Chapter 5

Republican Freedom: Three Axioms, Four Theorems

Philip Pettit

My aim in this essay is to reformulate the republican conception of freedom as non-domination somewhat more formally than I have done before. The account that I offer does not fundamentally depart from that which I have presented elsewhere (Pettit 1997b, 2001, 2007); and, while it may not fit in detail with Quentin Skinner's views, it is certainly in the same ball-park (Skinner 1998; Pettit 2002).[1] The motive for the reformulation is a wish to show how the approach compares with, and scores over, the theory of freedom as non-interference generally but, in particular, the version of that theory that Ian Carter (1999), Matthew Kramer (2003), and others have recently been defending.

The formulation employed uses the notion of control, in particular control over choice, defining liberty as the absence of alien or alienating control on the part of other persons. The notion of being subject to the alien control of others is used to represent the idea of domination. While the language of control is not so salient a part of the traditional republican lexicon as the language of domination or *dominatio* – although it does have a presence there (Pocock 1977) – it may serve better in displaying the connections between liberty and associated notions. The axioms presented in the first section are designed to shape up the concept of alien control so that it serves this purpose effectively.

The broad line of argument is this. Human beings routinely exercise certain forms of control over one another, affecting the probabilities attached to the options they respectively confront. But one variety of control is non-alien, leaving those affected with full freedom of choice, while another is alien or alienating, having a negative impact on freedom of choice. Each form of control can occur with interference, even interference broadly understood, and each form can occur without; thus

there may be freedom in the presence or absence of interference, and there may be unfreedom in its presence or absence. Alien control without interference materializes when the controller or associates invigilate the choices of the controlled agent, being ready to interfere should the controlled agent not conform to a desired pattern or should the controller have a change of mind. Non-alien control with interference materializes when things are the other way around: the interferee or associates invigilate the choices of the interferer, being ready to stop or redirect the interference should the interferer not conform to a desired pattern or should the interferee have a change of mind. Invigilation in the sense invoked may occur without awareness on the part of the agent invigilated and may not occasion any inhibition; it involves a virtual form of control in which the invigilator is ready to interfere but only on a need-to-act basis.

The chapter is in three sections. First, I set out three axiomatic assumptions behind the republican definition of liberty as the absence of alien control. Then, using those axioms and some plausible, independent principles, I derive four theorems that define the connection between interference and control: these show how alien control may materialize with interference but also without; and how non-alien control may materialize without interference but also with. At various points in the exposition of axioms and theorems, I respond to some challenges made by Carter and Kramer and then, in the last section, I address their version of freedom as non-interference more directly.

The focus in this chapter is on the freedom of choice, by which I mean the freedom to select one option from among a number of mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive options; choices just are such structured sets of options.[2] In some ways this focus may be misleading, since the primary interest of republican political theory is in the freedom of the person, not in the freedom of choice. The free person, on the republican understanding, is someone who is systematically protected and empowered against alien control in those choice-types that are deemed significant in social life (Pettit 2006b).[3] Thus the free person will not be someone who manages to avoid alien control in just any choices – including choices harmful to innocent parties – or who only manages to avoid it on an ad hoc basis: say, because of having mafia friends. The free person will avoid alien control in relevant choices and on the right basis.[4] The relevant choices will correspond to the important liberties, however they are understood, and the right basis will be

incorporation in a cultural, legal, and political matrix of protection and empowerment.[5]

The republican theory of freedom is distinguished, then, on two separable counts: first, in taking freedom of choice to require the absence of alien control, not just the absence of interference; and second, in taking the freedom of the person to require a systematic sort of protection and empowerment against alien control over selected choices. My earlier presentations of the approach did not distinguish clearly between these different aspects and I am happy to emphasize their separability here. But I focus in this chapter on what alien control means, and on how particular choices may or may not be controlled in an alien way, without addressing the connection with the freedom of the person. That connection remains central to the republican approach, however, and should figure prominently in a fuller account, meriting an independent axiom and generating a richer set of theorems.

The Axioms

The three basic axioms on which the republican conception of liberty relies bear respectively on: the reality of personal choice; the possibility of alien control; and the positionality of alien control.

Axiom 1. The reality of personal choice

In order to deliberate about what to do, in the manner that is distinctive of human beings, we have to assume with respect to the options before us in any context that we can take one or we can take another. They are there for us as possibilities that, in the most basic sense possible, are available for choice; they are, quite simply, choosables or enactables. Sometimes, of course, we think of an option, not in the basic terms in which it is so available, but under a richer description that reaches out to include a desired but saliently uncertain consequence; we think of it as hitting the target, for example, rather than just trying to hit the target. But in every case there is an aspect under which each option presents itself to us such that we can think: I can just do that, or I can just refuse to do that; what I do in this choice is up to me. Options are not restricted to basic actions like moving a finger or uttering a sound, which I can intentionally perform without doing anything else

as an intentional means of performing them (Hornsby 1980). But they must each be something of which, in context, I can think, and think rightly: this is within my power of choice; this is something I can do.

The axiom of personal choice is the claim that there are many scenarios where we are in a position to make these can-do assumptions and are right to make them: the options we face really are options, so that we can choose or not choose them, at will. I do not offer any defense of the claim here. Doing so would take me far afield, into issues of metaphysics (see Pettit & Smith 1996; Pettit 2001). And in any case a defense is not really necessary, since the axiom is unlikely to be contested amongst moral or political theorists. Such theorists presuppose the possibility of personal choice, as that is understood here, and look at issues that arise in the light of that presupposition.

Before leaving this first axiom, however, it is worth drawing attention to one important aspect of the claim, since it will be relevant later. This is that the notion of being able to choose this or that option, or having the option within one's range of choice, is distinctively agent-centered in character. When we think of an agent from a third person point of view, say as a neural system, or a system of psychological dispositions, or as a sociological type, we will naturally adopt a probabilistic viewpoint – or if we are sure enough of our ground, a deterministic one – assigning different degrees of probability to different options. But none of us can think like that of ourselves or the options before us as we confront a choice and exercise deliberation. In order to be deliberative agents, in order to perform as the makers of decisions, we must set aside the predictive point of view. Predicting decisions is not something we can do as we make the very decisions predicted.[6]

What is true of how we view ourselves as agents holds equally of how we must view others as agents: that is, view them from what we might call the second as distinct from the third person standpoint (Darwall 2006). If we think of others as agents in a certain context of decision, then we have to think of them as having this or that option at their disposal, so that the choice is up to them. We have to think of them in such a way that should they choose to do something that hurts us or hurts another, then we will not view that action in the dispassionate manner of the inquisitive scientist or therapist. As we would contemplate our own ill-doing with a sense of guilt of shame, so under normal circumstances we will have to view theirs with a feeling of resentment or indignation. The theme will be familiar from the tradition of

thought that began with Peter Strawson's 1960s paper on "Freedom and Resentment" (Strawson 2003), a way of thinking with which I strongly identify (Pettit & Smith 1996; Pettit 2001).

Axiom 2. The possibility of alien control

The second axiom asserts the possibility of a specific sort of relationship of alien control in which one party may stand toward another, in particular toward someone who faces a choice between certain options. In this relationship the first party will control what the second does, at least to some degree, and control it in an alien way that takes from the personal choice of that agent, jarring with the deliberative can-do assumptions discussed under the first axiom. Suppose that A stands in this relation to B, when B faces a choice between options, x, y, and z. As an alien controller, A will exercise some measure of control over what B does, and this control will mean that with respect to x or y or z, B is no longer able to think, or able to think rightly: I can just do that; the choice is up to me.

In the sense of interest in the current discussion, A will exercise control, alien or non-alien, over B's choice just so far as the following is true.[7] First, A has desires, however implicit, over how B chooses on specific occasions or just in general; at the limit, A may just want to have some impact, no matter in what direction, on B's choices. Second, A acts on these desires, no doubt among others, seeking a certain pattern in B's choices. And, third, A's presence makes a desired difference. Making a difference need not mean making an actual difference, of course. It may just mean making things assume a shape such that the probability of B's taking the desired pattern is raised;[8] more specifically, it is raised beyond the level it would have had in A's absence.[9] The extent to which A's presence and activity increases the probability of B's acting according to the desired pattern will be a measure of the degree of A's control over that pattern.

The control exercised by A may be alien or alienating in any of three broadly different ways. It may impact on B's ability to make a deliberative choice so that the assumption of personal choice is undermined on a general front. Or it may impact on the specific options that fall within the domain of B's choice, in which case there are two subpossibilities. The control may simply remove one or another option from the set of options faced by B, reducing the total options available, or

may seem to remove it. Or it may replace one or another option by a significantly changed option, or seem to replace it by a significantly changed option. An option will be significantly changed – it will count as a different option – so far as it differs in regard to some feature that is valued or disvalued by the agent (Broome 1991: ch. 5; Pettit 1991). Suppose I can choose x in a world where it has a valued or disvalued feature, F, or where there is a probability p that it will lead to a valued or disvalued result, R. Under this criterion of option-identity, you will replace x by a different option, x*, if you do something to affect that feature, F, or the probability of that result, R; more in the last section on this criterion of option-identity.

These varieties of impact – mnemonically, reduction, removal, and replacement – will involve alien or alienating control, since they all undermine the deliberative assumption of personal choice. As we know, this is the assumption that with each option originally on offer the agent, B, is positioned to think, and rightly think: I can do that. If B's ability to choose is reduced, then he or she will not be in a position to think that thought correctly, whether with some or all of the options. If an option is removed, B will not be right to think the thought of that option in particular; and if it seems to be removed, B will not be in an evidential position to think it, whether correctly or incorrectly: the option will not present itself as accessible. Finally, if an option is replaced, B will not be right to think the thought of the option originally confronted; and if it seems to be replaced, B will not be in an evidential position to think it: an option with a significantly different character will present itself at the site of the original option.

Alien control requires a relationship between individuals and individuals, individuals and groups, or groups and groups, in which the controller is aware of the controlled as an agent subject to a suitable form of control. Strictly, the controlled agent, B, need not be aware of the controller, A; B will be controlled, whether or not B registers or feels the control. But A has to be aware of B and of B's susceptibility to intervention; otherwise A would not be in a position to choose to intervene in B's affairs.[10]

The fact that alien control requires this awareness on the part of the controller means that an agent like B may escape the control of a more powerful agent, A, because A is unaware of what he or she can achieve – maybe unaware even of the existence of B. In such a case there is potential alien control but not actual alien control.[11] The case is like

that in which there is no actual agent in A's position but it is possible that such an agent might materialize; it is possible, for example, that a number of people might incorporate in order to play a controlling part in relation to another individual or group.

Alien control will be unwelcome to any victim who values having personal choice over independently available options. Alien control compromises such choice, jeopardizing one or more can-do assumptions. A victim of alien control may welcome paternalistic intervention in some cases, of course – an alcoholic may thank you for locking up the booze cupboard – but will not do so on the grounds of thereby retaining personal choice. Alien control is necessarily bad for personal choice but personal choice is not necessarily something that agents may cherish.

Axiom 3. The positionality of alien control

The third axiom, which is quite independent of the other two, asserts that if someone in B's position comes to be able to control what A does, then to that extent A's control over B diminishes, perhaps even disappears. Controlled or countered control is no longer a form of control, as we might say; the expression functions like "fake control" or "pretend control." Or at least adequately controlled control – intuitively, control of degree d that is controlled to at least degree d – is no longer control. Let the resources of mutual control be proportionate in this way, with each party adequately countering the other's control, and they will cancel out, leaving no one in a position of alien control over the other.[12] B may not be able to obtain resources that are quite enough for control of A, of course, but to the extent that B obtains any extra resources, and any degree of counter-control over A, A's control will be decreased.

The thought behind this axiom is the familiar idea that the resources that give one person power or control over another only have such an effect to the extent that they shift the relativities: they change the position of one in relation to the other (Lovett 2001). Alien control is positional. Let the first person enjoy an increase in resources and this will provide no benefit in terms of power or control if the second person enjoys a corresponding increase. The point may originate with Hobbes's (1994: 8.4) observations on the topic: "because the power of one man resisteth and hindereth the effects of the power of another: power simply is no more, but the excess of the power of one above that of another. For equal powers opposed, destroy one another."

The idea embodied in the axiom is intuitive. Suppose that you, B, have a certain choice between x, y, and z. Suppose that I, A, come to be able to exercise some alien control over your choice, making it more probable that you will choose x: I may do this, for example, through removing options y and z, or replacing them with options y* and z*. And now suppose that, by whatever means, you come to be able to control my options in relation to you, and that you reduce the probability of my taking such steps to the point where the status quo is established. When this happens, you will now be able to think with each option: I can do that. And that means, as in the third axiom, that the control that I at first gained is now lost again; you are no more subject to my control than you were at the beginning. Alien control is a zero-sum commodity; if one gains, another loses. It is a matter of relative position, not of absolute level.

I mentioned in passing that while adequately controlled control will cease to constitute control, less than adequately controlled control will retain a controlling aspect, though in a reduced degree. But there are other complications to put on the page as well. They bring out other ways in which counter-control may be less than fully adequate.

In the paradigm case of counter-control, B can foresee and personally obstruct or inhibit any effort at alien control by A when the intervention is imminent; counter-control means current, personal defense or deterrence. But even when the counter-control is of a suitably high degree, that paradigm case may be varied in either of two ways. It may not be personally implemented but implemented by a deputy who acts on B's express or manifest wishes or by a proxy on whom B relies to act in a way that satisfies those wishes; the proxy will act in that way, not because that is what B wishes, only because such action serves the proxy's own ends (Pettit 2007). And the counter-control may not be currently implemented but implemented by retaliation at a later time, whether by B at a later time or by a deputy or proxy at a later time.

Under either of these scenarios, it is not going to be the case that B at the time of A's intervention can rightly think of the option affected: I-now, alone, can do that. But what is true is that B will at least be able to think: I-now, reinforced by my deputy or proxy, can make it the case that I can do that; or I-over-time can do that sort of thing; or I-over-time, reinforced by my deputy or proxy, can make it the case that I can do that sort of thing. That these propositions are true does

not mean that the control suffered by B is controlled or countered in the full, paradigm sense but it does mean that such a stand-off condition is more or less closely approximated.

The Theorems

Theorem 1. Alien control may materialize with interference

I take the notion of interference in an inclusive sense. It covers a variety of intentional or quasi-intentional interventions by one party in the choice of another, where by quasi-intentional interventions I mean the products of negligence in which we would want to hold an agent responsible (Miller 1984). The common feature of the interventions is that, intuitively, they make a negative impact on the choice of the interferee and can be properly attributed to the interferer; they are matters in his or her domain of responsibility. The standard types include the radical manipulation of the choice of the agent, whether by hypnosis, brainwashing, intimidation or any of a range of interventions, but also more common interventions: imposing a sure-fire or probabilistic block on an option or purporting credibly to do so; imposing a sure-fire or probabilistic burden on an option – imposing a cost or penalty – or purporting credibly to do so; or credibly misinforming the agent about the blocks and burdens in place.

The first theorem is the unsurprising observation that one way for A to exercise alien control over B is by interfering with B, whether directly or by means of an associate, such as a deputy or proxy. Interference involves control so far as it serves the desires of the interferer, A, by changing the probabilities associated with the different options before the interferee, B. And that control will be alien so far as the interference practiced undermines B's ability, with one or another option, to think, or think rightly: I can just do that; I can just take that option, as originally presented.

It is not surprising that interference should be able to have such effects and serve the cause of alien control, for the different varieties of interference map closely onto the three broad ways in which alien control may be realized: via reduction of the agent's ability to choose, via the removal or seeming removal of an option, or via the replacement or seeming replacement of an option. Thus, manipulation will reduce

the ability of the agent to choose. The imposition of a probabilistic or sure-fire block will remove an option, ensuring that it is no longer something that the agent can just choose at will, and the purported imposition of a block will amount to its seeming removal. The imposition of a probabilistic or sure-fire burden will replace an option, substituting a burdened counterpart, and the purported imposition of a burden will amount to its seeming replacement. And, finally, giving misinformation to an agent about the blocks or burdens in place will make for the seeming removal or the seeming replacement of an option.

Theorem 2. Alien control may materialize without interference

There are two modes of control available in any area, as I have argued elsewhere (Pettit 2001: ch. 2; 2007). While both are modes of actual control, not just modes of potential control, I describe the one as active, the other as virtual. A factor F will actively control for a type of effect E if F is at the causal source of the process that leads to that type of effect. A factor F will virtually control for a type of effect E under weaker conditions. Suppose the effect E is normally occasioned, not by F, but by some other factor, N (for normal), but that in any case where N fails to produce E, F steps into the breach and takes over the productive role. When F steps in like this, it actively controls for the appearance of E. But so far as it is there as a standby cause, ready to intervene on a need-to-act basis, it controls for the appearance of C even when it is not actively in charge. It is a virtual controller of the effect in question.

Whereas interference of the kind discussed under the first theorem is an active way in which an agent, A, may control the choice of a victim, B, it should be clear that A may control what B does without any such interference, whether direct or otherwise. Suppose that A desires that B should generally choose x in the sort of situation considered earlier, being prepared to interfere, where necessary, in order to ensure this pattern of choice. Now imagine that under quite different pressures or incentives B is sometimes independently disposed to display that pattern. A may not have any reason in such a case to interfere in order to ensure the pattern. Doing so might be inefficient, not improving things enough to compensate for the extra effort; or it might be downright ineffective, having the counterproductive effect of inducing defiance in B. So A may stay his or her hand, and be content to let B

choose under autonomous pilot; or at least A may be content to assume this position, so long as the pilot guides B in the desired direction. A, as we can say, may invigilate what B does, being ready to interfere but only if this is required.

Does A control B's choice by means of such invigilation? Yes, A certainly does. By being there ready to interfere if necessary, though not interfering as a matter of fact, A is bound to raise the probability of B's x-ing in the case on hand. For in any such case there will always be a small probability attached to B's having a change of mind and becoming disposed not to x. And the readiness of A to interfere in such a case will increase the probability, therefore, of B's actually x-ing. Invigilation is a form of control.

That A acts in this virtually controlling way does not mean that A intentionally controls what B does. Suppose A intends to interfere with B as occasion requires in order to get B to choose according to a certain pattern. Now take the situation where B behaves after the desired fashion, so that A doesn't intentionally interfere. A need not be aware of controlling B in that particular case, perhaps even lacking the concept of control under which it may take a virtual form: that is, lacking the concept of invigilation. And so A need not intentionally control B. What A does is done intentionally, whether this involves interfering or refraining from interference. And what A does entails that A exercises control over B. But still, it does not follow, and it need not be the case, that A intentionally exercises control over B.[13]

As A's virtual control or invigilation need not be intentional, so it need not involve any very explicit surveillance and attention to B's behavior. Consider the case where you drive home from work according to blind habit, and without paying any explicit attention to what you are doing. Does your desire to get home control your action, according to your beliefs about the route? Of course it does, albeit in a more or less virtual way. The behavior is driven by the blind habit but let that habit not take you in the right direction and you will be alerted to the problem and will self-correct, letting your action be actively controlled by your desire to get home and your realization that you are on the wrong road. When A acts with a view to securing a desired pattern of behavior, and when this involves not interfering rather than interfering, that negative behavior may materialize as a matter of default habit, like your behavior in driving home, and yet be controlled by the desire to have B behave to a certain pattern.

When B is subject to the alien control of another, it must be the case, according to our earlier comments, that B's capacity for personal choice is reduced, or that one or more of the options available to B has been removed or replaced, or seems to have been removed or replaced. Which of these conditions is going to be satisfied when A controls B virtually, practicing invigilation but not interference?

If B is unaware of the virtual control exercised by A, say in making it probable that B will choose x, then the difference made by A will be that B will not be in a position to think rightly of y or z: I can just do that. This may be because A is in a position to reduce B's ability to choose, should B go for one of these options. Or it may be because A is prepared to remove such an option, should B be disposed to choose it; in that event, it is clearly going to be false that B can just take the option, or any option like it. Or it may be because A is prepared to replace the option by a burdened counterpart – y* or z* – should B become disposed to choose it; in that case too, it will be false that A can take y or take z. Or, finally, it may be because A is able to mislead B on these matters.

All of this will remain true if B becomes aware of the invigilation and virtual control exercised by A and can do nothing about it. But something else will be true in that case as well. Not only will B not be able rightly to think "I can do that" with respect to either y or z. B will not be in an evidential position to think that thought, rightly or otherwise, of y or z. B will recognize, depending on the case, either that no options of the kind are available, or that only y* and z* are within reach. Apart from living under the control that goes with being invigilated, B will suffer the inhibition that goes with being consciously invigilated.

B may try as a result of this consciousness to curry favor with A and secure permission to choose one or other alternative, without interference. But the options will not become available on that count as things B can just do. The options available will not strictly be y and z but y-provided-I-keep-A-sweet and z-provided-I-keep-A-sweet; they will be options that vary significantly from the original y and z.

What of the limit case, where A is disposed, as A may be contingently disposed, to let B choose however B wishes? Intuitively, A will still exercise alien control in this situation, since B will only be able to act on his or her wishes, so long as A allows or permits this. But where will the control show up? It will appear in the fact that, again, the options will not be available straightforwardly to B but available only if A remains

sweet. Whatever B does will be done *cum permissu*, as used to be said: with the implicit leave or permission of A.[14] And that will affect B's freedom of choice, even if B remains unaware of living under this invigilation.

Theorem 3. Non-alien control may materialize without interference

Non-alien or non-alienating control will occur when one party, A, does indeed control what another party, B, chooses but when the control does not deny B evidential access to the thought "I can do that" with the options independently available, or does not make that thought false. A may act so as to change the probabilities attached to the different options before B – so as to favor the choice of x, for example – but A's action will do nothing to undermine the accessibility or the truth of the can-do assumption that B will naturally make about each of the available options.

In order to see how in general this sort of control is available, two things need to be noted. The first is that human beings are capable of reasoning with themselves about what they should do in any situation of choice rather than just letting their beliefs and desires lead them on. They can slow things down, rehearse the background assumptions they are making, review the pros and cons of the available alternatives, and only decide one way or another in the light of this reflection. That, plausibly, is what deliberation consists in. When people go in for this sort of reasoning with themselves, they are intervening in their own decision-making processes in a way that enhances their personal choice, rather than undermining it. They are giving themselves firmer ground, not only for forming a preference but for knowing what alternatives are available such that, truly, they can think of each: I can do that.

The second thing to note, in the wake of this, is that people can play this same reasoning role, not just with themselves, but with one another. They can lend one another their reason, as it were, playing the role of advisers or collaborators, and helping one another to get clear on the options available in any choice and on the pros and cons of those alternatives. They can act in relation to one another as an *amicus curiae*, a friend of the court. This will show up particularly in the fact that the help provided in such co-reasoning, like the help provided in self-reasoning, leaves the agent in a position to choose as he or she will; the advice or analysis provided may be rejected. Where the agent

could rightly have made a can-do assumption prior to receiving counsel, he or she will still be able to endorse that assumption in its wake.

A may exercise a degree of control over B via co-reasoning of this kind, changing the probabilities attached to one or more of the options that are thought to be available.[15] That sort of control will not be alien, however, since it will do nothing to undermine the can-do assumptions associated with personal choice. It will not involve interference, even under the inclusive account of interference given earlier; there will be no blocking or burdening, sure-fire or probabilistic, real or seeming; and there will be no misinformation or manipulation. Or if there is something of this kind, it will not be intentional in the fashion that interference requires.[16]

This is a fairly unsurprising claim, of course, but it supports a congenial line on a controversial issue. This bears on the case where one agent controls what another does by making an offer rather than issuing a threat (Nozick 1969). The line supported is that normal offers or rewards do not make for an alien form of control.

Suppose that A is co-reasoning with B about what B should do, as in the model just given of non-alien control. One of the things that A may usefully point out to B, and do so without exercising alien control, is that the options available, say x, y, and z, can be extended to include the option of choosing x and getting a reward from C for doing so. This will be so if C really wants B to take x, and might be prepared, at least if approached in advance, to promise to reward the choice of that option. But suppose now that what is true of C under this hypothesis is actually true of A, and that A knows this. And suppose that A points out to B that as a matter of fact there is a further option available, apart from x, y, z, neat; this is the option of doing x and receiving a reward from A for doing so. If A's telling B about C was not an instance of alien control, neither can A's telling B about A – thereby effectively making an offer – be an instance of alien control.

This shows that offers, unlike threats, need not involve the alien control of an agent, only control of a non-alien kind. Where the normal threat, being non-refusable by nature, will replace one or more of the options, the regular offer need do nothing of the kind; it leaves x, y, z in place and simply adds a further option, x+: doing x, and accepting a reward (Pettit & Smith 2004). This does not mean that all offers are off the hook. An offer may be non-refusable, in which case it will replace one of the existing options and will represent an alien form of control,

however welcome that sort of control may be; not imposing a burden, it will be a non-interfering way of exercising control.[17] Or an option may be a mesmerizing offer that reduces the agent's ability to choose; it may be like the offer of a drink to an alcoholic.[18]

Theorem 4. Non-alien control may materialize with interference

The positionality of alien control means that if B comes to have resources of control over A that match the resources of control over B that A already has, then the resources cancel out and neither exercises alien control over the other; countered control is no longer control. Consider now a case in which A and B do not have alien control over one another, since their resources cancel out, but B does not try to control certain limited forms of interference by A. B exercises counter-control, inhibiting what A does by way of interference, only when A trespasses those limits; B checks A's control, as we say, rather than strictly countering it. This may be a pattern that emerges in the relationship or it may also be a pattern that B explicitly endorses and even announces.

What should we say in such a case? Assume first, as in the paradigm case mentioned earlier, that B foresees every form of interference that A is about to practice, whether within the limits or not, and has the personal ability, there and then, to inhibit it; B invigilates the pattern of A's interference, ready to stop or redirect it if it breaches the limits or ceases to be acceptable. Should we say that the interference practiced by A under those conditions gives A alien control over B? Surely not. Any control that A may seem to exercise over B is controlled completely by B, so that A's interference can be seen as a form of treatment that B, for whatever reason, permits A to impose. The positionality of control means that here, as in the case of the standoff, neither controls the other. Although B will be subject to interference in taking a certain option, it will still be possible and correct for B to think: I can do that. It will be possible for B personally, at any moment, to inhibit A's interference with the option; and that will be a fact that is known by B.

This paradigm case shows how the checking of control, like the straightforward countering, means that actually no alien control materializes. The interferer in this case may be a controller, since the interference may change the probability of what B does in any instance. But the

interferer will not be an alien controller who undermines the deliberative can-do assumptions. The interference practiced implements a non-alien form of control, as in the possibility registered by the fourth theorem.

But what now of the sorts of departure from the paradigm case that we mentioned earlier? What of the case where the interference is invigilated and checked, not by B, but by a deputy or proxy? And what of the case where it is not checked at the time of the invigilated interference but only by virtue of some later form of retaliation?

In each of these cases, and of course in the case where both variations occur at once, the strict can-do assumptions are false. But still, the cases approximate one in which they remain true. The agent will be able to impose a counter against the interference currently allowed, whether by redirecting the deputy or proxy, or by acting at a later time to undo the permission given. And so, with the option affected by interference, the agent will be able to think, and think rightly: I-now, reinforced by my deputy or proxy, can make it the case that I can do that; or I-over-time can do that sort of thing; or I-over-time, reinforced by my deputy or proxy, can do that sort of thing.

The interference that occurs under the adequate or close to adequate checking of the interferee may reasonably be identified with the traditional notion of non-arbitrary interference. Non-arbitrary interference, according to this gloss, is not a moralized notion like legitimate interference. Unlike "legitimate," "non-arbitrary" is not an evaluative term but is defined by reference to whether as a matter of fact the interference is subject to adequate checking. Interference will be non-arbitrary, as I have put it elsewhere (Pettit 2001, 2006a), to the extent that, being checked, it is forced to track the avowed or avowal-ready interests of the interferee; and this, regardless of whether or not those interests are true or real or valid, by some independent moral criterion. Thus there is no substance to the claim that the republican theory of freedom I favor is moralized, allowing interference just so long as that interference is morally acceptable; being non-arbitrary may make interference morally acceptable but it is not defined by such acceptability.[19]

The view that non-arbitrary interference does not affect liberty – liberty in the sense of the absence of alien control – is entirely sensible, as the fourth theorem makes clear. Controversy enters only at a point that our discussion does not reach. This is where republicans hold that the interference of a government that is suitably invigilated and

Table 5.1: The four theorems

	With interference	Without interference
Alien control of choice ⇒	Uncountered interference	Uncountered invigilation; the non-refusable offer.
Non-alien control ⇒	Checked interference	Co-reasoning control; the regular offer.
No control of either sort ⇒	Countered interference	Countered invigilation; no tempting offers.

checked by the constitutional people – assuming that the people are organized to serve as a suitable proxy for each individual citizen – is to that extent non-arbitrary (Pettit 2007). The claim is that government will restrict the options available to individuals but, so far as it is invigilated and controlled by the quasi-corporate people, it will not exemplify the domination or alien control of individuals.[20] I do not discuss or try to defend that claim here.

The upshot of these four theorems is nicely summarized in table 5.1, where the two varieties of alien control and of non-alien control are distinguished. Within the table, countered control is broken down into countered interference – typically, a standoff in mutual threats – and countered invigilation: a standoff in the capacity of two or more parties to interfere with one another. The case of no-control is also introduced in the table, on lines implied by the foregoing discussion.

Against the New Version of Liberty as Non-interference

Interference as option-removal

Despite important differences in other respects, Ian Carter (1999) and Matthew Kramer (2003) join in proposing a new version of liberty as non-interference, according to which liberty is inversely related, in my terminology, to the removal of options from the space of choice.[21] Building on the work of Hillel Steiner (1994), they take interference to be the antithesis of liberty and they equate interference with removing an option from an agent and thereby rendering the choice of that option impossible.

Their main thesis, then, is the negative claim that freedom of choice is not affected by anything other than removal of an option. I interfere with you and impact on your freedom only when I block you from doing something; I do not have any impact on your freedom to choose between various options just by coercively threatening, for example, to punish your choice of one or another alternative.

The new theory introduces a positive claim to complement and balance that negative thesis. This is that even when an action I take does not make it impossible for you to choose some actual option, it may make it impossible for you to choose a related potential option. You now have the option of keeping your money or not. I do not remove either of those options, so the line goes, when I make the highwayman's threat, demanding your money or your life: strictly, it remains possible for you to keep your money or not to keep your money. But I do remove a different, conjunctive option, which is that of keeping-your-money-and-keeping-your-life. And I do thereby reduce your "overall liberty": not the liberty to decide between the options of keeping your money and not keeping your money – those are assumed to remain in place – but the liberty to make a choice where one alternative is the conjunctive option of keeping your money-and-keeping-your-life.

I follow the standard, decision-theoretic view that a choice is a set of mutually exclusive, jointly exhaustive options and that in the contingent context of the choice, as emphasized in the first axiom, each option is one that the agent can just choose; it is within his or her power of choice. The account just given of the negative and positive claims of the new theory is set in this framework of concepts, not cast in the terms used by Carter and Kramer themselves. Within this framework, the conjunctive option is not an option in the original choice, since that choice was characterized by just two exclusive and exhaustive options. Overall liberty is reduced by coercion, then, so far as an option that does not itself appear in the coerced choice is rendered inaccessible in related possible choices. That is why your freedom to choose between keeping the money and not keeping the money is not affected but your overall freedom – your freedom across potential as well as actual choices – is reduced.[22]

Coercion in regard to an actual choice is not the only way in which conjunctive options are said to be removed and the agent's power of choosing over such options in various potential choices affected. Paying tribute to the recent reworking of republican theory, Carter and Kramer

now say that not only may I affect your potential, conjunctive options in making the highwayman's threat; I may have a similar effect on your overall liberty just through manifestly having the power to make various obstructive or punitive interventions in your life. If my power is manifest then when you become aware of my power, you are likely to preempt any negative response on my part by measures of self-censorship and self-ingratiation. In that case I may not make any options you are actually considering unavailable. But I will make it impossible for you to exercise choice over potential, conjunctive options such as doing-x-and-not-living-in-fear-of-me or doing-x-and-not-currying-my-favor.[23]

The republican theory argues that freedom may be reduced by alien control, however, even when this control is not manifest to the controlled party and does not induce inhibition. Do I affect your freedom, according to this new approach, even when it is not manifest that I hold such power and when you do not practice self-abasement? I do, so the line goes, but only in a probabilistic sense. Plausibly, so it is said, it will be more probable that you will come to be aware of the power and be prevented in this same way from taking certain conjunctive options, as it will be more probable – this was true in the earlier case too – that you will suffer direct prevention at my hands.

The master move in the new approach, then, is to start with a clear, well-defined notion of interference, under which it means removing an option; to cast interference in this sense as the only violation of liberty; and then to explain how an agent's overall freedom as non-interference may be reduced or jeopardized by active coercion, by manifest domination, or even by the sort of domination that is not registered by the dominated party.

A problem with the theory

The striking thing about the new theory of freedom as non-interference, as appears when it is translated into the framework of choices and options, is that it ignores the most salient explanation of why coercion and similar initiatives affect the freedom of a choice. This explanation would point out, as we have seen here, that while unchecked coercion does not simply remove any of the options by which a choice is characterized, it does replace one or another option. I change the option of keeping your money when I make my coercive threat, replacing that option by a life-endangering alternative. Thus, you are no longer right

to think of the original option: I can do that; things have been changed so that the option is no longer available to you. And given you are aware of the threat I make, you will no longer be able to think, consistently with that awareness, that the original option is one you can still choose. Your personal choice over the original options will have been radically altered and, assuming that you have no check over me, you will be under my alien control.

Defenders of the new theory might argue that on the proper way of individuating the option of keeping your money, that option does remain in place, even when I issue the coercive threat. This response raises the question, then, as to how we should individuate options: that is, individuate those enactable courses of action that we contemplate as available alternatives in any choice we make. The striking thing about the line taken in the new theory is that it implies that options must be individuated so coarsely that no matter what penalty I impose on an option like your keeping your money, no matter how I change it, that option will remain available for choice; it will not count as having been replaced. Worse still, no room appears to be left for the possibility that an option might ever be replaced, no matter how it is changed by the interventions of another. It seems that while others may be said to remove options from someone's choice, rendering them inaccessible, they are incapable of so changing an option, say by imposing a penalty, that they might be said to replace it. Options are individuated on the coarsest possible basis.[24]

I favor a much finer way of individuating options; in particular, a way of individuating options according to which any unchecked penalty imposed by another will change the identity of the option. The line, as I put it earlier, is that if an option is changed in a way that engages your values – whether or not these are the right values, by some independent metric – then it is thereby made into a different option. I may not replace an option before you by constraining things so that you have to do it with your right as distinct from your left hand, assuming that handedness does not matter to you. But I will replace an option before you if I take steps that, by your own lights, make for a different evaluative profile.

This should not be surprising. An option is a possibility that you can realize in a relevant choice; it is a package of probabilistically weighted possible consequences, each with its own attractive or aversive aspect. You may well think that the possibility before you remains the same

option, the same enactable package, if I only introduce changes that do not matter to you. But you will certainly think that you now confront a different possibility, if I make changes that do matter: changes that affect the probabilities of various valued or disvalued consequences.

We can do better than appealing to intuition in support of this way of individuating options. A plausible constraint rules that options should be individuated in such a way that all and only intuitive cases of irrationality – say, all and only intuitive cases of intransitive preference – should have to be indicted as cases of irrationality (Broome 1991). That constraint gives considerable support to the principle of option-individuation adopted here. Suppose you are disposed in a choice between a big apple and an orange, to take the apple and give your friend the orange; and in a choice between an orange and a small apple, to take the orange and give your friend the small apple. Will you be intransitive and irrational if you are disposed in a choice between the two apples, to take the small one and give your friend the large? Surely we should say, no; your disposition testifies to your politesse, not to any lack of rationality. A nice feature of our principle of option-individuation, as distinct from any coarser principle, is that it supports this reply. Taking the big apple is rude by anyone's lights when the alternative left for your friend is a small apple; and so it is not the same option as taking the big apple in either of the other cases – it differs from taking the big apple in those other cases in a valued or rather a disvalued property (Pettit 1991).

Summing up this line of thought, then, my main problem with the new theory of freedom as non-interference is that it looks downright bizarre in ignoring the salient explanation for why unchecked coercion may affect freedom of choice: that it replaces one of the agent's options. Why ignore this possibility in favor of an exclusive emphasis on option-removal? Only, it seems, because options are individuated in an implausibly coarse manner.

The issue of probability

In outlining the republican conception I directed attention in passing to how various criticisms from the proponents of the new version of freedom as non-interference can be countered. In conclusion, however, I would like to address one general issue raised. Both Carter and Kramer argue that certain probabilities that should matter in the theory of freedom

don't matter enough in my book, or in the republican approach more generally. I think that the approach does dictate a surprising line on probabilities but I see nothing in this line that is a matter for reasonable rejection.

Republicans will naturally be concerned about the probability that someone may gain alien control over others, and will rejoice at any reduction in this probability. That is not in dispute. But it is said that republicans should also be concerned about the probability of someone who enjoys alien control actually interfering with the person controlled, and should rejoice at any reduction in this probability, no matter what the source of the reduction: this, on the grounds that the reduction increases their expected liberty. The criticism made is that I do not recognize this.[25] In particular, I do not see that if someone powerful is endogenously restrained in some measure from actually interfering with others – restrained, say, by a shift of attitudes or habits – then any potential victim of interference is liberated in corresponding measure: the measure, presumably, in which he or she would be liberated if the restraint came from increased protection. The potential victims suffer a loss of freedom, so it is suggested, only in direct proportion to the controller's probability of actually interfering.

There are two very different sorts of natural restraint that might be envisaged in the objection. One would be so radical as to deprive the controller of full agency, making the option of interference effectively unavailable; it would cripple the agent in the manner of a pathology. The other would not have this disabling effect. While prompting the controller to be less harsh, it would still allow access to interference; it would enable the controller still to think, and think rightly: I can do that, I can take that interfering option.

Were the first sort of restraint in place, then that indeed would be grounds for ascribing an increase in liberty to the victims; it would undermine the agency and hence the control of the would-be controller. But the second sort of restraint would not offer a similar prospect of liberation. Under this scenario the controller remains an agent, and an agent who is in a position to interfere or not interfere in an unchecked manner. Even if the probability of the controller's imposing a sanction is reduced, this will not remove the alien control exercised over the victims. They might have reason to take some consolation from the thought that the controller has become more soft-hearted but this cannot be consolation at an increase in their expected freedom. The

controller will maintain the profile of a controller across variations in the probabilities assigned and that robust and daunting fact will survive any consolation derivable from the prospect of small mercies.

In order to appreciate this point, consider the distinction between the evil of being subject to someone's alien control and the evil of being actually interfered with. The first evil is characteristically interpersonal, arising only in the context of two agents in relationship to one another, whether individually or in groups. The second evil is not necessarily of this kind, since the block or burden suffered at the hands of another, may be indiscernible from the block or burden that might come about as a result of a natural accident. You may be obstructed by a tree across the road in just the way I may obstruct you; or you may be inhibited by a natural prospect of physical harm in just the way you may be inhibited by a harm I hold out as a threat.

A decrease in the probability of interference at the hands of an alien controller will not remove the specter of alien control, at least if this is due to a non-disabling, endogenous feature of that agent. That interpersonal evil is more or less insensitive to the endogenously based probability of interference; alien control will remain in place so long as the agent can interfere or not interfere, whatever the reduced probabilities of interference that are dictated by the agent's nature. A decrease in the probability of interference will only provide a reason for consolation with respect to the other, natural evil: that which is associated with the sort of interference actually practiced. It will provide some relief from fear of the treatment that is in prospect, at least if the victims are aware of the situation, but it will not reduce the level of alien control and the associated unfreedom.

Relief from fear of interference can be of enormous importance, of course. To be subject to the power of someone with a lash is to suffer the evil of alien control, regardless of the exact probabilities of the lash being applied on this or that occasion, with this or that severity. While you will remain subject to that control so long as the controller can apply the lash, however, it will be a source of substantial consolation to learn that the probabilities of the lash being applied have decreased, say because the controller has fallen in love or discovered religion. The decrease may come about because pardons are more frequently given or because the use of the lash in punishment is made probabilistic, turning on the toss of a coin. But no matter how substantial the consolation on offer, it will not give you or others any reason for thinking that

you are now less unfree than you were previously.[26] This has to be a sticking point, as Carter and Kramer see, on the republican conception of freedom. But it is a good and sensible point on which to stick, not the implausible one that their theory makes it out to be.[27]

NOTES

1 I draw only on my own work in the argument of the chapter, and on my single-authored work; the outlines of the republican conception were sketched earlier in Braithwaite and Pettit 1990. I do not presume to speak for Quentin Skinner, though my strong sense is that we are in broad agreement on the nature of the republican conception of freedom; this is reinforced by his congenial contribution to this volume. Nor of course do I presume to speak for any others who endorse a more or less republican way of thinking about freedom. See for example (Honohan 2002; Richardson 2002; Viroli 2002; Maynor 2003).

2 I do not address the claim in Kramer (2003: ch. 3) that freedom in the sense involved here may depend on more than the freedom that is defined in the space of choice or action.

3 I stress later that whether someone is proof against alien control in a given choice is a factual matter, not one involving values, but notice that the identification of those types of choice that are significant for the freedom of a person will naturally involve an evaluative perspective; it will mean identifying the liberties that count. There is a resemblance in this respect between my view and Kramer's (2003: ch. 5) thesis that someone's overall freedom is determined, not just by the extent of particular freedoms, as Carter (1999) thinks, but by also by the positive weighting that is given to these freedoms. But this resemblance is superficial and does not really reduce the gap between our positions.

4 This means that we might identify free choices, not in the broad manner adopted here, but in a narrower, more demanding fashion as those choices in which the freedom of the person – a status or capacity – is exercised. I adopt that line in some other writings. See (Pettit 2003; Pettit 2006a; Pettit 2007).

5 Someone may remain a free person and still suffer alien control on this or that occasion, as when systematic protection fails. Such a breach of the defenses will challenge the person's status as a free person but need not reduce it significantly, especially if that status is vindicated in the apprehension of the offender and in the exaction of suitable amends; on the theory of amends see (Braithwaite and Pettit 1990; Pettit 1997a).

6 A question often arises, however, as to how far we should take a deliberative or a predictive stance on our future self. Professor Procrastinator knows that he often fails to review books he accepts for review. Should he accept for review a book that he thinks is important and that he is uniquely well-placed to bring to general notice? That may depend on whether he looks on the future self that will write or fail to write the review in a deliberative or a predictive way (Jackson & Pargetter 1986).

7 There is a sense in which control can occur without any related desire on the part of the controller: this is the sense in which the weather may control what someone does. But that sense of control is not relevant to freedom in the same manner as control that occurs in the presence of desire. The presence of the desire does not entail, as we shall see in discussing Theorem 2, that control is always intentional.

8 It will make it more probable that B will perform to the desired pattern, of course, in more than the evidential sense of providing extra evidence that B will do so. There will be extra evidence that B will perform to the pattern but that will be due to A's presence, not merely revealed by it. The need for this qualification is ignored in many definitions of what power or control requires, particularly those that invoke the notion of conditional probability in explicating the idea; see for example Dahl 1957. Notice that A may control for B's x-ing without controlling for that result most effectively – that is, without maximizing the relevant probability – or without controlling for it most efficiently: that is, without maximizing A's overall utility.

9 The relevant contrast for determining whether A raises the probability of B's x-ing should be the probability of B's x-ing in the absence of A, not just the probability of B's x-ing in the event of A not taking the action whereby A exercises control. For suppose that B is negatively affected by the fact that A is present in B's life so that no matter what A does, no matter even if A omits to do anything, A's presence reduces the probability that B will x. It would be strange in that case to say that A had control over B in regard to the x-ing. And yet there might be an action available to A such that by taking that action, A would raise the probability of B's x-ing beyond the level it would have had, if A had not taken that action. A has no chance of controlling for the desired pattern in B's behavior in a case like this. Similarly A would have no chance of not controlling for that pattern did it happen that A's presence meant that B was more likely to x, regardless of how A actually acted.

10 If A chooses not to intervene, this may come about without any very explicit consideration of the option of intervention. Suppose I am aware of your being subject to the influence of my intervention, for example, and suppose that did I think you might make a certain choice, I would consider intervening to try and change your mind. In the case where I do not think that you are liable to make that choice and let you be, without giving any explicit thought to intervention, still I can be said to choose not to intervene. More on this later.

11 In Pettit 1997b I use the word 'virtual' instead of 'potential'; as will appear later, I now reserve 'virtual' for a different purpose. Notice that weaker parties in a situation of potential alien control may take self-denying steps in order to ensure that a stronger party does not become aware of their presence or vulnerability. But this does not mean that the stronger is actually exercising alien control, only that such control is possible and even probable, at least in the absence of the precautionary steps.

12 As I have argued elsewhere, A and B may have fewer choices available in which to enjoy their independence, once they have taken all the steps necessary to protect themselves against each other (Pettit 1997b: ch. 2). Their freedom as non-domination will not be any more compromised than it was prior to either gaining resources of control over the other. But it may be more deeply conditioned.

13 I think that Matthew Kramer is right to say, then, that my position supports the view that freedom may be reduced non-intentionally; he is mistaken, however, to think that I ever suggested otherwise.

14 Notice that there will still be a distinction between A's only having access to such control over B – being a potential controller of B – and A's actually having or exercising control over B. As mentioned earlier, actual control will require A to be aware of B as subject to the effect of his or her interventions.

15 It may also make it clear that an option previously thought to be available is not available. But that is no problem, since it will not remove or replace any option that was actually available.

16 The argument of this paragraph applies equally, of course, to self-reasoning; it is clearly a non-alien form of self-control. But that, as Quentin Skinner has reminded me, raises the interesting question as to whether there is an alien form of self-control. This would have to involve one aspect or part of the person replacing or removing options otherwise available to another, or reducing the other's capacity for deliberative choice. The Freudian superego might be thought to control the ego in that way or the present self, using techniques of precommitment, might be thought to control the future self in that manner. In the traditional image, reason is said to exercise that sort of control over the passions. Since the passions are not the true self, however, but rather a usurper, at least in the usual representation, such control may not be well cast as an alien form of self-control.

17 It seems reasonable to ask why an offer should be made non-refusable, if it is supposed to be welcome to the recipient. One possibility is that however welcome in some respects, the reward in question is not one that the recipient would necessarily accept, if refusal were possible. And in that case the non-refusable offer begins to look like a form of burdening or penalization, and so a species of interference.

18 For these reasons I hope that my picture of offers may not be as 'rosy' as Ian Carter alleges. There is one respect, however, in which it is less than wholly appealing. It makes the insincere offer no more damaging to freedom than the sincere. While the insincere offer does involve misinformation, this is not misinformation that makes for the seeming replacement of any existing option.

19 This criticism is made in Ian Carter's paper, despite the fact that, as he acknowledges, I have insisted on the non-moralistic nature of the concept of non-arbitrariness. His criticism turns on an independent, strictly irrelevant quarrel, to which I allude in the following paragraph, about how far the notion of non-arbitrary interference can be plausibly realized or approximated by state interference in the lives of citizens; this is not a question I discuss here (see Pettit 2007). Another writer who assumes the same line of interpretation is McMahon (2005); for my response see Pettit (2006b). If the concept of non-arbitrariness and hence the concept of freedom are moralized, then that might justify a paternalistic concern for people's

good, regardless of their perception of the good. I am charged with such paternalism by Brennan and Lomasky (2006: 241) who ask a reasonable question – 'how could liberty as non-domination not give ample shelter to paternalism?' – but treat it as rhetorical and ignore everything I or anybody else has said on the topic. Although they focus on Skinner and me, their 'republicanism' is constructed from a range of authors who have little in common other than claiming to criticize one or another version of 'liberalism'; I have no wish to defend the concoction of theses that they put together for their essentially polemical purposes.

20 This claim is implicit in the old adage, republican in inspiration, according to which the price of liberty is eternal vigilance: that is, the sustained invigilation of those in authority.

21 For Kramer (2003), as mentioned earlier, there are factors other than choices of action that are relevant to freedom; and the inverse relation between a person's overall freedom of choice and the removal of options is not straightforward, since some options are taken to be more important than others for overall freedom. But I shall ignore these complications here.

22 Defenders of the new theory put limits on the range of conjunctive options whose elimination reduces an agent's overall liberty. Ian Carter (1999: ch. 7) suggests that I will reduce your overall liberty by imposing a condition, c, on an option y, in a choice between x and y, only if it was previously within your causal power to take y-with-c or y-without-c. Matthew Kramer (2003: ch. 5) thinks that this is too demanding. It may not have been in your power to engage others in conversation or not to engage them in conversation – this is in part up to them – but if I ensure that you will have no interlocutors then, intuitively, I affect your freedom. He argues that an amendment to Carter's line is needed – one that preserves a similar causal element – but does not spell out the detail of his proposal (Kramer 2003: 395–9). What, on Carter's and Kramer's approach, justifies any restriction? According to their theory, it is bad that I lose potential, conjunctive options; and bad for me as a free agent. Why count only the loss of potential and causally accessible options, then, in estimating my overall liberty? If the focus is on potential options, not on the options over which you are actually choosing, then this restriction looks arbitrary. The motivation as distinct from the justification for the restriction is clear, of course. If the loss of any conjunctive, potential option is to count as a reduction of your overall liberty than almost anything I do will reduce your overall liberty. Let me do something that brings about any consequence, C, and I will thereby make it impossible for you to take an option, x, in the absence of C; I will have removed that conjunctive option from your realm of choice.

23 Needless to say, this claim about the grain-of-truth in republican theory, generous though it is, misses the core message of that theory. It fails to register the focus on alien control or domination as the primary danger to freedom.

24 Carter (1999: ch. 7) and Kramer (2003: ch. 5) do have extensive discussions of how actions should be individuated, particularly within the theory of freedom. This, however, is a different topic. A token or particular action is an actual event, where an option is a possibility that an agent is in a position to realize or not.

Actions may be considered as types rather than tokens and while options might be cast as action-types, they are typed on a very distinctive, decisional basis. Options are ex ante types of actions that are characterized by the types they rule out – the other relevant options – and by the types of consequences, and associated probabilities, that they allow. Such an ex ante type of action will vary in identity, intuitively, as it is associated with consequences or probabilities of consequences that differ by reference to the values of the agent.

25 Rightly or wrongly, Quentin Skinner is said to take a different line. On the relation between our views, as of some years ago, see Pettit (2002).

26 It will thereby reduce the content-dependent disvalue of the unfreedom suffered, though not perhaps its content-independent disvalue; on relevant distinctions see Kramer 2003: ch. 3, who draws in turn on Carter 1999.

27 My thanks to Gideon Rosen for a very helpful discussion of this material and to a number of people for remarks on an earlier draft. Brookes Brown, Philipp Koralus, Cecile Laborde, Frank Lovett, John Maynor and Quentin Skinner provided illuminating comments. And Ian Carter and Matthew Kramer did a great service in guarding me against some misconstruals of their views.

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