. 75-001-X (2012).

²⁰ L. Cicatiello, S. Ercolano, and G. Gaeta, “Income distribution and political participation: a multilevel analysis,” *Empirica* 42 (2015): 451. The unconventional political activities considered are actions such as signing petitions, attending demonstrations, strikes, boycotts or occupations of buildings, and participating in political meetings and groups.

resources (time, money, skills) must be invested in order to carry them out.”²¹ People in poverty are systemically excluded from political activity, both formally and informally.

Beyond this, a recent study proves that “economic elites and organized groups representing business interests have substantial independent impacts on U.S. government policy, while mass-based interest groups and average citizens have little or no independent influence.”²² It examines a twenty-year period in the United States and finds that if large corporations and wealthy individuals want a law passed, there is nearly a 60% chance it will be passed. In the case of everyday voters, issues that almost no one supports *and* issues that almost everyone supports have a 30% chance of becoming law, i.e., the perspectives of everyday voters have nearly no impact. The authors conclude that “the preferences of the average American appear to have only a minuscule, near-zero, statistically non-significant impact upon public policy,”²³ and that since “policymaking is dominated by powerful business organizations and a small number of affluent Americans, [...] America’s claims to being a democratic society are seriously threatened.”²⁴ Wealth gives the rich exclusive access to the formal political system, while everyday citizens have little to no influence on the formal decision-making process.

Across the world, eight men—six of them Americans—own as much combined wealth as half of the human population.²⁵ In the last three decades in Canada, the top one percent of

²¹ *Ibid.*, 450.

²² Martin Gilens and Benjamin I. Page. “Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens,” *Perspectives on Politics* 12, no. 3 (2014): 565.

²³ *Ibid.*, 575

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 577.

²⁵ Anna Ratcliff, “Just 8 men own same wealth as half the world,” *Oxfam International* (2017).

Canada's income earners captured 37 percent of total income growth.²⁶ The United States is similarly—and even more—unequal. A perfect example of which is the Walton family: “the six heirs to the Walmart empire command a wealth of \$145 billion, which is equivalent to the net worth of 1,782,020 average American families.”²⁷ While the top one percent of the U.S. population controls 36.7 percent of all American wealth, the bottom 40 percent own -0.9 percent, i.e., the bottom 40 percent are in debt and own no wealth.²⁸ The richest countries in history (primarily governed by democracies) have extreme levels of wealth disparity. Although not all inequality is democratically destructive, the evidence is clear: while those in poverty are excluded from many forms of political activities and decision-making, economic elites have the greatest access in and success at influencing the decision-makers and the decision-making process. All this inequality exists despite the fact that democracy is meant to be a political system run by the majority of citizens, not by a select few.

How does James suggest a method that rectifies the “problem of democracy?” The foundation for personal ethics is the interaction and mediation of felt human experience through communication, but this only occurs when others are included (and acknowledged) in one's moral paradigm. And on a political level, inclusion of everyone in a democracy is the foundation

²⁶ Keith Banting and John Myles, “Framing the new inequality: The politics of income redistribution in Canada,” *Income Inequality: The Canadian Story*. Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy (2016): 509-40.

²⁷ Joseph Stiglitz, “Inequality and economic growth” in *Rethinking Capitalism*, eds. Michael Jacobs and Mariana Mazzucato (New Jersey: Wiley Blackwell, 2016): 134-155.

²⁸ Tom Malleon, *Fired Up about Capitalism* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2016), 33. An interesting and important fact regarding countries with vast income inequality is that they correlate with higher levels of social ills, including higher rates of mental illness, teen pregnancy, obesity, incarceration, and homicides, as well as lower levels of life expectancy, social trust, educative performance among children, and social mobility (Ibid., 35).

of social ethics. Therefore, for James, the best method to solve problems of political exclusion is *pragmatic inclusion for an ethical democracy*, or less esoterically, *pragmatic inclusion*. This method is *pragmatic* because it begins with the consequences of actual experiments, namely the felt human experiences experiments cause; it is *inclusive* because it seeks solutions through including more voices in the discourse rather than prescribing outcomes,²⁹ which is best institutionally established by its goal, an *ethical democracy*. For James, a true democracy is an expression of inclusion when formal institutions create the conditions for every individual and community to influence conventional decision-making processes and influence cultural norms, or common sense. This requires more than formal rights of democratic participation, it also includes a material basis so that no one in a democracy is excluded from political participation because of their level of poverty, and no one has greater access to participation because of their wealth.

A democracy genuinely controlled by its citizens is the open-ended political goal prescribed by James, who—although never a political theorist—said, “Democracy is still on its trial. The civic genius of our people is its only bulwark.”³⁰ Jamesian inclusion, when broadened to include institutions, calls for a form of democracy where human beings, by virtue of having and communicating felt human experiences—the foundation of ethics—are involved in decision-making processes as much as possible. This inclusion creates a common sense that mirrors everyone’s demands, not solely the demands of the rich and influential. But Jamesian democracy

²⁹ Pragmatic inclusion is the practical and political instantiation of James’ ethical foundation, namely “pre-moral inclusion.” See ch. 2.4.

³⁰ William James, *Memories and Studies*, edited by Henry James, Jr. (New York: Longmans, Green, 1911), 42.

is not an end with defined goals, but open-ended, trusting the “civic genius” of ordinary people to find practical experiments that satisfy their demands.

Pragmatic inclusion for an ethical democracy is my reworked version of Van Parijs’ real freedom for all. Van Parijs’ ideal society is one in which everyone has “freedom to do whatever one might want to do,”³¹ but pragmatic inclusion’s ideal is open. Ethical democracy, based in problems expressed by actual human beings, with the goal of expansive inclusion to solve these problems, is the idea of pragmatic inclusion. Van Parijs’ foundation is a biased abstraction, while pragmatic inclusion is neutrally based in the inclusion of practical human voices.³² Van Parijs’ arguments are overly individualistic, but pragmatic inclusion understands that socially-constructed common sense produces particular types of human beings, including their tastes, values, and identities.³³ Pragmatic inclusion also acknowledges that the basis for ethics on an individual and social level, i.e. inclusion, is democracy on a cultural and political scale, and therefore, since common sense influences everyone, protecting and enhancing democracy is the best mechanism for including all voices in common sense’s ethical dialogue. Van Parijs recognizes value only in economic and utilitarian individual preferences, whereas pragmatic inclusion sees all meaning as valuable, and all action as meaningful.³⁴ Pragmatic inclusion is the foundation and ideal missing in the BI debate because neither its inclusive foundation nor its democratic goal are abstract, individualistic, or economistic. It is practical, social, and based in the understanding that all activity is meaningful in the creation of common sense.

³¹ Van Parijs, *Real Freedom*, 20.

³² See ch. 2.

³³ See ch. 3.2.

³⁴ See ch 3.3 and 3.4.

4.3.1 *Van Parijs' Rejection of a Democratic Foundation*

The previous chapters identified unreconcilable problems in Van Parijs' argument for a BI. Before I posit my Jamesian argument for pragmatic inclusion as the best justification for BI, I should discuss Van Parijs' perspective on democracy in *Real Freedom for All*. He acknowledges that "Democracy, no doubt, matters on many counts. It may even empirically turn out to be a necessary condition for realizing a free society."³⁵ This claim is made within the paradigm in which real freedom (to do whatever one might want to do) is the measure of social justice. Recall that freedom, not inclusion or democracy, is the goal of Van Parijs' liberalism, and as such, he ultimately argues that a democracy is inadequate to attain this goal: "a (maximally) democratic society cannot plausibly be said to coincide by definition with a society of (maximally) free people."³⁶ I will make two points to against Van Parijs' position. First, inclusion is the ethical basis for the development of common sense, rather than real freedom—for which Van Parijs advocates. Thus, Van Parijs' rejection of democracy as a goal of BI is unrelated to the current case because he rejects democracy as a foundation for achieving real freedom. The Jamesian case advocates for democracy (through its basis in inclusion) as the pre-moral practical principle on which ethics should stand. Second, the only democracy that he considers is socialist. He defines democracy as "a society that subjects everything to collective decision-making and gives each of its members an equal power in the decisions it takes, [...a society of] collectivism, of

³⁵ Van Parijs, *Real Freedom*, 8.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

public ownership of both people and capital.”³⁷ He makes this claim without any evidence; he does not consider democracy without socialism, even though a socialistic democracy is not democracy’s only form. While democratic socialism is a potential end of pragmatic inclusion, democracies choose their own ends, and as such, Van Parijs either misunderstands or perverts the definition of democracy through a straw man fallacy.

Pragmatic inclusion defines a democratic society as a society in which all citizens have access to the full range of political participation, or more simply, a society in which everyone is included in (formal and informal) decision-making processes. This does not necessarily mean an economic overhaul of capitalism (although it could); rather, it means a society structured in a way in which voices have the power to prove an experiment as a success or a failure. While Van Parijs rejects democracy as the best ideal of society, I argue that it is the only ideal towards which an ethical society ought to strive.

Political institutions help perpetuate and change social ethics (or common sense), and therefore have the responsibility in this argument to exhibit James’ moral method on a large and open-ended scale by providing the material means to engage in democracy. All citizens are impacted by political institutions and social ideologies, and therefore every perspective should be heard by these forms of common sense. Reform is necessary because communities are excluded from social and political influence because of poverty, and the wealthiest groups of people have exclusive access. The thesis of this chapter is that BI the best ethical argument in favour of BI is that BI is indispensable in attaining this pragmatic inclusion for an ethical

³⁷ Ibid.

democracy. Thus far, this thesis demonstrated that Van Parijs' real freedom for all is problematic (and fundamentally deficient) and that James' social ethics can be used to solve the problems in Van Parijs' argument. Pragmatic inclusion, then, is the final phase of this thesis. The best argument for BI is in pragmatic inclusion, and pragmatic inclusion can be realized through policies like BI. Pragmatic inclusion is a better theoretical and practical basis and argument for BI than is Van Parijs' real freedom for all. The next section investigates existing literature that justifies BI as a core component of democracy but argues that the arguments provided are insufficient to attain pragmatic inclusion and are unconvincing because of that fact.

4.4 Basic Income and Democracy Literature

Nearly every argument for BI is based in individual freedom, whether it be liberal-egalitarianism,³⁸ Republican freedom,³⁹ Rawlsian political liberalism,⁴⁰ or "independentarian" status freedom,⁴¹ amongst many other examples. But a small group of researchers, most notably Carole Pateman, Michael Goodhart, and Leticia Morales, argue for a democratic case for BI. There are two broad models of the democratic defence of BI: the Pateman-Goodman and the Morales models. The Pateman-Goodhart model broadly conceives of democracy as a political decision-making process in which formal and informal political participation is considered but has definite goals beyond democracy that it aims towards. The Morales model conceives of

³⁸ Van Parijs, *Real Freedom*.

³⁹ Philip Pettit, *On People Terms. A Republican Theory and Model of Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Robert Saxton Taylor, *Exit Left: Markets and Mobility in Republican Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

⁴⁰ Simon Birnbaum, *Basic Income Reconsidered: Social Justice, Liberalism and the Demands of Equality* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

⁴¹ Karl Widerquist, *Independence, Propertylessness and Basic Income* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

democracy in a more limited sense, focussed on the indirect impacts BI would have on the poor's participation in formal politics, namely, an increase in free time to consider electoral politics, less stigma around poverty, and better self-esteem amongst the poor. I investigate the two models to see if either appropriately argue for BI as a necessary part of democracy and conclude that each is inadequate and requires pragmatic inclusion as a basis.

4.4.1 *The Pateman-Goodhart Model*

Pateman's and Goodhart's perspective is based in democratic self-government as "a political form of freedom in contrast to an economic form."⁴² Its first feature is an analogy in which voting and BI are equivalent, where "a basic income should be seen as a fundamental or democratic right, like universal suffrage."⁴³ Second, that BI emancipates people insofar that it guarantees the enjoyment of other basic rights; as Goodhart states, "[BI] satisfies the fundamental economic right to a guaranteed subsistence that democracy demands."⁴⁴ These arguments appeal to BI as abstract right and as a means to a definite goal, namely the enjoyment of other abstract rights. As I showed in chapter two, felt human experience is the basis of ethics, not abstraction, and inclusion (or in a political form, democracy) precedes and does not prescribe definite goals; democracy demands nothing but the voices of everyone. As such, an argument for BI based in abstraction with prescribed ends falls back into the liberal paradigm, even if the

⁴² Carole Pateman, "Freedom and Democratization: Why Basic Income is to be preferred to Basic Capital," in K. Dowding et al. (eds.), *The Ethics of Stakeholding* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 132.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 131.

⁴⁴ Michael Goodhart, "None So Poor that He is Compelled to Sell Himself" Democracy, Subsistence, and Basic Income," in *Economic Rights*, eds. L. Minkler and S. Hertel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 109.

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abstractions and ends are democratic in nature. Morales also argues that BI is not an abstract right or a means toward particular ends and states that the Pateman-Goodhart model assumes a “substantive conception of democracy”⁴⁵ which fails to appreciate “value pluralism” and posits a set of valuable outcomes which neglect “all alternative goals that citizens may reasonably try to advance.”⁴⁶ Thus, I suggest from the Jamesian perspective in which ethics is based in human experience and democratic inclusion does not prescribe ends that the abstract and ends-based aspects of the Pateman-Goodhart model be rejected.

The following features of the model, I believe, are more persuasive. The third feature of the Pateman-Goodhart model is that BI creates the *condition* for equal social standing amongst citizens. They argue that BI helps “remove the temptation for some citizens to see others as less worthy of respect, and so as lesser citizens, because of their lack of economic resources.”⁴⁷ Pateman argues that BI can restructure marriage and family structures as well as political ones, because when employment and income are detached, women are less likely to be considered second-class citizens. And lastly, since BI creates the freedom to say “no” to employment, the Pateman-Goodhart case for BI based in democracy argues that it promotes collective self-government. It does so by creating space for people to develop themselves, either politically or through other methods: “a basic income would allow individuals at any time to do voluntary or political work [...or time] to learn to surf, to write or paint, to devote themselves to family time, or to have a quiet period of self-reassessment or contemplation.”⁴⁸ The inclusion of people

⁴⁵ Leticia Morales, “The Democratic Case for a Basic Income,” *Law, Ethics, and Philosophy* 6 (2018): 126.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Pateman, “Freedom and Democratization,” 146.

⁴⁸ Carole Pateman, “Democratizing Citizenship: Some Advantages of a Basic Income,” *Politics and Society* 32, no. 1 (2004): 96.

otherwise considered unworthy of respect changes the contents of social dialogue, and therefore has the potential to shift relations of status. And BI will provide opportunities for communities and individuals to engage in formal and informal political and social decision-making, as well as the relaxation and leisure necessary for engaging in socio-political arenas. These features fit nicely into the paradigm of pragmatic inclusion because the Pateman-Goodhart model advocates for BI; it is the floor on which people can engage in and change their worlds.

Morales disagrees with any attention paid to BI's impact on informal political participation, primarily because the BI scheme required to satisfy the goals mentioned above, she argues, "may be too radical or too demanding under present socio-economic conditions."⁴⁹ Her suspicions are not unwarranted: as BI does not fully rectify the vast disparity of wealth in the West, academics argue that BI could have negative effects on women and workers,⁵⁰ and BI would not provide absolute freedom from racial, gendered, and economic oppression. Morales argues that the Pateman-Goodhart model "offers no real account of how precisely a basic income would improve political participation or democratic skills."⁵¹ Instead, she argues that "What we need is an argument that explains why a basic income may improve individuals' opportunities to participate in the political process."⁵²

4.4.2 *The Morales Model*

⁴⁹ Morales, "The Democratic Case," 127.

⁵⁰ Ingrid Robeyns, "Will a Basic Income Do Justice to Women?," *Analyse und Kritik* 23, no. 1 (2001); A. Gourevitch, "The Limits of a Basic Income: Means and Ends of Workplace Democracy," *Basic Income Studies* 11, no. 1 (2016).

⁵¹ Morales, "The Democratic Case," 129.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 130.

Morales states that formal *political* participation—not civic or informal participation—is the “foundation of legitimate political authority,”⁵³ and that “a more modest model of democracy that prioritizes broad and effective political participation in decision-making processes, offers a more plausible democratic case for a universal basic income.”⁵⁴ Morales claims that citizens engage in informal political activities such as demonstrations and boycotts when they “feel excluded from conventional forms of participation,”⁵⁵ so she argues for BI exclusively focussed on formal political participation. Money is a material precondition for formal political participation, and income inequality undermines formal political participation, she argues; therefore, BI is a promising solution.

Morales does not consider direct impacts on formal participation, such as the ability to pay for voter registration or transportation to voting booths. She argues that the democratic value of BI is best understood when considering its indirect effects. She states that a BI “might politicize citizens because it gives them a stake in society”⁵⁶ by avoiding negative experiences with case workers and incentivizing participation through formal channels. Further, it helps diminish the impact of the “scarcity mindset” in which people can only think about their immediate needs, and opens up the possibility to follow public debate, participate in political organizations, and hold political representatives accountable. Morales concludes that BI indirectly effects formal political participation of the poor by “freeing up time, energy, and ‘cognitive bandwidth’, and by positively affecting their status and beliefs about themselves and others.”⁵⁷

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 135.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 132.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 134.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 135.

Morales' critique of the Pateman-Goodman model—that aiming towards specific ends undermines the independent value of democracy—is hypocritical because her argument also is ends-oriented, namely toward more equitable status relations (for which both models advocate) and a positive self-image amongst the poorest population. Her critique of feasibility fails to consider the wider implications of BI; although an impact on gender roles and the poor's engagement with politics are prescribed ends in the Pateman-Goodhart model, a more robust democracy is a condition under which such ends are possible, not one that guarantees these ends. Further, Morales' model is fundamentally individual, and does not consider BI's possible cultural effects.

Neither the Pateman-Goodhart nor the Morales models are sufficient in defending BI as an aspect of democracy. The Pateman-Goodhart model is based in abstractions with particular ends, and the Morales argument ignores the fact that democracy happens inside *and outside* of formal institutions. An argument for BI needs a robust philosophical basis, such as the one I have outlined throughout this text and define below. Although I will use the best of these two arguments, namely Pateman-Goodhart's expansive view of democracy and Morales' detailed approach to the politicization possible with a BI, in my argument, only a BI argument based in pragmatic inclusion for an ethical democracy sufficiently accounts for the demands of inclusion and democracy.

4.5 The Jamesian Definition of Basic Income

Thus far, it is clear that the welfare system and Western democracies have significant problems, and the current methods of justifying BI in freedom and in democracy have obvious

flaws. As such, I propose a brief outline of a further possible method, namely one based in pragmatic inclusion for an ethical democracy, i.e., based in *inclusively listening* to those impacted by contemporary social assistance programs (pragmatic inclusion), identifying *systemic problems of exclusion* (namely the problem of welfare and the problem of democracy), and with the only explicit end being *a more expansive realm of influence* on common sense and cultural norms (an ethical democracy). The definition I suggest is remarkably simple and lies in a BI with clear parameters, something that the aforementioned authors omit. BI is *an income that adequately provides for every individual's basic needs, irrespective of employment, funded by distributing the excessive wealth of the ultra-rich*. A connection to basic needs, the decoupling of income and employment, and taxation of the wealthy are pragmatic inclusion's only requirements for BI.

The practical application of this BI proposal is left open-ended. In the same way that James says, “there is no such thing as an ethical philosophy dogmatically made up in advance,”⁵⁸ I argue that there is no such thing as a single correct way to implement BI. Whether it be distributed in cash or in kind, for individuals or households, in a lump sum or regular instalments, for everyone or for only for the poor—as long as the above three aspects of the definition are respected, the goal of pragmatic inclusion is accomplished. As long as these requirements remain the principles of welfare reform, democratic processes are left open to make changes to this policy. James says that “there can be no final Truth in Ethics any more than in Physics, until the last man has had his experience and said his say.”⁵⁹ And until the last

⁵⁸ William James, “The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life” in *The Writings of William James*, 610.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 611

human says his or her say about BI, and more generally, welfare and the power disparity of inequality, there can be no final truth in pragmatic inclusion for an ethical democracy.

4.5.1 Solution to the Problem of Welfare

There are strong arguments about why these requirements of BI create pragmatic inclusion for an ethical democracy. BI needs to provide an income adequate to cover everyone's basic needs because, as Morales mentions and as I have argued, a precondition to participation in civic and political life is the abolishment of poverty. This aspect of BI (towards which Van Parijs also aims) provides everyone with a floor under which they cannot fall, so that individuals and communities have the means to do more than simply survive. As poverty is "the most important individual-level determinant of political participation;"⁶⁰ if everyone is guaranteed an income sufficient to cover basic needs, they are automatically included in spheres of life otherwise inaccessible to them, namely, informal and formal political participation. I define basic needs as primarily physical needs (although this is open to revision), which means that BI must provide enough money for everyone to afford adequate food and housing. In practice, depending on the location of housing in Canada, BI should be tailored by and for municipalities, not the nation or the province, and would be around \$1500 per month, or \$18,000 per year.⁶¹ If welfare, distributed in the form of BI, is at a level high enough to afford basic needs, a primary condition necessary for an ethical democracy is met.

⁶⁰ Cicatiello et al. "Income distribution and political participation," 450.

⁶¹ Statistics Canada, "Survey of Household Spending," *The Daily*, 2018.

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Economic inclusion involves formal and informal decision-making processes, such as voting, running for office, donating and participation in electoral campaigns, and also an income sufficient for covering costs of joining unions, attending demonstrations, and creating and joining civic groups outside of electoral politics. Informal political participation exceeds even the definition in the Pateman-Goodhart model; workplaces, neighbourhoods, schools, and families are also centers of political action. As James shows us, wherever there is human action, there is experimental political participation, because the status quo is produced and maintained by structures beyond government policy. A young woman who is a single mother and working two jobs to support her family has very little impact on the status quo, because she does not have the time or mental energy to support or resist norms and ideologies in her life. But with a BI, she has the means to rethink sexist stereotypes, read about ideas beyond her moral paradigm, cultivate friendships that help her grow and change into a better person, and develop her capacities in expressing her perspective and listening to others.

This hypothetical situation shows that not only formal processes—i.e. those that change laws—form common sense, but that every activity can impact the socio-political status quo. And for this reason, as outlined in chapter three, BI should be provided irrespective of employment. All activity is meaningful, but only the activity that produces economic growth is (currently) rewarded with the means of survival and therefore, inclusion in decision-making processes. BI rectifies this by decoupling income from economic activity; any work requirement in a BI devalues non-economic activity and excludes the poorest people in a society from opportunities outside of employment that make a difference in common sense. Volunteering and creative pursuits are two of the many examples of non-economic activity that have value in a

community and should not exclude those with the least wealth and power. As Van Parijs states, the ability to say “no” to an employer will force workplaces to compete for employees by incentivizing them with better pay or benefits. Alternatively, these businesses could invest in automation, which will again allow more worker-involvement in the society. When communities and individuals are not forced to work to survive, they can fill their time with a host of other valuable activities, such as creating their own small businesses, caring for their families, and developing their capacities.

4.5.2 Solution to the Problem of Democracy

The problem of inequality and the influence that the wealthy have on electoral democracy is the final problem left for this definition of BI. The previous two aspects of the BI of pragmatic inclusion work to solve the problem of welfare. To be unemployed or underemployed would no longer mean a life of desperation. The problem of democracy is addressed by the condition that BI acquires its funding through distribution of the wealth of the super-rich which generally means the richest 1% of individuals and corporations. This transference of wealth could be accomplished in many ways, including a wealth tax, a maximum income, a progressive and aggressive income tax scheme, or an overhaul of the structure of business ownership based in workplace democracy. And it would most likely require high taxes on the wealthiest corporations, ending massive subsidization of corporations, and closing tax-loopholes; but again, there is no one right way to implement BI. Taxation on the ultra-rich would reduce the wealth of the richest people in a society and therefore reduce their influence in politics and on

ideology more generally. It would not solve the problem of unequal access completely, but BI would take important steps toward a society with less income (and influence) inequality.

An important objection to this aspect of BI's definition is the reaction of the 1%. Clearly most rich people would respond negatively to higher taxation, and this response is as human and felt as the "cries of the wounded" from the people in poverty that I outlined. Does this mean that pragmatic inclusion is unfairly biased towards the preferences of the poor and even *excludes* the voices of the rich? No, because its goal is inclusion, not the appeasement of preferences. The voices of the rich are absolutely represented in contemporary decision-making processes—their voices are heard and usually central in the status quo—and with a BI the rich will still have influence, albeit in slightly less dominant form. But other voices, namely those of people in poverty and on welfare, are marginalized, as James states, "Pent in under every system of moral rules are innumerable persons whom it weighs upon and goods which it represses."⁶² The moral rules of common sense govern the lives of everyone, but not everyone has the material means necessary to influence common sense. The purpose of BI is not to help one group and hurt another, it is to create the conditions in which everyone, despite wealth and structural economic forces, has the means to participate in the democratic dialogue so that common sense becomes an equilibrium that accurately reflects the demands of the people. Preference is not a factor in the argument for BI—BI is the condition for ethical deliberation based in felt human experience, and the common sense, habits, and preferences that the ethical deliberation produces.

⁶² James, "Moral Philosopher," 624.

Solutions to the problem of democracy (and its current state of inequality) are also an aspect of the rest of pragmatic inclusion's definition of BI. If everyone is given the platform on which they can advocate for their needs, and governments and cultural ideologies reflect these needs, the majority could favour experimenting with new and different economic systems that rectify inequality. Perhaps people with a BI will implement a solution that has not been considered in our deeply exclusive democracy. Pragmatic Inclusion for an ethical democracy leaves such decisions to democracy. A truly inclusive democracy would most likely make changes that help the majority of citizens, i.e., not the 1%, and therefore one could *predict* particular outcomes, but never prescribe them. Whatever the outcome, it will be a society built on the maximum number of voices, rather than the perspectives of a handful of elites.

BI's only requirements are meeting basic needs, unconditionality regardless of employment, and funding coming from the wealthiest in society, which is a means of achieving pragmatic inclusion for an ethical democracy. No one is theoretically excluded from social, civic, or political activities because of a lack of income, every type of activity is valued, and the disparity of influence is reduced. An ethical democracy acknowledges the decision-making processes in a culture reach further than electoral politics; only after people's basic needs are met can they become involved in civic organizations, social movements, and unions, and on an even smaller scale, basic needs are a prerequisite to communicative family and community interactions. This type of BI would radically change a society into a more inclusive and democratic one. But the rest of James' experimental method—experimenting, listening, and revising—is unguaranteed. BI is not the only way to create pragmatic inclusion for an ethical democracy, but it is a fundamental component. To create the conditions for James' method and

to further the goals of pragmatic inclusion require supplemental institutional policy, which will be suggested in the section below.

4.6 Further Considerations in the Pursuit of an Ethical Democracy

A BI, paid at a level sufficient to cover basic needs, irrespective of employment, funded through taxation of the wealthy is the prescription of pragmatic inclusion that includes as many voices as possible in the creation and maintenance of common sense in formal and informal political spheres. But an argument for radical inclusion through BI as a prerequisite to a better society is not blind to the problems of democracy; radical inclusion does not mean pure majoritarianism. Pragmatic inclusion is not naïve to the fact that people often advocate for ideas contrary to their own needs or are ignorant to the ways in which they think. Instead it seeks to rethink democracy with BI as one of its necessary components. A democracy *begins* with economic inclusion, but it does not end there. Many other social changes are required to create the best common sense, i.e. one that best represents the people it influences. The following are some supplementary policy suggestions that mesh with James' ethical method that will further the goals of pragmatic inclusion. They are inspired by the "social virtues" of William James as defined by Trygve Throntveit, namely experimentation, historical wisdom, and empathy. I suggest policy measures that follow from each of them.

Experimentation, which I explained in detail in chapter two, is the method whereby individuals and collectives realize goods and evils. As James says in a letter, a genuine understanding of the universe waits on "the total 'evidence', which only the race can draw," but

that evidence “has to include the experiments of individuals in itself.”⁶³ BI is the first method to create the conditions for experimentation because it allows for “articulating, testing, and deliberating over moral hypotheses and their consequences,”⁶⁴ because it includes everyone (especially those currently repressed) in this process. A further suggestion is the support for and creation of more workplace democracies, whether they are co-operatively owned, or led by boards with strong union (or worker) representation, so that workers’ voices are included in the governance and control of their places of employment. Another idea to create pragmatic inclusion is to promote investments in co-operative housing so tenants are similarly included the control of their homes. Electoral reform, such as proportional representation, is an additional supplement to BI, so that elected governments better embody the votes and the interests of the people they represent. And finally, the experimentation process can be best realized with a well-funded public healthcare system because illness should not exclude anyone from engaging in the socio-political world. All these suggestions give more people the ability to creatively experiment in their world, regardless of wealth, status, or identity.

The second social virtue of William James—historical wisdom—explains that a democratic society should understand the ways that moral ideals have shifted and changed through time, which ideals have been overcome and ought to stay silent, and why conventionally accepted ideals have dominance. As Throntveit explains, “history and the society it shapes provides

⁶³ William James et al., “WJ to L. T. Hobhouse, August 12, 1904,” in *The Correspondence of William James*, edited by Ignas K. Skrupskelis and Elizabeth M. Berkeley, 12 volumes (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992–2004), 10: 449.

⁶⁴ Trygve Throntviet, “William James’s Ethical Republic.” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 72 (2011): 272.

resources from which all experimenters draw, and imposes constraints under which it operates.”⁶⁵ Public education is not an explicit end of BI, but both education and BI are methods of attaining an ethical democracy, therefore a society built on pragmatic inclusion would also require a robust, accessible, and well-funded public education system. This public education system should be diverse in its curriculum, involving ideas beyond that which is considered normal in the status quo, in particular ideas from non-western and Indigenous societies. Publicly-funded education (ideally from preschool to university) provides the tools necessary for listening to the voices of others and fully taking advantage of the inclusion provided by BI, as well as creating good habits among the citizenry. Further, publicly-funded museums, which create historical awareness about how a society came to be, is another suggested essential.

Finally, the social virtue of empathy has two institutional forms: those that restrict unempathetic virtues from being cultivated, and those that cultivate empathy. Clearly empathy is a key virtue in pragmatic inclusion, because genuine listening is essential to test an action’s or a policy’s moral quality. Listening requires attention, and James says in *The Principles of Psychology*, that attention, “out of all the sensations yielded, picks out certain ones as worthy of its notice and suppresses the rest.”⁶⁶ To guarantee attention towards, and therefore the judgement of empathic worthiness of, other moral perspectives is difficult, but it begins by limiting anti-empathic ideologies from spreading. A single voice has a multitude of content, and content that is essentially exclusionary—such as white supremacy—is not moral or immoral, but anti-moral

⁶⁵ Trygve Throntveit, *William James and the Quest for an Ethical Republic* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 104.

⁶⁶ William James, “The Stream of Thought,” in *The Writings of William James*, 70.

in a Jamesian paradigm. Because inclusion is the source of ethics (and the goal of BI), beliefs that exclude people from a society undermine the possibility for and conditions of an ethical democracy. Inclusion is pre-moral while exclusion is anti-moral because exclusion violates morality's foundation. As a result, to create the best conditions for an empathic public, hate speech laws are a suggested supplement to BI in order to stifle anti-moral ideologies and to create the conditions for inclusive democratic dialogue.⁶⁷ The content of every voice is acceptable and included in pragmatic inclusion *except* when it undermines the condition for such a society: the ever-expanding inclusion of voices. James claims that a consequence of his philosophy is the “democratic respect for the sacredness of individuality,” or, “the outward tolerance of whatever is not itself intolerant.”⁶⁸

Examples of institutional mechanisms that cultivate empathy, on the other hand, are an independent, free press, held to high journalistic standards that reports felt impacts that might otherwise go unnoticed, affirmative action programs, and integrated city planning so that workplaces and communities include as many different voices as possible. Further, reconciliation with indigenous peoples and other marginalized populations in order to take steps towards creating bonds of trust amongst groups that have been oppressed by colonial countries are suggestions. In the BI pilot in Finland, it was reported that people on BI reported a greater sense of social and political trust relative to the control group on contemporary welfare.⁶⁹ Thus,

⁶⁷ This brings up the issue of who is considered human. It is easier to state reasons *not* to consider someone non-human, notably race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, ethnicity, etc., but this thesis is not the place for such a debate.

⁶⁸ William James, *Talks to Teachers on Psychology: and to Students on Some of Life's Ideals* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1899), v.

⁶⁹ Kangas et al., “The basic income experiment 2017–2018 in Finland,” 19-20.

empathy is already a reportedly direct result of BI, but the aforementioned changes could also increase empathy, which is needed in order for James' experimental process, and pragmatic inclusion, to fully succeed.

If the three social virtues are all achieved through implementing the suggestions above—or alternatives that have similar outcomes, a utopian—yet attainable—pragmatic inclusion will exist. But these suggestions are meant only as beneficial additions to BI in attaining pragmatic inclusion for an ethical democracy. They are not essential in this argument but will help create a society where BI, as an instrument of pragmatic inclusion for an ethical democracy, is most effective. BI achieves the pre-moral condition of inclusion as the foundation upon which a truly inclusive and ethical democracy may be built. Once the condition of pre-moral, pragmatic inclusion is attained (BI), more conditions can to be implemented in order for James' experimental method to be practiced most effectively.

4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I reconstructed an argument for BI with the principle of pragmatic inclusion for an ethical democracy, rather than Van Parijs' real freedom for all, as its basis. I did so by stressing the voices of people impacted by contemporary welfare systems and examining experiments with BI to show that welfare systems in the West require reform. Next, because political influence is distributed according to wealth and the levels of western inequality exclude the poor and give special access to the rich, I argue that a more inclusive democracy is necessary. The solution provided was pragmatic inclusion for an ethical democracy and the practical example was a BI, paid at a level sufficient to cover basic needs, irrespective of employment,

and funded through taxation on the wealthiest individuals and corporations. This solution is based in the writings of William James, and specifically his social ethics which show that inclusion precedes ethics, and ethics is a method of social mediation. In order to fully explain this definition, I drew upon existing literature that coupled democracy with BI advocacy and showed that the Jamesian pragmatic inclusion principle is the best foundation for this argument. Finally, I suggested policies that will maximize the democratic impact of BI with the social virtues of William James posited by Trygve Throntveit.

Some critiques may decry BI as a socialistic pipe dream, but it has been proven to work in bettering the lives of people in poverty, and it has been proven that it can pay for itself.⁷⁰ As James states, “I will now confess my own utopia. I devoutly believe in the reign of peace and in the gradual advent of some sort of socialistic equilibrium.”⁷¹ This equilibrium is best constructed through listening, experimenting, and revising our experiments. BI is an example of a tool that creates pragmatic inclusion for an ethical democracy, and pragmatic inclusion is the principle that, with the help of BI, can expand the scope of influence, wealth, and power in order to move ever-closer to a world where everyone is included.

⁷⁰ Bregman, *Utopia for Realists*, 104.

⁷¹ William James, “The Moral Equivalent of War,” in *The Writings of William James*, 667.

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1. Summary of Contents

In this thesis, I investigated a new justification for basic income (BI) that is based in the social ethics of William James. I proposed a Jamesian “pragmatic inclusion for an ethical democracy” as an alternative to “real freedom for all,” as theorized by Philippe Van Parijs, a leading advocate for BI. After thoroughly explaining real freedom for all, I identified three main issues in this foundational argument and argue that pragmatic inclusion for an ethical democracy, as a philosophical system, solves them. The first inadequacy is the most fundamental: Van Parijs bases his defence of BI on the ideal of “maximin real freedom.” This abstract notion overlooks the fact that felt human experience is the origin of ethics and that demands fall into an equilibrium based on who is included in the social realm. As I show through the social ethics of William James, an ethical philosophy should begin by studying the contemporary socio-political climate, listening to the voices of people marginalized by the status quo, and view ethics as a practical and human endeavour, rather than something to be understood through abstract intellection.

The second issue with Van Parijs’ philosophical paradigm is his individualism: he reduces human beings to isolated aggregates of essential talents and preferences, rather than acknowledging that the human self and its preferences are in large part socially and culturally constructed in the Jamesian “common sense.” The result of such individualism is a philosophy, and, more importantly, practical policy initiatives, that I argue are biased against people in poverty and persons with disabilities. The final problem with Van Parijs’ philosophical worldview is that he diminishes the value of non-economic activity by arguing that present-day

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salaries, incomes, and jobs contain inherited value from the past that ought to be distributed through BI. This perspective ignores the fact that non-waged activities also have value. Instead, James shows, ethics and politics are the production of the habits and norms of common sense which is produced by *all* forms of activity. Pragmatic inclusion is a better paradigm in which BI should be argued, one that has its foundations in human experience, a social definition of the human self, and values all human activity. It is a deeply human philosophy that can solve practical human problems.

The definition of BI that I provide is minimal. It suggests three features (two of which were part of Van Parijs' original definition) necessary to attain the open-ended goal of pragmatic inclusion, which is an ethical democracy. These features are a BI 1) set at a level sufficient to cover basic needs, 2) without a work-requirement, and 3) paid by taxing the wealthiest members of society. These features solve both the *welfare problem* (people on welfare currently are unable to live a full life) and the *democracy problem* (the richest people and groups in a society have greater access the decision-making processes in a society, especially compared to the poorest population). This definition of BI effectively abolishes poverty and curbs the wealth of the most powerful people, and in doing so, distributes influence on the common sense of a society through (economically) including everyone in formal and informal politics by ensuring that no one is excluded because of poverty.

A BI that is both justified through Jamesian pragmatic inclusion for an ethical democracy and defined as an income set at a level sufficient to cover basic needs, without a work-requirement, and paid by taxing the wealthiest members of society overcomes the problems of Van Parijs' freedom-based and individualist BI. While the Jamesian philosophical perspective

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and justification is essential in more coherent BI advocacy, the remaining features of Van Parijs' BI definition, "[1] a *regular* income [2] paid *in cash* [3] to every *individual* member of a society, [4] *irrespective of income from other sources*,"¹ are left optional, and should be examined more through a Jamesian lens in future studies. Further considerations of policy proposals to enrich the pragmatist project for BI are suggested in the final sections of chapter four, but this thesis laid the groundwork for any follow-up research about ethical social assistance, namely that ethics always begins in inclusion.

2. Possible Directions for Basic Income and Pragmatism Research

The focus of this thesis was primarily on the new foundation and new ends for BI. Further research on the other aspects of Van Parijs' argument is required in order to fully reform the argument. Other aspects include questions around extra allocations for people with disabilities; since undominated diversity is an unacceptable principle to provide these allocations, should pragmatists accept that BI is set at the same level for everyone? What about children or the elderly? Considering James' focus on the part over the whole,² and his empathy for unique needs and perspectives,³ I hypothesize that a particularized BI would be preferable, but a full argument is necessary to defend this hypothesis. Further, as indicated in chapter 4.6, there are many other political policies that should be defended as things that grow from pragmatic inclusion and help attain the goal of an ethical democracy.

¹ Philippe Van Parijs and Yannick Vanderborght, *Basic Income: A Radical Proposal for a Free Society and a Sane Economy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 4.

² William James, "The Stream of Thought," in *The Writings of William James: A Comprehensive Edition*, ed. J. J. McDermott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 21-73.

³ William James, "On A Certain Blindness in Human Beings," in *The Writings of William James*, 629-44.

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Another way to move forward in thought lies in advancing the philosophy of pragmatism and the social ethics therein, with special focus on James. Of course, there are other pragmatists that more easily align with socio-political arguments, including John Dewey, George Herbert Mead, Jane Addams, Sidney Hook, Roberto Ungar, Robert B. Talisse, and even quasi-pragmatists such as Jürgen Habermas, Cornel West, and W. E. B. Du Bois. These scholars' contributions to a political pragmatism should be investigated and used to bolster the ideas outlined above. But James is a predecessor to all of these thinkers, and along with Charles Sanders Peirce, began the American school of pragmatism. The social and political effects of James' ideas, especially regarding his relationship to democracy, should continue to be studied in order to better justify and broaden the proposal outlined above. The belief that James is an individualist should be eradicated from scholarship, because his individualism is always situated in a social world.

Further, what practically has created and continues to create such extreme inequality in the West should be further investigated (always situated in pragmatic inclusion). What are the ways in which rich populations impact democracy and why do they have this power? This will require ongoing historical, economic, and philosophical studies. And what about other crises in the world, particular global warming? How can BI help reduce the impacts of climate change? This text based all value and ethical activity around human feeling and activity—should the activity of nature be included in the foundation of ethics? Or is nature an aspect of the human? And more ethnographies, investigative journalism, and fiction and non-fiction books should be written by and about the experiences of people in poverty in order to create a society that hears and listens to the “cries of the wounded.”

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Clearly, the suggestion most appropriate to this project is a policy proposal, namely a BI with the three requirements listed above. I have argued and truly believe that this proposal is philosophically justified and ethically imperative. But its realization will not come without work. I implore my readers to take up James' doctrine of meliorism, which "treats salvation as neither necessary nor impossible. It treats it as a possibility, which becomes more and more of a probability the more numerous the actual conditions of salvation become."⁴ BI is a step towards the possible salvation of this world. James says the following about meliorism, but it applies to the outcome of BI as well: "If none work, it will fail. If each does his best, it will not fail. Its destiny hangs on an *if*."⁵ So let us all work *as if* our ideas and actions will make a difference, and basic income—and even the salvation of the world—can be realized.

⁴ William James, "Pragmatism and Religion," *The Writings of William James*, 466-7.

⁵ William James, "Faith and the Right to Believe," *The Writings of William James*, 739.

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