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Violence and Freedom: a Phenomenological inquiry into the practices of Freedom

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ABSTRACT

It's difficult to give an account of human history without alluding to the reigns of terror and the fascination with violence perpetrated in the name of freedom and justice. Freedom and violence are two contrasting concepts that have shaped the history of humanity. While freedom is often associated with liberation, violence is characterized by the use of force and coercion. This study delves into the complex relationship between violence and freedom from a phenomenological perspective.

Our understanding of freedom is shaped by the Kantian conception of freedom as the property of the will. It's a model of freedom which associates freedom with mastery. It's not only the negative and positive conceptions of freedom that have fallen prey to this attitude but postmodern freedom also operates within the same framework.

The paper challenges this conventional understanding of freedom and its alignment with violence by drawing on phenomenological philosophy to explore the experiences of individuals who are both subject and objects of violence. It argues that freedom is not simply the absence of physical constraints, but rather a complex interplay of social and existential factors that shape individuals' experiences of agency and autonomy.

KEYWORDS

Freedom, Phenomenology, Postcolonial Theory, Postmodernism, Violence

Introduction

In this paper I intend to make an analysis of the postmodern conception of freedom and the practices premised upon them. The analysis of these practices aims to indicate, inter alia, the specifity of the human condition and the historicality of freedom.

The discussion in this paper revolves around the theoretical as well as practical implications of the dominant conception of freedom. With this objective in view the paper examines the conception of freedom entailed by postmodernism. More precisely this paper deals with the political implications of two apparently competing but actually complementing conceptions of freedom.

Research methods

The analysis of the practices of freedom aims to show how the human condition is a condition of possibility for human agency. The analysis of the practices of freedom will highlight the various ways in which human agency is a constitutive condition of being human. The paper also aims at indicating the logical as well as practical inconsistency that operating within the Kantian conception of freedom entails.

My argument is that our conception of freedom is shaped by our experience of the world in general and the conditioning influences of historical, social, and linguistic circumstances in particular. I will also argue that the concept of freedom is not an independently existing entity but is instead an abstraction that is derived from our experience of the world.

With the above objective in view the first part shall expound on the postmodern conception of freedom. I shall examine the major tenets of postmodernism and the practices of freedom it sanctions so as to indicate the far-reaching influence of the Kantian conception of freedom.

In the second part I shall make a phenomenological analysis of violence with a view to establishing the ambivalent relation between freedom and violence. The analysis of violence as an instrument of liberation shall attempt to point out the constraints of operating within such a conception of freedom.

Results and Discussion

1.Postmodernism

A General Survey. Modern philosophy in general and enlightenment philosophy in particular is characterized by a belief in the perfectibility of human nature – those human beings are capable of improving their conditions through an understanding of their nature. So, reactions against this ideal are bound to fall in either of two categories: there're those that deny the possibility of perfecting human nature and there're those that admit that human nature is perfectible but deny that this perfectibility follows a similar pattern for all humans.

The first of these two categories can itself be divided into two groups: the first group attributes the impossibility of perfection to the absence of human nature (in the absence of human nature the issue of perfectibility would become superfluous). This position is represented by existentialists. There're also others whose skepticism is grounded on certain character of human nature- they attach the essential fallibility of human nature to the original state of man

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(natural defect) or to events that follow after (like the original sin). The various religious views of human nature fall in the latter group.

The second response is characterized by a categorical rejection of objective ideals. It denies the truth of the belief that to perfect human nature one must adhere to certain rules or that one must follow the pattern drawn by some 'enlightened' cultures and individuals. However, the advocates of this position are not opposed to the idea of the perfectibility of human nature which they take to be within our grasp. They subscribe to the idea that every culture, if not individual, sets the goal of perfection in its own unique way and devises the means by which to attain it. This relativistic thinking traces its origin to the Greeks, or more specifically to the sophists. The closer representatives to the modern version of this thinking, however, are the postmodernists. Their main thesis is centered on the denial of universal principles and eternal patterns.

The postmodern period refers to a 'style of thought which is suspicious of classical notions of truth, reason, identity and objectivity, of the idea of universal progress or emancipation, of single frameworks, grand narratives or ultimate grounds of explanation' (*Eagleton, 1996: 1*). The postmodern period, therefore, casts a suspicious eye towards the traditional ideas of truth, reason, personality and objectivity, of the possibility of widespread advancement or liberation, of single systems, excellent stories or extreme grounds of clarification.

'Against the Enlightenment norms, it (Postmodernism) sees the world as contingent, ungrounded, diverse, unstable, indeterminate, a set of disunified cultures or interpretations which breed a degree of skepticism about the objectivity of truth, history and norms, the givenness of natures and the coherence of identities' (emphasis added) (*Eagleton, 1996*). By running counter to the ideals of Enlightenment, Postmodernism underscores the world's contingency, ungroundedness and variety. The cluster of societies set against each other generate a level of distrust about the objectivity of truth, history and standards, and the givenness of qualities and the essential congruity of identities.

Yet postmodernism is not a whole-sale rejection of modernity as it is sometimes made out to be. Foucault (as one of the foremost advocates of postmodernism) is normally presented as a critique of modernity but some have detected a slight tendency, especially in his later works, of approving some tenets of modernity. This is to mean that in addition to his potent critique of modernity as 'paving the way for the sciences of discipline and normalization', his works have also betrayed a 'qualified endorsement of the enlightenment ethos of critique'. (*D'entreves, 1996: 1*). His characterization of modernity as 'a permanent reactivation of an attitude, a permanent critique of our historical era' testifies to postmodernist's reserved but sometimes glaring approval of the critical bent characteristic of enlightenment. Yet as we shall see in the subsequent pages this enigmatic continuity between modernity and postmodernity is nowhere more apparent than in their conception of freedom.

Postmodernism is generally inimical to any kind of unifying structure- no less in the political than in the metaphysical. Nonetheless postmodern politics is less determinable than its metaphysical and epistemological counterparts. This can be illustrated by the tendency to treat socialism as a postmodern response to the oppressive structure of liberalism when in fact socialism is basically as grand a narrative as liberalism – in its rhetoric of the emancipation of the proletariat, it does not only promise to come up with truth as a finished product but it also (against what postmodernists stand for) believes to possess emancipatory knowledge. The emergence of identity politics into the world sphere indicated postmodernism's growing influence of the political ideal hitherto largely influenced by the grand narratives of socialism and liberalism.

Hicks explains postmodernism in the context of their attempt to effect a compromise between Heidegger and Nietzsche. He argues that although postmodernists endorse Heidegger's rejection of reason, they are dismissive of his 'metaphysical quest for Being' (*Hicks, 2004*). They would rather put Nietzsche's determination of life in terms of power struggle at the centre of their analysis. Despite the suspicious eye with which they view such ethico-political notions as freedom and justice, postmodernists still defend a particular notion of freedom or the lack thereof. The following section examines their attitude towards freedom with a view to ascertaining the continuing influence of the Kantian conception of freedom.

Postmodern Freedom. The rejection of the grand narratives and the ideals they stand for characterizes the postmodern mind. Postmodernism challenges mainstream values, beliefs and ideologies. This is implied, inter alia, in their conception of freedom. For Richard Rorty 'freedom is the recognition of contingency' (Rorty, *1989: 46*). This is to mean that freedom is understood in terms of the realization that we must respond to the demands of self-creation. The concept of postmodern freedom has become increasingly important in today's globalized society as people are encouraged to view things from different angles and challenge convention. People are no longer tied to singular traditions or norms; instead, they have the freedom to choose which values they wish to adhere to. This type of freedom requires open-mindedness towards ideas that some may consider strange.

Furthermore, they view meanings as fluid and context-dependent which allow for alternative ways of being or participating in the life-world. It also recognizes that morality has many different sides depending on where one stands with respect to particular issues or cultural practices. Therefore, individuals have more room for autonomy when it comes to making choices about their own life decisions without feeling restricted by societal expectations/demands. However, this should not mislead us into believing that all postmodernists conceive of freedom in terms of individual autonomy. Johanna Oksala points out that Foucault does not share the glorification of individual autonomy as a release from power which mainstream postmodernism seems to advocate: 'the ideal of freedom as emancipation from the effects of power is an important part of the Enlightenment thinking and the subsequent understanding of emancipatory politics. Foucault warned us that the Enlightenment ideal of individual autonomy was one effect of normalizing power, power that is totalizing and individualizing at the same time' (*Oksala, 2005: 182*).

To the extent that postmodern freedom enables us to explore possible avenues for coming to the knowledge of the self it's believed to have provided humans with a greater degree of freedom than its predecessors. Postmodernists believe that the kind of freedom they advocate is capable of rising above the limited knowledge of the self and creating an understanding of 'the other'. They have laid a stronger claim to intersubjective and intercultural values than the domineering and oppressive structure of modernity, so they argue.

The postmodern account of freedom advocated by Lyotard and Foucault appears to present itself as a realistic

alternative to the questionable and highly suspect conception of freedom that the Kantian notion of freedom implies. Is this a justifiable claim? Does postmodernism really offer a better conception of freedom, or even an alternative conception of freedom (one which is independent of the dominant (Kantian) conception)? This is not an irrefutable claim. Yet its refutation requires an analysis of the relation between Foucault and Heidegger. Among other things, this analysis enables us to grasp Kant's influence on Foucault in general and on Foucault's understanding of freedom in particular- an influence which the history of philosophy overlooked for the most part, due partly to the postmodern and relativist label attached to the latter.

There's no doubt that Foucault shares Heidegger's conception of Freedom as practice as opposed to the property of the will. 'Foucault's late thinking identifies ethics as the deliberate dimension of freedom. Ethics is a practice of freedom' (*Oksala, 2005: 190*). However, Foucault's analysis of freedom presupposes a sovereign subject (much like Kant's) capable of self-creation and self-invention- Heidegger, however, is unequivocal in his rejection of the possibility of such a subject.

While Heidegger, in Being and Time, investigated the ahistorical structures of human existence, Foucault was a militant historicist (*Karademir, 2013: 376*). In the following I shall pledge to examine Heidegger's connection to postmodernism with a special emphasis on the ambivalent relation between Heidegger and Foucault.

The analysis of Foucault's relation to Heidegger does not only enable us to point out the precise place the ontology of freedom has played in the history of philosophy but most importantly it helps to unravel the largely obscure account of freedom implicit in Foucault's work and Kant's influence on this account.

Foucault's own confession goes a long way to pacifying an otherwise tumultuous task of examining the relation between the two philosophers: 'for me Heidegger has always been the essential philosopher…. My entire philosophical development has been determined by my reading of Heidegger' (*Karademir, 2013: 376*). Not all aspects of his thought, though, have been determined to the same degree. In some of his works, howsoever ironic that may seem, the influence of Kant is much more palpable than that of Heidegger. One such aspect of his work is his discussion of freedom.

Michel Foucault calls for resistance to the productive forces of power that manipulate and produce our identities. Freedom today, he maintains, is to be discovered in the ongoing struggle against the techniques of subjectification. Foucault insists that freedom is less a thing to be secured, than an activity to be engaged (*Thiele, 1994: 280*). By analyzing freedom in terms of practice rather than the property of the will Foucault underscores the dialectical relation that such a conception of freedom presupposes. 'Where there's power, there's resistance… this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power' (*Oksala, 2005: 190*). However we should not overlook the contentious view that despite his refusal to fully endorse the self-legislating autonomous subject Foucauldian freedom traces its lineage and remains to be highly dependent on the Kantian notion of freedom as it's manifested in his analysis of the role of the subject in the quest for freedom 'the quest for freedom in Foucault's ethics is a question of developing forms of the subject that are capable of functioning as resistance to the normalizing power (*Oksala, 2005: 190*). Despite Foucault's denial of the possibility of the autonomous individual implied in his claim that the individual subject is a result of normalizing power, the freedom of the individual is explained in terms of its capacity to stand opposed to the process of normalization.

With the self no longer given (as the gift of God, nature, or history), freedom is manifest only through its "invention." Foucault, however, insists that freedom of the creative self arises only in the social and political arenas wherein our identities become the spoils of battle' (*Oksala, 2005: 190*). Postmodern freedom is characterized by the forging of identity through the deliberate but not necessarily informed (recourse to knowledge is not an essential ingredient of the process of invention) act of self-creation. Nevertheless the 'creative activity' implied by Foucault's conception of the practice of freedom presupposes a self-autonomous subject capable of engaging in the critical interrogation of the present'.

Foucauldian freedom entails the struggle to remain free from definitions of the self that prescribe its telos. Rather, freedom is found in the construction of a protean self as it evolves by way of the dynamic clash of productive power and resistance (*Oksala, 2005: 190*). The locus of freedom is sought in the dialectical relation between power and resistance in which the resistance is understood as internal and integral to the power structure which gave rise to it.

Unlike the individual rights and opportunities of Berlin's negative liberty, liberty, for Foucault is a practice, it is what must be exercised' (*Thiele, 1994: 280*). Hence, we are admonished 'to create ourselves as a work of art'.

Foucault believes that it's the warlike confrontation between forces that opens up, 'a social clearing' within which subjects are produced, subjective positions are defined, objects and domains of knowledge become possible (*Karademir, 2013: 387*). In the end as Thiele succinctly puts it 'despite the differences between positive liberty, negative liberty, and postmodern liberty, the identification of freedom with mastery remains central to all' (*Thiele*, *1994, 281*). The failure of postmodern freedom to provide a viable alternative to its modern counterpart should be appreciated against the backdrop of the undisputed triumph of the Kantian conception of freedom the influence of which extends to its critiques i.e. it supplies a framework, a foundation which even its critiques can only ignore on pain of unintelligibility.

Despite the apparent similarity between Heidegger's and Foucault's conception of Freedom, Kant remains ingrained in the latter's understanding of freedom. This influence is manifest, inter alia, in Foucault's implicit endorsement of the sovereign subject (much like that of Kant) – with a self-creation and self-invention capacity.

In addition to the implicit endorsement of the self-determining subject that Foucault's version of the postmodern notion of freedom evinces, it also tends to subscribe to the dichotomizing structure of transcendental philosophy. This partially political attitude is represented by various nationalist movements which Foucault as a far leftist passionately approves.

So, in the end it can be contended that postmodern freedom, much like positive and negative liberties, subscribes to the identification of freedom with mastery. If we ignore the identities of the master and the mastered, we can see that all three conceptions of freedom ultimately boil down to the mastery of one by the other. Thiele argues as much:

'whether the mastery in question is of the higher self over the lower self and its desires and needs (as with

positive liberty); or the mastery of the empirically demonstrable self over its private domain (as with negative liberty); or the mastery of the aesthetic-agonistic self over its contested, protean constitution (as with postmodern liberty)-each form of liberty tends to lose its quest for mastery upon the world' (*Thiele*, *1994, 281*).

It should be clear from the outset that Kant's influence is not limited to philosophers. In other words, it's not just the philosophers (like Foucault) that have fallen victim to the idea of freedom as will or causality, but the practical men- 'those who should be committed to freedom given the nature of their activity' also find themselves tied to it. The practical men, (the freedom fighter, the nationalist, the liberator, etc.) much like the philosophers, operate within the framework of the Kantian tradition. Martin Heidegger and Hannah Arendt are two of the most prominent critiques of the notion of freedom as the property of the will which Kant has bequeathed to posterity.

Arendt followed in the footsteps of Heidegger in discerning the problem of alterity posed by a conception of freedom as the property of the will. 'In spite of the great influence the concept of an inner, nonpolitical freedom has exerted upon the tradition of thought, it seems safe to say that man would know nothing of inner freedom if he had not first experienced a condition of being free as a worldly tangible reality. We first become aware of freedom or its opposite in our intercourse with others, not in the intercourse with ourselves' (*Arendt, 1961: 148*). She has provided us with a profound analysis of the political implications of the causal conception of freedom where she highlighted, inter alia, the significance of the shared, public space of freedom. The enigmatic relation between violence and freedom can, at least to a limited extent, be better appreciated if it's examined in light of this problem of alterity.

If it were true that sovereignty and freedom are the same, then indeed no man could be free, because sovereignty, the ideal of uncompromising self-sufficiency and mastership, is contradictory to the very condition of plurality (*Arendt, 1958: 234*). The idea of plurality, indeed of intersubjectivity is contingent on the impossibility of the autonomous subject. Arendt's rejection of the identification of freedom with sovereignty supplies not just a critique of the autonomous subject in its Kantian as well as Foucauldian version but it also indicates the continuity existing between the two apparently incompatible positions: 'in view of human reality and its phenomenal evidence, it is indeed as spurious to deny human freedom to act because the actor never remains the master of his acts as it is to maintain that human sovereignty is possible because of the incontestable fact of human freedom' (*Arendt, 1958: 235*).

By stipulating an imaginary autonomous subject, transcendental philosophy does not only deny the fact of finitude but it also allows the same (in the person of the west) to establish itself as the objective criteria for the possibility of the subjective experience of the other (non-west).

To the extent that they had a positive notion of freedom which would transcend the idea of a successful liberation from tyrants and from necessity, this notion was identified with the act of foundation, that is, the framing of a constitution ~ Jefferson, therefore, when he had learned his lesson from the catastrophes of the French Revolution, where the violence of liberation had frustrated all attempts at founding a secure space for freedom, shifted from his earlier identification of action with rebellion and tearing down to an identification with founding anew and building up (*Arendt, 1958: 234*).

Furthermore, she argued that the traditional understanding of freedom as the ability to act according to one's will was inadequate and even dangerous. According to her, this view of freedom reduced human beings to mere agents of their own desires and impulses, devoid of any deeper sense of purpose or responsibility. In other words, if freedom is solely defined by the will, then individuals are left with no ethical or moral framework to guide their actions.

Arendt believed that this narrow conception of freedom as the property of the will led to a form of individualism that undermined the very foundation of a democratic society. In her view, true freedom was not about the ability to do whatever one wanted, but rather about engaging with others in a meaningful way and participating in the public sphere.

For Arendt, freedom was not something that could be possessed or controlled by the individual will. Instead, it was a collective and dynamic phenomenon that emerged through the interactions and relationships between individuals in a political community. True freedom, she argued, could only be achieved through active engagement with others and a commitment to the common good.

Generally speaking, Arendt's criticism of freedom as the property of the will challenged conventional notions of individual autonomy and self-determination. By emphasizing the importance of social and political relationships in the pursuit of freedom, she offered a compelling alternative vision that continues to influence contemporary debates on democracy, ethics, and human rights.

In the subsequent part, following the line of argument pursued in the foregoing section, attempt shall be made to show whether and the degree to which 'the practical man' finds himself emboldened or constrained by the idea of freedom as the property of the will. With that objective in view, I shall endeavor to make a phenomenological analysis of violence.

2.Phenomenology of Violence: The Complex Relationship between Violence and Freedom

A Preliminary Appraisal. Freedom and violence are two contrasting concepts that have shaped the history of humanity. While freedom is often associated with liberation, choice, and self-determination, violence is characterized by the use of force, coercion, and the suppression of individual rights. This section aims to explore the intricate relationship between violence and freedom, examining how these concepts interact, complement, and collide with one another.

Given the amount of violence perpetrated in the name of freedom, the intelligibility of the practices of freedom necessitates the intelligibility of violence. Accordingly, I propose to make an analysis of violence with a view to determining the extent to which the ethical positioning implied by acts of violence is compatible with the background assumptions that structure freedom.

The relationship between violence and freedom is better understood if we focus on the instrumental capacity of the former vis-à-vis the latter. However, this should not be construed as a denial of the constitutive capacity of violence, which as we shall see in due course, is as much important to give a full account of violence as its role as a means. It should also not create the impression that I subscribe to the position that violence always aims at freedom or that violence is the only way to freedom. I'm simply saying that if there's any relation between the two, if liberation

movements seem to engage in both activities, then that relation is primarily one of means to an end.

By taking a cursory overview of violence, I pledge to analyze the ambivalent relation between violence and freedom. This analysis accentuates the practices of freedom begotten by the plethora of nationalist movements. The phenomenological analysis is also intended to demonstrate that the imperative of the realization of freedom takes precedence over other problems of the human condition.

Historical Perspectives. In Das Capital Marx claimed 'violence is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one'. Throughout history, violence has often been employed as a means to achieve or maintain societal freedom. Revolutions, civil wars, uprisings, and liberation movements have historically been characterized by violent struggles against what they believed to be oppressive regimes. The American Revolution, French Revolution, Russian Revolution and numerous liberation movements ranging from anticolonial to secessionist movements exemplify instances where violence was seen as the best, if not the only, means of achieving the goal of liberation. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that violence can also perpetuate a cycle of oppression, undermining the very principles of freedom it is intended to secure.

Violence is often perceived as a breach of moral and ethical codes and is therefore deemed illegitimate, unacceptable, irrational, and bestial. This view accords well with the Latin etymological root of violence – namely viol – that relates to terms such as 'defilement', 'infringement', 'outrage', 'injury', and 'violation' (*Sen, 2013: 77*). The unfavorable connotation the term is usually associated with has played a significant role in the categorical denunciation of acts of violence even when they're viewed as the only means of achieving liberation.

Violence often comes dressed in the garb of authority, power, right or legitimacy, even when it in effect announces their absence. If we attempt to approach a general definition of violence as a disruption of human relations or human situations, the difficulty that must be faced is the fact that violence is often that peculiar kind of disruption which also seeks to enforce some continuation of a given order of things (*Dodd, 2009: 46*). Although it's difficult to find uninterrupted uniformity in the way violence has been historically viewed (due primarily to the variety of motives which prompt its existence), one can safely claim that it consists of the upsetting of the established order. This rebellion against the order may aim at the restoration of a previous order (as in the case of anticolonial struggles) or the creation of a new one (liberation movements fighting to change the existing government illustrate this position).

Violence and The Constitution of the Subject. Social movements often emerge in response to perceived injustices, fighting for the recognition and expansion of individual freedoms. While some movements adopt non-violent strategies, others resort to violence as a means to bring about change. The Civil Rights Movement in the United States, with figures like Martin Luther King Jr., and the Indian independence movement led by Mahatma Gandhi, exemplify non-violent movements that effectively achieved freedom and justice. Conversely, the struggle for civil rights in South Africa under apartheid and the various anti-colonial struggles in Africa and South America saw violence as a means to challenge oppression. The relationship between violence and freedom in these examples exhibits the complexities and moral dilemmas inherent in utilizing violence for liberation.

Despite the fact that the treatment of violence in this context centers on the instrumental aspect of violence, good arguments have been brought in favor of the claim that violence has played a significant role in the constitution of the subject. Hence the appositeness of violence as a means of achieving the goal of liberation should not overshadow its constitutive capacity. Violence is not a simple physical act, it's not just a rejection of the values of the other but it's an act of negating 'the other'. The perpetration of violence, in its original as opposed to its derivative form (counter-violence), is aimed at reducing the 'other' to the 'same' if possible or at a minimum it's bent on the complete annihilation of the ontological as well as political specificity of the other. This act of reduction testifies to the constituting capacity of violence. Colonialism probably offers the best example of how violence constitutes the subject. The asymmetrical relation which characterizes the colonial experience manifests itself in the subject-object relation created between the colonizer and the colonized.

The colonial experience manifested through the paradoxical dependence of the colonizer on the colonized must be appreciated in light of 'the prosperity and privileges of the former and the pauperization and deprivation of the latter'. The paradox is all the more intensified when one realizes that the liberation movements (the anticolonial struggles of Africa and South America in particular) which set themselves against the colonial structure and its rational justification- the enlightenment project, failed to draw the conceptual schemes and the practices of freedom from within their respective lived experiences. One may even be so bold as to attribute the failure of these movements to the fact that they relied heavily on the European concepts and categories- the very concepts which supplied the theoretical tools for the perpetration of historical domination.

Since colonialism was a violent process of subjugation, the anticolonial struggle had to be violent- so in a way colonialism proves itself to be a condition of possibility of anticolonial violence at the same time cementing the status of counter-violence as 'the privilege of subjugation and exploitation'. Hence, we may muster the audacity to claim that this constitutive character of violence has led Fanon to appeal to violence as the only means by which 'the colonized masses can achieve their liberation'. However this condition of the possibility of liberation (violence) stands in the way of the attainment of freedom to the extent that it's undergirded by the subjugating and dominating approach of transcendental philosophy. Original violence (best illustrated by colonial violence), in its obsessive pursuit of universalism, has fashioned the colonized in its own image.

Berlin accentuates herder's hatred of the great levelers who eliminated native cultures and replaced them with their own, historically, and therefore spiritually foreign oppressive to their victims (*Berlin, 1990: 245*). The lamentable success of universalism is not attributed to the charm of its ideals or to the deficiency or some kind of inadequacy of the incorporated culture. It's rather, by and large, a result of the open and widespread, albeit sometimes subtle and complex, use of violence.

Universalism ultimately comes down to what Hountondji called 'unanimism' – in this particular context, however, the term is used to refer to the tendency of the west to eliminate differences and to contend that the whole of humanity subscribes to the same system of political and cultural ideals.

This explains, at least partly, postcolonial theory's commitment to 'engaging the universals taking the form of the abstract figure of the human or that of reason' (*Chakrabarty, 2000: 5*). The instrumental role of the 'universals' in the objectifying process of domination has been significant; as such it's been the object of critique by critiques of the enlightenment like postcolonial theory.

Postcolonial theory invites us to reconsider the Enlightenment both as an eighteenth-century phenomenon and as a concept that bears on modern political formations (*Carey, Festa, 2009: 5*). This insistence to reexamine the enlightenment project should be viewed vis-à-vis the irrationality of its rational ideals.

Postcolonial theory claims to react against enlightenment's exclusion of Africa or to be more exact 'its inclusion as the negative other of reason and the west' (*Eze, 1997: 7*). Eze situates postcolonial philosophy within the scholarly debate regarding the status and nature of African Philosophy. In explaining the reason why African philosophy should be examined in light of the colonial period he writes: 'the single most important factor that drives the field and the contemporary practice of African Philosophy has to do with the brutal encounter of the African with European modernity- an encounter epitomized in the colonial phenomena' (*Eze, 1997: 4*). Accordingly, the emergence and eventual acceptance of postcolonial philosophy as an emancipatory discourse must be appreciated against the backdrop of enlightenment's rational sublation of African realities.

Furthermore, postcolonial philosophy laments this lopsided relation between the colonizers and the colonized which instead of coming to an end with colonialism went on to become the foundation of the human sciences. It's through these sciences that the constitutive role of violence has been unmistakably effective. A new subject has been constituted; a new identity has been formed. Yet it's a fragile identity the formation of which can be traced ultimately to the indirect act of the oppressor, the dominator. Fragile identity is a term I used to refer to identities that tend to lose their grounds, deny not only the perpetual flux of identity by clinging to the obscure past but also the specificity of the human condition. But most importantly these are identities for which the present condition does not include the possibility of transcendence. The possibility of transcending the constituted self is precluded because of the estrangement they suffered in the hands of the subjugator. The act of constitution is in effect an act of dislodging – the self is dislodged from its cultural and historical embeddedness. Nonetheless the loss of the self should be understood in light not just of this dislocation but also in light of its failure or rather refusal to immerse itself in the phony universal.

The ambivalent relation which characterizes the relation between freedom and violence reaches its peak when we analyze the effects of the loss of the self- resentment. Resentment refers to the feeling of hatred and hostility towards the perpetrator of the loss of the self, towards the subjugator and the dominator. But most significantly it's the unfreedom which gets in the way of the attainment of freedom. The process of liberation which this resentful self embarks on will no longer be the ethico-political ideal of freedom (the logical and practical contradiction of using unfreedom to be free needs no explanation) but it will rather be an act of riddance understood in terms of the separation of the subjugated from the dominator/subjugator. The emphasis in this latter case is on asserting independence from the forces of domination but the act of independence amounts to reversing the position of the parties in such a way that the loss of liberty on the part of the dominator is viewed as the sine qua non for the liberty of the dominated- in the spirit of the dominant conception of freedom discussed under the previous sections.

Why Freedom cannot be achieved through Violence. Although Arendt assertively alleges that 'the old and terrible truth that only violence and rule over others could make some men free has been refuted by technology rather than modern political ideas' (*Arendt, 1965: 114*), one will have to wonder whether western universalism has embarked upon a more 'humane' way of mastering others rather than abandon the whole project of 'rule over others' i.e. the dominant conception of freedom which takes the loss of freedom by one as an essential condition for its attainment by another is still operational despite the apparent loosening of its techniques.

A sober assessment of the situation surrounding the relation between the subjugator and the subjugated exposes the fact that such 'transformation of power relations', to use Foucault's own statement, implicated by 'the violent overthrow of the subjugator…' leads at best to a resentful social relation which subjects both parties to an ever-ending antagonistic relation since the liberation of the subjugated (viewed in this manner) is supposed to be achieved only through the overthrow of the subjugator.

To reiterate an important point I mentioned in the previous pages – I am not arguing that we should not entertain violence as a possible and sometimes necessary instrument for countering originiary violence: Arendt herself has something to say about that 'under certain circumstances- acting without argument or speech and without counting the consequences – violence is the only way to set the scales of justice right again'. Rather I am claiming that whatever we achieve via the acts of violence it's entirely different from the act of freedom in so far as violence aims at the complete annihilation of the other while the demands of freedom involve the attempt 'to enter into a relationship with the other without allowing its very self to be crushed by the other'.

Violence cannot make us free because it destroys the existential space within which free beings can relate. The colonizer, the dominator is not free (though obviously he's not deprived of his liberty) because by subjugating and oppressing others through violence he denies himself of the company of others – 'the other' who, as we shall see in the subsequent chapter, is essential for the freedom of the same. The case of the colonized, whose immediate concern is freedom from oppression (liberty), is not too dissimilar to the status of the colonizer. As a result of this immediate concern the colonized makes no attempt (the possibility of making such an attempt is highly dubious due mainly to the already fractured relation between the two parties) to preserve the existential space needed to claim freedom. Since 'the life of a free man needs the presence of others' and violence is nothing other than (or at least mainly) the elimination of 'the other', violence cannot be the path to freedom.

It's not only because of its tendency to destroy the existential space that violence makes freedom impossible but also because of the fact that it fashions identities in a way which ultimately renders them inimical to the demands of freedom. In describing this constitutive capacity of violence Fanon says 'it's the white man who creates the Negro' (*Zahar, 1974: 89*). Violence as the privilege of subjugation can be understood as a necessary means of identity formation but the identities it constitutes are fragile identities-identities which are born out of resentment and which are

incapable of relating to 'the other' in any other way than through the so-called self-creating act of violence.

Nonetheless we sometimes encounter scenarios where violence feels like a right. Violence has oftentimes been articulated as 'the right of free people over the unfree' and 'the privilege of the subjugated over the subjugator'. So long as there are victims (we can suppose the almost certain existence of victims in the dichotomizing structure endorsed by transcendental philosophy) there'll always be someone whose use of violence can be justified by recourse to this condition of victimhood. These scenarios tend to justify the attempt to view freedom as an act of liberation or at least as an attempt at resistance (by the oppressed) to power (possessed by the oppressor). But we cannot help but wonder, together with Arendt, whether the act of liberation was a sufficient condition for the attainment of freedom:

Before it became an attribute of thought or a quality of the will, freedom was understood to be the free man's status, which enabled him to move, to get away from home, to go out into the world and meet other people in deed and word. This freedom clearly was preceded by liberation: in order to be free, man must have liberated himself from the necessities of life. But the status of freedom did not follow automatically upon the act of liberation. Freedom needed, in addition to mere liberation, the company of other men who were in the same state, and it needed a common public space to meet them a politically organized world, in other words, into which each of the free men could insert himself by word and deed (*Arendt, 1961: 148*).

Levinas insists that the history of European philosophy is characterized by 'a history of violence towards the other'- in arguing thus he's pointing to the attempt to reduce the other to the same. To put it differently, he contends that the attempt to incorporate the other into the sphere of absolute knowledge represents this history. Condorcet's naïve optimism in the possibility of eliminating 'crime and folly and misery in human affairs, due to indolence and ignorance and irrationality through the development of a comprehensive and systematic natural science of man and the creation of a harmonious society of nations, unbroken progress in the arts and sciences, and perpetual peace, through the application of scientific method' (*Berlin, 1997: 582-583*) is not just a camouflaged call for epistemic violence but it's also a stipulation of universalism as the only means of salvation.

As we can gather from our discussion of transcendental philosophy in the previous parts the treatment of the other as a reflection or more precisely as the figment of my consciousness is testament to the status of the other as an object of knowledge. The other is absolutely knowable to the extent that it's derived from my 'intentionality'. As such transcendental philosophy and the various liberation movements which have been influenced by the dominant conception of freedom basically close off the possibility of inter-subjective relation between 'the same' and 'the other'.

Conclusion

The relationship between violence and freedom is complex and multi-faceted. Violence has historically played a significant role in securing liberation and challenging oppressive systems. However, the misuse and abuse of violence can undermine the very freedoms it aims to protect. Striking a balance between these two concepts is crucial for preserving individual rights and upholding democratic values. By adopting peaceful means, dialogue, and collaboration, societies can navigate the complex terrain between violence and freedom, ultimately striving for a more harmonious and just world.

Striking the balance requires understanding the significance of coming to terms with our specific context and also recognizing the logical as well as practical incoherence of striving for the perfect society, takeing note of the mythical nature of the universal man. It also demands that we recognize that the world is a shared-world- it's the "other's" as well as 'mine'. Despite all its success to underscore the autonomy of the individual, the dominant conception of freedom fails to respond to the ethical demand of the other. The Kantian conception of freedom advocates mastery as the road to freedom thereby denying the originality of 'the other'; the various liberation movements have, by subscribing to this dominant conception of freedom, endorsed this exploitative structure. In other words, the dominating and oppressive structure of transcendental philosophy has found its way to its professed enemies through the causal conception of freedom. The nature of freedom that liberation movements operate in is derived from the same structure against which they claim to stand. This is testament to the constitutive capacity of violence. Thus we can safely conclude that this dominant conception of freedom fails precisely because it does not take due cognizance of the ethical, epistemological and existential demands of the other.

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Насильство і свобода: феноменологічне дослідження практик свободи

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Важко описувати історію людства, не згадаючи про панування терору та насильства, що вчиняються іменем свободи та справедливості. Свобода і насильство — це дві протилежні концепції, які сформували історію людства. Хоча свобода часто асоціюється зі звільненням, насильство характеризується застосуванням сили та примусу. Ця розвідка досліджує складний зв'язок між насильством і свободою з феноменологічної точки зору. Представлене автором розуміння свободи сформовано кантівською концепцією свободи як властивості волі. Ця модель свободи декларує її як панівну. Це не лише негативні та позитивні концепції свободи, які стали жертвами такого ставлення, але й постмодерна свобода також діє в тих самих рамках.

Стаття кидає виклик загальноприйнятому розумінню свободи та її співвідношенню з насильством, спираючись на феноменологічну філософію для дослідження досвіду індивідів, які одночасно є суб'єктами та об'єктами насильства. У ній стверджується, що свобода — це не просто відсутність фізичних обмежень, а швидше складна взаємодія соціальних і екзистенційних факторів, які формують індивідуальний досвід волі та автономії.

Ключові слова: свобода, феноменологія, постколоніальна теорія, постмодернізм, насильство.

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