

Reality: Pre-Requisites for the Notion of 'Freedom

Dr Madhu Prashar

Principal, Dev Samaj College for Women, Ferozepur City, Punjab

ABSTRACT

Historical knowledge is a reflection of the past in all its varied manifestations. This past form historical reality, which exists objectively, irrespective of the consciousness reflecting it and the professional historical knowledge separated out from it. Unlike the reality of nature, reality of society has a number of specific features. In studying social reality man cognises himself above all as an ancestral creature with all the specific manifestations of his nature. He presents the greatest interest to himself in that quality and strives for maximum fulness and all-round knowledge of all the ties, relations, regular and chance elements of his social life. Hence, understandably, the diversity of approaches to social phenomena and social development. In that connection it should be cleared that there is no other path of conscious-self-awareness than historical knowing which itself a substructure of historical consciousness. This work will be done through this research paper.

I. INTRODUCTION:

The objectively determined opposing of cognitive activity as means of developing truths to all other forms of cognitive activity almost simultaneously embraces, as far as one can judge, all the most important forms of social consciousness, historical consciousness included. From the moment that historical knowing become distinctly isolated, an orientation on actual truth began to be an important inner characteristic of it. The isolation of historical knowing, and it's singling out in a special professional activity within historical consciousness occurred simultaneously with the singling out of other branches of professional knowledge, often, moreover, even with certain lead.

But the isolation of historical knowing within the womb of historical consciousness, which comes down to an isolation of rational, cognitive activity wholly oriented on study of past, does not mean an overcoming, the activity of newly establishing forms. On the contrary, that form is still preserved in all social structures and performs the function of preserving, accumulating and transmitting historical experiences, a function of a given society's social self-awareness and self-identification, a function of self-preservation of ethnic integrity, cultural community and continuity.

Historical consciousness has always been developed to a greater or lesser degree by members of the society as a socio-economic and ethnic whole, although they are not always conscious in so doing, in a distinct rational form, of the criteria, maxims, and rules to which their own historical consciousness is subordinated. On the contrary, historical knowing as a substructure of historical consciousness, essentially serving the same functions much more rationally, proves to be completely rational at certain stages of development.

Our ignorance of the 'True Historical Process' is too profound for any sure insight into the dramatic moments, the real 'Turning Point' of history. Whether they are discoverable in those fragments or rags of the past which have floated down to us, is still remain a live question.

We have seen that historical consciousness evoke related but distinct categories of experience and thus act as a basic source of insights into the human condition and provides an intimation of meaning in things and of purpose to life for the individual, while it furnishes the community with unifying value orientation and the continuity of its identity.

Hence, the historical consciousness is connected attempts at various stages of the world history to solve the basic problems of humanity. But as freedom is historical develops concept and historically, there are different interpretations and meanings given Liberals including idealists and bourgeois conceived a very to it. narrow view of freedom. They regarded freedom as free will i.e., in accordance with volition which is not determined by external They hold that idea of determinism, which asserts that causes. human actions are decreed by necessity fully relieves man of responsibility and makes impossible the moral evaluation of his 'actions'. According to them, it is only unrestricted and unconditional freedom that can be the basis of human responsibility and they see separate individuals pursuing their independently concerned ends.

Marx tackled the problem of freedom from two aspects. Firstly, in his anthropological views, in Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts he expressed freedom as the 'negation of alienation' and the 'self-realization of man', that expresses his conception of freedom within the framework of his view of human nature. Secondly, in German Ideology and Capital, he discussed another equally important dimension of his thought for the purposes of this study of freedom which is his theory of history. This was an attempt to explain the basic structure and main stages of historical process through which man will finally attain his freedom. So, his second

aspect viewed: (i) freedom as the recognition of necessity and (ii) freedom of the whole society.

Since Marx considered freedom and alienation as correlative, though opposing notions, it will be necessary to examine the concept of alienation. Also, as Marx believed that the elimination of alienation would lead to the establishment of a society of free men.

For the first aspect, in the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, he introduced the thesis that the economic life is decisive for man's entire mode of existence. The other aspects, including the political and the religious, are only of secondary importance.

Further, he felt that in the Capitalist system of production this economic life took such a form, that far from being a result of human self-development, it deprived men of their very humanity, thereby, representing a radical loss of freedom. In fact, Marx's theory of alienated labour is an explanation of the causes and forms of this loss of freedom.

Alienation is a radical loss of freedom precisely because it is the negation of genuinely human productivity. This is described by Marx in the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts in four aspects: alienation from the product of work, from the work itself, from one's fellow beings, and from human species-life.

So ultimately, in the system of wage labour that human life of man loses its free and self-directed character; as it becomes a means, the very species-life of man is transformed into a mere means of physical existence. Man suffers the unfreedom which is a loss of himself.

Relevant reason seems to be for his second aspect is that his theory of historical development is based on a principle which would seem to weaken seriously the claim that individuals are free in any meaningful sense. This is the principle of the law bound nature of history: namely, that history proceeds unalterably according to definite laws, independently of the wills of individuals, and that the historical conditions which were formed according to these laws actually exert a determining influence on these individuals. And in Capital Marx explicitly characterizes these laws as:

"the natural laws of (a society's) movement! And states as the purpose of his work "to lay bare the economic law of motion of modern society"

The concept of freedom, which Marx employs in his assessment of the progress of history is different from that elaborated in his anthropology. It refers not to individual men but to whole societies. It is based not on a conception of the nature of man but on a historical view of the relation of man to his changing external circumstances. In so far as these circumstances prevail in giving form to human action, man is unfree; in so far as he learns, not to avoid the influence of these but to control them, to make them work for his own factors, ends, he increases his freedom. However, this historical concept as power, does not contradict or even replace the of freedom anthropological concept - freedom as self-realization. The two are complementary to each other. The self-realization of man is impossible so long as he is not able to control his environment. On the other hand, the possession of power itself is not an end but only a means. It can have value only to the extent that it is utilized for the accomplishment of a goal which is good in itself, and this is for Marx the Perfection of Man. Marx, here, realized that the realm of freedom was to be made possible only by the age-long struggle of man to control his environment, to submit the forces of nature and the spontaneous tendencies of social life to his own designs - in short, that the freedom of self-realization could be achieved only by the meditation of freedom as power.

And we see that his view of the concrete freedom achieved in history centers on the notion of power, control, domination of Marx's view is 'activist' in the most radical sense of reality. the word; the truly liberated man is the one who transforms and refashions reality according to his own ends. The world is not seen as an unalterable order as is seen by fatalists (who maintained that the world is specified by necessary laws which man can do, no more than recognize), but rather as the highly malleable raw material for man's self-oriented activity.

If the liberal ideas were correct, then human freedom would be an illusion. As all men's activities like everything else in the world are in all respects governed by causal laws, which give rise to necessary characteristics of events and determines their necessary outcome; and this applies as much to human actions, so that men can never make themselves independent of necessity in nature and society, also it is wrong to suppose freedom and necessity as incompatibilities. On the contrary, necessity gives rise to freedom and is its precondition.

As we seen, Marx's solution of the problem of necessity and freedom, is based on recognition of the objective necessity as primary and man's will and consciousness as secondary and derivative. Necessity exists in nature and society in the shape of objective laws. Unknown laws manifest themselves as objective laws.

At the very beginning of history, man, being unable to grasp the mysteries of nature, was a slave of unknown necessity and hence unfree. The more man learned the objective laws, the more conscious and freer became his activity. This begins with the production process itself, in which man "sets in motion the natural forces of his body in order to appropriate nature's productions in a form adopted to his own wants", and so "

realizes a purpose of his own."

But man's mastery over nature and also to control and plan their own social life in order to satisfy their material and cultural requirements does not mean an independence of man from natural laws, natural necessity and objective laws of society or social necessity. On the contrary, it means; the knowledge and conscious-utilization of these laws - not the ending of Necessity, but its Recognitions, and the direction of social activity in accordance with the recognition of necessity.

As a result of the necessities of our own nature, we gain knowledge of external things, of our own nature, and requirements and then we act on the basis of such knowledge. In proportion as this takes place, what we do follows from our own conscious decisions based on knowledge of our own requirements and of how to realise them.

Human knowledge, then, is an essential means to human freedom. If knowledge depends on practice, the growth of knowledge has also a transforming effect on practice. For in so far as we know the properties and laws of things, we can in practice master them - makes them subject to us, instead we being subject to them. The growth of knowledge, a product of man's striving to master nature and to organise his own social life, contributes step by step to the realization of that mastery and to the building of higher forms of social organization, to the realization of the possibility of a full and free life for all.

To say that freedom entails the elimination of chances does not mean, of course, that by the exercise of freedom we somehow continue to do away with the linkage of accident and necessity. The operation of accident or chance, and its linkage with necessity, is an objective fact, a universal feature of events in both nature and society which we have to reckon with and to which we have to adapt our actions. It exists independently of ourselves and we can by no means do away with or alter it. What we have to do to realize freedom of action is, through knowledge of necessity, to bring a whole process including the chance inherent in it, under our control and so direct it to an end decided by ourselves.

Engels wrote:

"Chance is only the one pole of a relation whose other pole is called necessity, ... The more a social activity, a series of social processes, becomes too powerful for men's conscious control and grows above their heads, and the more it appears a matter of pure chance, then all the more surely within this chance the laws peculiar to it and inherent in it assert themselves as if by natural necessity!"

However, according to Marx, 'Human Freedom' is a historical process and that it is not in a real sense possible in the pre-historical era of human development. As man's activity is not properly utilized in this era due to Private Property, Class Struggle, Ideological Consciousness etc.- which distorts the reality. But as 'praxis in a continuous process, develops new relations which culminate in truth to ultimately form a historical knowledge that can be realized through historical consciousness' - is that process of knowledge which recognize the natural and objective necessity by which freedom is realized. There is a reciprocal relation between the whole process and realized freedom, as they help in developing each other. 'More the freedom is realized, the more will develop the process and vice-versa!'

In this society, the conditions of life, with hitherto dominated people as alien, religious, mystified, ideological, with a class and private property, will ultimately come under man's control. As it will differ from earlier conquests in that it will not be based on restricted productive forces. Before, the productive forces were able to supply products sufficient only to fill the needs of a minority of the society - thus the necessary exploitation of one group by another, without which there could have been no development at all. Modern large-scale industry, which concentrates capital and utilizes power driven machinery, presents a different situation. It has productive forces capable of supplying the needs of all. Thus, the conquest of freedom 'permitted' on the basis of these forces, can be of a different kind; it can be universal, in the sense that it frees all men from their basic wants and, at the same time, eliminates the need for exploitation.

Marx's conception of the future socialist society expressed in terms of the same fundamental idea, for in the passage on 'Freedom and Necessity', in third volume of Capital he stated that:

"Freedom in this field [of material production] cannot consist of anything else but the fact that socialized mankind, the associated producers, regulate their interchange with nature rationally, bring it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by some blind power."

II. CONCLUSION:

Thus, a leap from the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom will take place. All this enable people consciously to use objective laws in their practical activity, to direct the development of Society in a rational and systematic manner, and to create all necessary material and spiritual pre-requisites for an all-round development of society and for every individual.

REFERENCES:

- [1]. Toynbee, A.J., *Greek Historical Thought*, (USA: Mentor Book, 1952).
- [2]. Gittler, J.B., *Social Thought Among Early Greeks*, (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1949).
- [3]. Croce, B., *History as the Story of Liberty*, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1951).
- [4]. Javadekar, A.G., 'Axiology of Knowledge', *The Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. XXIX, No. 4, 1957.
- [5]. Childe, V.G., *Society and Knowledge*, (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1956).
- [6]. Ruggiero, Guido de, *The History of European Liberalism*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1927).
- [7]. Koerner, K.F., *Liberalism and its Critics*, (London: Croom Helm, 1985).