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Freedom as Discourse in Western Idealism

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Abstract

Freedom is an abstract concept which is more understandable by its limitations. The question is that, is there a comprehensive concept of freedom in western idealism? For this purpose, this study created some conceptual research in the poles of western idealism. Accordingly, freedom in framework of Socratic philosophy had no context except virtue orientation. Then, it was reduced to security and property in the new period. The present study used the discourse analysis of freedom to show why and how the concept of freedom has an underlying and philosophical concept in old and new schools. Thus, a single and undeniable attitude to freedom in western idealism is non-scientific and non-historical. The present study selected the analytical comparative method to discuss the concept of freedom discourse in western political thought in old and new periods, indicating why and how freedom is a discourse concept; or at least belongs to its specific community, and cannot be necessarily compared in a generalized, universal way.

Keywords:
Freedom, liberalism, virtue, security, ownership.

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Introduction

Today, freedom in social, political, and economic fields is a very common term especially in the new era after the enlightenment. As expected, freedom cannot be necessarily discussed in terms of the considered freedom before the modern era. In fact, human has been always involved with the nature challenges and livelihood over time while the tribe life, considered as a context for the natural limitations of old human, was a reason for his multidimensional characteristics being typically used for environmental needs.

In the new political literature, freedom is a common concept, taken for granted, indicating that all governments should consider "defense of freedom" as the pre-assumption of any intellectual policy. So making the governing group in most political systems in today's world insists on indicating their political system through democracy and liberalism. Comparing the old Greek to the new liberalism indicates an evolution in image the organic system and the new Cartesian second contract. Such a controversy, in answering the meaning of freedom, while comparing and analyzing the freedom discourses in western idealism, indicate how and why freedom is not a comprehensive meaning but a discourse and concept limited to a reduced theorization of political philosophy, which cannot be generalized, to a specific universal concept.

Freedom as Civil virtue

The Greek era is the era of self-esteem or Hellenistic Humanism; a belief different from the eastern civilization of China to ancient Egypt with the governance of Gods having human kindness and belief but more powerful than human. Greek man attempts to discover the secret of this power. So free himself from the captivation of Gods. Thus, he leaves the inconceivable search of the cosmos to discover the non-human existence and reduces the abstract concepts from the Macrocosm to Microcosm. Greek sophism and its political effects on the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle are the most significant result of freedom from such thoughts. According to the Socratics, the wisdom of government has an organic discipline. Thus, power and insight are like two wings of a government. Therefore, the men with insight are deserved to have power while those in love with wealth should be away from power. The desire to wealth and material lust prevent the expediency for government, thus the man in power cannot distinguish the personal interest from the governmental

interest. Therefore, the degree of freedom and its conditions are generally dependent on human nature of his copper, silver and gold positions. So the extent and quality to which human is arbitrary and depends on his position. The copper human is free from everything but his power is limited to family, perhaps at the father's power. However, silver and gold human are limited, of fatherly but powerful. Such a position will not be granted to anybody except austerity and talent. Thus, the system adjusts the relationships between freedom and power in a compulsory way; a part of freedom should be ignored for gaining power. Therefore, a range of free human begin with a low power and end to gold human, i.e. philosopher kings who sacrificed all their freedom for achieving expediency instead of self-absorption. According to Plato, the perfectionism of this wisdom is with philosopher kings that is elected from elite guards and becomes responsible for the government's leadership. Such leaders allocated a considerable part of their lines to study different sciences such as geometry, mathematics, and fostering the power of mind in addition to physical and military training to prepare themselves for mediating between terrestrial human and Gods (Plato, 1983, 349-354, 537a-540e).

Aristotle considered reason, as a duality of theoretical, or the talent determining the knowledge versus practical, or the rational talent for determining the profit and loss. Rationality guides human towards his desires and ideals, and should work under the order of theoretical reason (Aristotle, 2000-A, 1140-41), otherwise it will go astray. Thus, he considered the rules equipped with free will on promoting the citizenship level based on the free education of the inferiors. Therefore, teaching the civil virtue, i.e. commitment to public interest, is established when the social life and civil activities of citizens are guided in the path of wised life (Aristotle, 2000-B, I: II: 15, 1253a).

Plato's society is a society in which the limits of power and freedom are depicted based on ethical virtues. Thus, every social class is required to have common participation to modify the government through comprehensive efforts. But Aristotle considered friendship to a fellowman as the subject of his ethical and political discussion. Obviously, despite the friendship in utopia, everyone was busy with a job that was more compatible with his nature. Aristotle considered friendship as the most significant virtue in balance between freedom and utopian power; because friendship makes citizens work for their fellow citizens without being scared of their social and occupational job, so that the meritocracy is flourished in the society and the

members of utopia play their roles in the best way. Thus, the education industry reaches to its peak by friendship in Aristotle's point of view because nobody can achieve the rationality of practical performance without education and use of practical methods such as playing the music. Thus, a good and happy life depends on observing the virtue-oriented frameworks of transferring the fortunate aspects in social and political life founded by human, through friendship. As such virtues are manifested better and more complete, the life will be more fortunate and happier. Human has a good nature and is always attempting to create more happiness with his work. Aristotle believed that law should be respected as the manifestation of human rationality to make better friendships and ethical virtues. Thus, the person who does not respect law, is the worst human and is not qualified to live in utopia. Therefore, Aristotle's thoughts indicated that the element governing the depiction of virtues and vices in utopia is wisdom, based on the theoretical reason. Slaves and children are deprived of this element due to nature and are sentenced to obedience while they are free from many ethical constraints (Shariat, 2015, 40).

Freedom as an absolute security

However, it cannot be judged whether a general theory is achieved on the limits of personal freedom and government's power. As long as the elements of satisfaction in the subject and element of ethical justification in the object are not seriously considered, distinguishing the ethical field from political element, which will result in recognition of morality, policy, and balance between ethical theory and political theory, is still ambiguous especially when the object has rational opposition like the subject. Otherwise, according to John Locke, the British philosopher, our situation is still in the free political situation and our transfer from the primary situation to the universal situation when social contract was emphasized instead is merely theoretical and non-realistic. Perhaps this serious similarity in transferring to constitutionalism was the same reality in understanding the transfer situation from natural to civil which resulted in being in the range of democratic society opponents and according to Popper, the enemies of open society, due to historical contexts considered as free by Plato and Aristotle. Here, the new political philosophy miracle, that was misunderstood as the common freedom in form of social contract, occurs because social contract was not as a golden point in universality of political theory, with or without morality was not a new

thought but it was also in ancient Greek as Hobbes stated (Hooker, 1925, 187) but it was a decision-making criterion. An example quoted by Locke from Garcilaso de Lavega in "history of Peru" increases our imagination in the problem where humans: "In some provinces, says he, they were so liquorish after man's flesh, that they would not have the patience to stay till the breath was out of the body, but would suck the blood as it ran from the wounds of the dying man; they had public shambles of man's flesh, and their madness herein was to that degree, that they spared not their own children, which they had begot on strangers taken in war: for they made their captives their mistresses, and choicely nourished the children they had by them, till about thirteen years old they butchered and eat them; and they served the mothers after the same fashion, when they grew past child-bearing, and ceased to bring them any more roasters." Garcilasso de la Vega Hist. des Yncas de Peru, l. i. c. 12." (Locke, 1997, par.57, p.182).

Thus, the main issue of the security raised by Hobbes was the attempt to design an appropriate ethical theory according to social, political, and economic conditions of the government in a liberal manner. According to Hobbes, the presence at the situation of contract is associated with a kind of rationality resulted from practical talent. So we ignore some of our social rights necessarily in contract to achieve security, but it didn't mean that we have no right to demand them again and this is not associated with the rules due to common, sense because this negligence means that the person with civil attitude has disregarded the natural freedom to realize his goals and this never means taking oneself and others from the main right about that thing. Otherwise the life of man is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short" (Hobbes, 1998, ch.13, p.84) and the lack of commitment declines the human life as a "Bellum Omnium Omnes" meanly "war of every man against every man" (Hobbes, ch.13, p.85).

According to Hobbes, human freedom is complete in the state of nature, and every human has the right to use all his freedom rights completely. However, if he gives a part of his security to another one in defense of his freedom, he will not act rationally and if someone who uses that part of freedom to defend such a security, he will have the right to use his authorities. When someone has assigned his right in this way, he is obliged and committed to not create any obstacle to those who received such a right. In addition, he cannot cancel his voluntary and free action and such prevention is considered as injustice, harm, and illegal because the above-mentioned right was already assigned

(Hobbes, 1998, ch.14, p,88). Common sense requires that the person who assigns his right to ignores it will receive another benefit. According to Hobbes, such a profit that is formed according to peaceful coexistence is called a state of "contract" (Hobbes, 1998, ch.14, p, 89). In this contract, the ruler is not only out of the contract, but the only person who is out of the contract, when all authorities are in his hands to create security. Thus, based on the contract, the right to sign the secondary contract is deprived for the individuals (Hobbes,1998, ch.18, p.116).

The magistrate is a person simultaneously in charge of law and its interpretation. No objection can be made to him and he has the right to judge and announce war and peace. In addition, he cannot be punished or removed and even nobody has the right to change the form of government. Thus, government is run through his judgement and cannot be decomposed. Furthermore, he is in charge of selecting all counselors[1] and ministers whether at the time of peace or war (Hobbes, 1998, ch. 14, pp. 116-121).

According to Hobbes, the presence of public power is inevitable for the security supply. In fact, if humans have civil characters due to their nature and respect the civil virtues without using the force machine, there will be no need to use power. However, since power and stealing the life, wealth, and livelihoods of others are a part of human egoistic nature, thus avoiding the war, peace, and security of human is impossible without fear. According to Hobbes, natural rules are inconsistent with our natural desires guiding us toward partiality, nemesis, etc. Hobbes decided to govern the nature rules to natural desires of human through establishing a powerful and free government. He believed that pacts and contracts without sword support are only words. Thus, if there is not enough power, everyone will rely on his power to realize his right and will begin parameters war among him and other humans. Thus, "the final cause, end, or design of men (who naturally love liberty, and dominion over others,) is the introduction of that restraint upon themselves, (in which we see them live in commonwealths,) is the foresight of their own preservation, and of a more contented life thereby." (Hobbes, 1998, ch.17, p.111).

Freedom as an absolute Ownership

Absolute ownership refers to human liberalization through a civil government and is the product of Locke's philosophy and extensive studies and his experiences in reconciliation between political arena and the city of god.[2]

Locke, in his introduction of second treaties of government, leaves both themes of search for ruler, i.e. the old virtue-seeking discourse and the new Hobbesian discourse, and instead, looks for imaging the modern government in his socio-political and economic contract. (Shariat, 2015, 131-153) Hobbes thought about absolute securities for solving the destruction and the chaos due to behemoth or the evil nature.[3] However, Locke's problem was the accountability due to the backwardness of people in overseas territories (Modern Europe) or specifically the status of "slavery and Ruine" in England (Locke, 1997, preface, p.137) in contrast to the Muslims from east or Middle East. Locke's theory, in absolute ownership, was for responding such confrontation in a new analysis of human definition that was recited by "Industrious and Rational" from an English Christian citizen (Locke, 1997, par. 34, p. 291). Thus, it can be claimed that the fifth chapter, i.e. property, is the heart of two treatises of government. In other words, the spirit of freedom has declined in ownership discourse. Thus, according to Locke, human is free, but not liberal, in fact, he is very law-binding and dogmatic in case of economic relationships.[4]

According to Locke, freedom as absolute property is the type of product called fashion[5] (Locke, 1977, par. 58, p.183). Locke believed that freedom begins with the order of God by his donation:

"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth,"

Gen. i. 28; (locke, 1977, par.23, p.156.)

And his citation of the benefits of plantations,

As much land as a man tills, plants, improves, cultivates, and can use the product of, so much is his property. He by his labour does, as it were, enclose it from the common. Nor will it invalidate his right, to say everybody else has an equal title to it, and therefore he cannot appropriate, he cannot enclose, without the consent of all his fellow commoners, all mankind. God, when he gave the world in common to all mankind, commanded man also to labour, and the penury of his condition required it of him. God and his reason commanded him to subdue the earth, i. e. improve it for the benefit of life, and therein lay out something upon it that was his own, his labour. He that, in obedience to this command of God, subdued, tilled, and sowed any part of it,

thereby annexed to it something that was his property, which another had no title to, nor could without injury take from him. (Locke, 1977, par. 32. P. 291). As stated, God donated the human all existing natural inheritance to use them rationally for the best life advantages and peace. Thus, his ownership happens as soon as human bonds his labor to commons and a free laborer can add whatever he collected to his property provided. However, if the property is perishable, one may change them to other types of properties, such as gold and silver that are not perishable (Locke, 1997, par. 37. P.294). because

"the water running in the fountain be every one's, yet who can doubt but that in the pitcher is his only who drew it out? His labour hath taken it out of the hands of nature, where it was common, and belonged equally to all her children, and hath thereby appropriated it to himself" (locke, 1977. Par.29, p. 289).

However, if the plantations is finished and nobody does agriculture on that land, he will lose his right because that right of ownership was originated of the labor, that no longer does exist.

"whatsoever he tilled and reaped, laid up and made use of, before it spoiled, that was his peculiar right; whatsoever he enclosed, and could feed, and make use of, the cattle and product was also his. But if either the grass of his enclosure rotted on the ground, or the fruit of his planting perished without gathering and laying up; this part of the earth, notwithstanding his enclosure, was still to be looked on as waste, and might be the possession of any other." (Locke, 1977, par.38, p. 295) Thus, social contract was basically theorized for maintaining the property and freedom and the balance between them in the light of law. The special act of law is to order the human properties, otherwise what is the need to the government formation? (Locke, 1997, par.4. p. 269). According to Locke, contrary to the Aristotle, all men as a human being had a complete freedom in natural situation as Adam and Eve were at the beginning of creation.[6] However, this property aspect of human (including his property and life) were always at risk. According to Locke, man "in the state of nature" was free and was "absolute lord of his own person and possessions, equal to the greatest, and subject to nobody" and so had an absolute power on his life and his properties. Thus, he went under the umbrella of a government and unity in a government to maintain and guarantee his property, because although it was free, using of it was insecure and at the risk of the others' invasion. Thus, it was only in this case that valid law was required. Everyone indicated his satisfaction that law is the basis for the recognition of right from

wrong and is a balance for solving the conflicts between people as well as people with government. (Locke, 1997, par.123, p.350)

Locke considers the maintenance of property rules as the most significant aspect of establishing a contract government and since these rules are established or have no doubt for establishing and durability of absolute property, the government is still stable and revolution is considered as a denied action. However, maintaining the government for the public interest is only imagined under certain conditions, provided that no injury is entered to property rules. In other words, if public interests of freedom are threatened only under specific conditions, the ruler can use specific authorities he did not have already under normal conditions. Otherwise, when kings act opposite to the law, people let them have increased specific authority at optimal level without the minimum complaint. In this case, Locke warned that people and kings should judge properly, so that no loss is caused to their property rules because "they acted conformably to the foundation and end of all laws, the public good". (Locke, 1997, par. 165, p. 378). However, this time period is very short "God and nature never allowing a man so to abandon himself, as to neglect his own preservation: and since he cannot take away his own life, neither can he give another power to take it. Nor let anyone think this lays a perpetual foundation for disorder. (Locke, 1997, par.168. p. 380) However, the problem is that the person who accepts the authority of affairs under specific conditions is likely to not leave the power after solving the threat conditions and may expand the threat and increase the power with this excuse to continue these conditions until slavery and desolation. Locke did not reject this probability unlikely for such kings who have a God-like government. According to him, such kings were so good and wise that received such special authorities by people. However, there is a concern that "That the reigns of good princes have been always most dangerous to the liberties of their people. (Locke, 1997, par. 166, p.378)", because when a policy was registered as a procedure, the successors of that kind may consider it as the basis for any lawlessness, so "it has often occasioned contest, and sometimes public disorders, before the people could recover their original right, and get that to be declared not to be prerogative, which truly was never so" (Locke, 1997, par. 166, p. 378)".

According to Locke, the main reason for gathering of people is keeping their property, life, and security. "Which is the end for which they are in Society." (Locke, 1997, par.222, p.413)" Since law is considered as the most significant

indicator of contract and its dissolution, the most important government is focusing on how to select the representatives of people and supervise the law and legislation. Where people cannot directly supervise their interests, their representatives supervise and if such a supervisor cannot protect the property, life, and freedom of people, then the distance between people and rulers becomes so much indicating to the dissolution of the society.[7] So "Whenever the society is dissolved, 'tis certain the Government of that society cannot remain" (Locke, 1997, par.211, p.407). Since in Locke's freedom discourse, the end of government, is protecting the life and properties of people, when the rulers use their power for "the destruction, and not the use of their Power, and imploy it for the destruction, and not the preservation of the Properties of their people," (Locke, 1977, Par.229, p. 417) the right to object the government, or "the dissolution" is suggested to preserve of "the dissolution of the society" (Locke, 1997, par.211, p,406).

Conclusion

Evaluating the aspects created in the old classic era and Greek philosophy and the modern era including the English naturalism in Hobbes' model and American monopolistic individualism in Locke's experience, it seems that personal and democratic freedom in "new world" have had considerable discourse and historical evolutions in terms of history and context. In this study, both these viewpoints were used for analysis. Studying freedom in the old and modern eras indicated that meaning and concept of freedom are strongly dependent on discourse conditions which are imposed as historical, social, and political form, although it is not free. Thus, freedom and slavery were the pre-determined situations in the Greek era stating that human is born either slave or free due to his nature and should have specific job of a free human or slave in the cosmos.

However, these types of freedom were never socialized, although they are different from what the freedom formed during the new era and especially in the liberal democracy process, they are meaningful in the self-conceptual discourse. Hobbes fabricated God with the aim of political secularism and Locke used the economic secularism to renovate a degree of freedom in line with global evolutions. In that era, human was not servant by nature or a subject beyond human will, but he could increase his knowledge both theoretically and practically through a value system such as educational system to liberate his future from human dominance with or without his

mediation. Locke emphasized on keeping the philosophical relationship between religion and policy making in the world. He used the Hobbes' political secularism and smoothed the way for social secularism in future centuries consciously or unconsciously.[8] In other words, freedom became an excuse for the increasing growth of capital in the modern world establishing a link with modernity and gradually defining the ethical concepts of civilization areas such as science, art, technology, and architecture in wide dimensions within a self-open platform. However, freedom entered the areas of morality and this is the limit which neutralizes the empirical belief in western idealism. Despite the efforts made by Locke, to keep the philosophical relationship between religion and politics, his problem in the philosophical unity of these two areas prevents the way to achieve happiness. However, based on this study, the basis of modern freedom is nothing except absolute property. Locke investigated modernity by raising his political discourse. As far as is related to the critical challenges of today's era, it seems that the change of Locke's system is impossible without a rival, virtual, non-secular economic system.

Notes

1. Hobbes, in the 25th chapter, emphasized the problem of council in circulation of policy and referred to an obvious misleading on council. In His words: "Command is, where a man saith, do this, or not to do this, without expecting other reason than the will of him that says it. From this it followeth manifestly, that he that commandeth, pretendeth thereby his own benefit: for the reason of his command in his own will only, and the proper of every man's will. Is some to himself. Counsel is where a man saith, do, or do not this, and deduceth his reasons from the benefit that arriveth by it to him to whom he saith it. And from this it is evident, that he that giveth counsel, pretendeth only (whatsoever he intendeth) the good of him, to whom he giveth it. Therefore between counsel and command, one great difference is, that command is directed to a man's own benefit; and counsel to the benefit of another man." (Hobbes, 1998, ch.25, p.169).

2. See (Shariat, 2015, 99-175)

3. See (Hobbes, 2016, p.10)

4. In fact, the issues mentioned about Libertarianism and moral nihilism in the liberalism project are related to social area which were common historically and philosophically after the social revolutions. In terms of theory, the opinions of John Stuart Mill on utilitarianism became common in western thoughts. Locke considered virtue orientation in distinguishing policy from economy under the influence of church collapse and geographic changes as well as the religious and scientific enlightenment. Hobbes only made policy as secular and John Locke added property to this absolutism. In addition, John Stuart Mill found social secularism. In fact, the conflicts of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century were only about the necessity of philosophical secularism from one hand and moralistic ideas of Marxism in criticizing the political economy on the other hand. The problem why the modern challenges of the Islamic republic of Iran are contrary to modern west is evident. West attempts to move this challenge to the principle of modernity and continue its life by creating a duality from the confrontation of modernity versus traditionalism. However, the ethical challenges due to the nature of capitalism and theoretical limitations due to colonial nationalism (Shariat, 2008, 24) are serious barriers for justifying the universality of liberalism in theory and practice. If a political system can stay stable due to all hardware and software processes in practical policy and in challenge with all competitors for more than four decades indicate the scientific and practical ability of a political ideology. Based on history, Islam has been discussed as an intellectual school with philosophical, political, social, and

economic parameters, as discussed in this study, could play a role as a serious competitor during over 1400 years; as confessed by of John Locke, stated in previous note.

5. However, some experts consider wisdom as a compass which can save human from falling into a fashion which is usually controlled by human intention in light of rules obtained from social contract (Yolton, 1970, & also Polin, 1969)

6. This discussion is rooted in explanatory issues about freedom (Shouls, 1992).

7. Locke distinguished between the dissolution of government and avoiding it and the dissolution of society because whenever the society is dissolved, the government in that society cannot endure. Thus, the sword of conquers usually cuts the roots of government and cuts the societies into pieces to save the dominated and displaced people from the support and dependence on that society who had to be safe from aggression (Locke, 1977, par.211. pp.406-407. Although Locke is optimistic, that the world is so experienced in this issue and its negative consequences are so that they do not let this type of government dissolution be needed anymore, the historical events especially in the last three centuries were full of the societies which were dissolved. The museums of history are full of leftovers from last civilizations which are now only a memory. The dissolution of Indian civilization of North America and their societies are the clear examples in the case. (Shariat, 2008).

8. In explanation of social secularism (See: Shariat, 2014, 47-60).

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