

# Pre-freedom

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## Abstract

Although some concepts like negative and positive freedom are certainly considerable in the area of freedom; this paper argues to highlight what the researcher has called 'pre-freedom'. For this purpose, it tries to clarify the concept of pre-freedom as a condition in which a person is related to other ones by primary ties. It is observed under the light of the fact that s/he does not conceive itself as a person who is being instructed his/her own social role. In other words, pre-freedom is the condition in which a person is not able to choose. It only imitates its leader and practice sheepish obedience of authorities. This person can, thus, be employed and exploited through three major techniques, namely the dependent identity, the doll of authorities, and the fragile security that the researcher attempts to explain them respectively based on various German thinkers such as Erich Fromm, Hannah Arendt, and Herbert Marcuse.

**Keywords:** pre-freedom, freedom, dependent identity, the doll of authorities, fragile security

## 1. Introduction

The pre-freedom is the condition in which one does not perceive itself as a free creature because they only belong to society, race, family, tribe, organization, and so forth. In this case, the individual's action is not based on the realization of his/her potential, self-identity, and so on. Indeed, s/he generally is related to other ones by primary ties. It is observed under the light of the fact that s/he does not conceive itself as an individual who is being instructed his/her social role. This state is slightly similar to the Middle Ages. Accordingly, Fromm, a German author, points out that "In the Middle Ages both sides of human consciousness - that which was turned within as that which was turned without - lay dreaming or half awake beneath a common veil. The veil was woven of faith, illusion, and childish pre-possession, through which the world and history were seen clad in strange hues. Man was conscious of himself only as member of a race, community, party, family, or corporation - only through some general category" (Fromm, 1984, p. 38).

In fact, human exists as a member of a community, class, religion, nationality, group, and so forth, not as an individual who is autonomously able to do something in isolation. In general, this state is characterized in the absence of individual freedom, or at least the lack of individual freedom. To clarify the situation of individual freedom, the researcher tries to discuss the condition of individual before his/her freedom. For doing it, he puts forward the term pre-freedom. Therefore, the first question which is going to be answered is the concept of pre-freedom. The question will be responded by concentrating on explaining three mentioned concepts; dependent identity, the doll of authorities, and fragile security.

## 2. Methodology

The study is based on the descriptive-analytic method. In other words, it is a library based research in which the researcher should use written text whether electronic or physical books, and article. To seek reliable and valid sources of information on the concept of pre-freedom was a challenge for the researcher. The researcher became decisive that he had to use electronic resources in order to facilitate administration of the project. However, the researcher felt responsibility to document and validate the information of paper. For doing it, he mainly recognized to use those electronic databases by which he became able to extract the list of key works of the paper which are related to the topic whether directly or indirectly. After this step, the researcher discussed the process of its project by dealing with the definition of the term pre-freedom. To examine the term of pre-freedom, the study employed three terms including the dependent identity, the doll of authorities, and the fragile security as the features of pre-freedom in its analysis. Generally, in association with all above basic issues in the

analytical study, the researcher approaches to the understanding of pre-freedom concept. For example, the study show people's values, identities are formed by leaders, ideologies, or something like that in his analysis under the term "dependent identity". Moreover, the study used the analytical method in the all parts of this study.

### 3. Dependent Identity

To develop the very central theme of the article, the researcher tries to define the very conceptual notion of pre-freedom. For doing it, the term pre-freedom should be defined. The term pre-freedom is combination of pre which is a prefix meaning before and freedom which means liberty. So it literary means a condition before liberty. If we describe human as a creature who has been thrown into this world to pass the stage of pre-consciousness and immaturity so that reach to the state of maturity in which he can be aware to choose and analyze as a free creature, pre-freedom is articulated to those people who do not reach to the stage of maturity to choose as a free creature. Therefore, pre-freedom means a condition in which a person is not able to choose and analyze. Instead, it only does sheepish obedience of leaders and authorities. In other words, a leader defines something as truth and a person who unquestionably obey him/her is in the condition of pre-freedom. Such a person only narrates the statements of its leader and obeys them. Therefore, it is the victim of being in the condition of pre-freedom.

In the pre-freedom condition, it is important to know that people, as mentioned before, comprehend themselves by primary ties instead of their attempts. Castration of mind is one feature which shows a person is in the condition of pre-freedom. In fact, this condition can be explained by a phenomenon which is called "dependent identity."

We can observe, in the writing of Herbert Marcuse, this view that "the society bars a whole type of oppositional operations and behavior; consequently, the concepts pertaining to them are rendered illusory or meaningless. Historical transcendence appears as metaphysical transcendence, not acceptable to science and scientific thought. The operational and behavioral point of view, which has been practiced as a "habit of thought" at large, becomes the view of the established universe of discourse and action, needs and aspirations" (Marcuse, 1964, p. 22).

In this case, the identity can be defined or at least highlighted according to the leaders' interests including political leaders. In fact, values and identities of those people who are in the pre-freedom are not formed by themselves. Instead, they are the products of the hypnotic definitions or dictations of leaders, ideology, or other things. In this stage even the terms are misused. For instance, killing by doctors can be named "medical matters" (Arendt, 1964, p. 53). Likewise, massacre of Jews was defined by Nazism as the solutions to improve human's noble race. As Hannah Arendt implies, so many Nazis such as Eichmann who had killed Jews and he was the key person in the Nazi's machinery *genocide*, were neither perverted nor sadistic. In fact they would not like to commit genocide but they did it because they failed to think about what they were doing (p. 129). In other words, they were in the condition of pre-freedom, namely only imitators who were not able to choose. Instead they only performed their leaders' ideologies.

According to Herbert Marcuse, "mono-dimensional thought is systematically promoted by the makers of politics and their purveyors of mass information. Their universe of discourse is populated by self-validating hypotheses which, incessantly and monopolistically repeated, become hypnotic definitions or dictations" (Marcuse, 1964, p. 16)

In fact, based on mono-dimensional thought, there is one way of life and all other modes of life are rejected. For instance, capitalistic systems refuse communist systems and vice versa. As Marcuse believes in both camps, the movement of thought is stopped at barriers which appear as the limits of identity only in one way (Kettler, 1976, pp. 14 -15).

That is to say, political systems attempt to give people the identity to prevent them to have an independent identity. The systems generate and even manipulate needs and values of people to control them. In fact, it tries to keep people in the condition of pre-freedom. This can be clarified in the writing of Herbert Marcuse. For Marcuse, the general objective purpose of a society is to reconcile the person in the form of existence which his society imposes on him (Marcuse, 2009, p. 191). This action provides the condition of pre-freedom.

A system such as the capitalism, for instance, encourages people to consume more and more the goods it produces. People are obligated to request the different models and the newest innovations in a permanent stream of gadgetry. It is not enough that people buy cars; they are conditioned to request new goods every two or three years in order to maintain their "image." In this way, they are taught to establish their personal worth and self-esteem based on the quality and the quantity of the inanimate objects they possess. This conditioning is achieved through a continual barrage of various oriented advertisement and the creation of the ideology that

emphasizes economic success is synonymous with a meaningful and happy existence. The educational system plays a major role in conditioning people to adapt to the types of discipline and stress that are the consequences of a consumption/production based civilization. Marcuse argues that people's false needs act as the chains that tie them to the repressive society. In this case, Marcuse sees liberation as a vital "biological" need. He argues that this form of freedom can deceive people and keep them under delusion because people should entirely spend their time and energy to attain those needs that is called false needs by Marcuse (Marcuse, 1969, p. 51). Moreover, according to Herbert Marcuse, Pre-freedom can be also clarified in term of "mono-dimensional man." It is evident once he says: "The products indoctrinate and manipulate; they promote a false consciousness which is immune against its falsehood. Moreover, as these beneficial products become available to more individuals in more social classes, the indoctrination they carry ceases to be publicity; it becomes a way of life. It is a good way of life - much better than before - and as a good way of life, it militates against qualitative change. Thus emerges a pattern of mono-dimensional thought and behavior in which ideas, aspirations, and objectives that, by their content, transcend the established universe of discourse and action are either repelled or reduced to terms of this universe. They are redefined by the rationality of the given system and of its quantitative extension (Marcuse, 1991, p. 12)

By joining others, people try to seek an identity for themselves. That is why, as Fromm points out, "a sense of identity is so vital and imperative that man cannot remain sane if he does not find some way of satisfying it." (Fromm, 2008, p. 59). In this case, Fromm believes that "people are willing to risk their lives, to give up their love, to surrender their freedom, to sacrifice their own thoughts, for the sake of being one of the herd, of conforming, and thus of acquiring a sense of identity, even though it is an illusory one." (p. 61).

But this is only a dependent pretended identity, an identity which is shaped by others, instead of individual itself. A system develops individuals' selves, and it fails to satisfy their needs.

The danger of the above feature is that although a man can say "I", he turns into a robot. True enough, robots do not rebel. But given man's nature, robots cannot live and remain rational, they become "golems," they will destroy their humanity because they cannot stand any longer against the dullness of a meaningless life that is going to be explained in the second feature of pre-freedom (p. 352).

#### **4. The Doll of Authority**

The doll of authority is the second way by which the people, who are in the pre-freedom condition, will be exploited. This concept would be understood in this way that individuals, in pre-freedom condition, would be likely to accept their despotic rulers as absolute leaders and believe that obedience means freedom. Although they usually have a political presence; they are just the doll of authority that can be easily found in some regimes like the Nazi. It is a significant example which is called totalitarian regime. Although they think their political opinions are their own private thinking, it is only repetition of the rulers' sentences if one profoundly and carefully considers theme because such people are not able to choose. But it should not be ignored that this state can be also seen in the oppositional individuals as well. For Alexis de Tocqueville, this is a dangerous form of existence that members of society will embrace their tyrants as liberators and believe in their chains as freedom because the citizenship will be too blinded by apparent benevolence to notice that they are target of invisible violence (Locke, 2006, p. 670). Unfortunately, these chains are the borders of pre-freedom.

Mainly people may not perceive that they are not free. Even in the modern life, as Herbert Marcuse implies, they are tied to the systems through unnecessary things or false needs under the conditions of a rising standard of living. He argues that people are so busy to catch those needs and they are so blinded and restricted because they are going to attain them. That is why we should say people have been chained by these techniques to be not free. Instead, they are kept in the pre-freedom conditions in this way. Thus, the apparent freedom is a delusion instead of real freedom. In other words, they have been jailed in the pre-freedom by this illusively freedom. In fact people have forgotten what it really means to be human (Marcuse, 1991, p. 4). The critical question may arise that who knows what is the real freedom for people? Some scientists might criticize Herbert Marcuse's standpoint which is very ideal. His perspective comes from the leftist intellectuals who distinguish what is the best for mankind. Although criticizing Marcuse's view can be correct in some sense, it cannot deny his concern about false needs and blind followers, because the process of control of people's mind can limit their choices. Thus, it is acceptable that modification or distortion affects the processes of understanding and behavioral outcomes that persuade human being to be easily influenced by such manipulation.

In fact it urges the majority to follow regular obedience. It is possible in some ways such as propaganda by political leaders, controlling the press, monopolizing or at least controlling education and something like that. In this approach, the oppressor can be successful if they prevent people from knowing what is going on and also

prevent them from distinguishing between false needs and real needs.

There are, according to Hannah Arendt, two different ways of viewing the doll of authority which can be noticed and each of which shows one aspect of the second feature of pre-freedom.

One approach sees a person who is disabling to reject harming people. This can be seen in Eichmann, the key member of Nazi in doing genocide, who was constitutively incapable of exercising a kind of thinking that would have made his victims' suffering as unreal or real. It was not because of a very strong feeling of hate that enabled him to commit the genocide. In actuality, it was because of the *absence* of the imaginative abilities that would have made the human and moral criteria of his actions touchable for him, namely being in the condition of pre-freedom.

In this case, Hannah Arendt points out that "except for an extraordinary diligence in looking out for his [Eichmann] personal advancement, he had no motives at all. And this diligence in itself was in no way criminal; he certainly would never have murdered his superior in order to inherit his post. He merely, to put the matter colloquially, never realized what he was doing" (Arendt, 1964, p. 267).

This fact or condition of being involved in others in terrible activities like the genocide can connect with the failure of thinking and judgment which can be helpful to see the second feature of pre-freedom that is called the doll of authority in the present paper.

From Eichmann's trial in Jerusalem (where he had been brought after Israeli agents found him in hiding in Argentina), Arendt could notice difficultly that Eichmann came to his willing involvement in the program of genocide through a failure or absence of the abilities of deeply thinking and judgment. Therefore, the participation of someone like Eichmann in the Holocaust is not because of imposing his evil desire on others. But it could be mostly a completely innocuous person that is the tool of authority, because they operate without thinking carefully and they just follow orders. To put more it simply, they help to commit the crimes with no consideration of their effects upon those they can be targeted. As a result, Eichmann did genocide because he was jailed in the condition of pre-freedom, namely sheepish obedience.

This can be seen in Isaiah Berlin's standpoint in another way once he implies that a Nazi did something not because it was good or right, or because they like it, but because s/he was a German and this was a German way to live during Second World War (Berlin, 2002, p. 10).

Another approach sees people that they form a small to a great political crook like Leviathan in the standpoint of Tomas Hobbes. This can be clarified in the standpoint of Hannah Arendt as she points out that "if there is such a thing as a totalitarian personality or mentality, this extraordinary adaptability and absence of continuity are no doubt its outstanding characteristics. Hence it might be a mistake to assume that the inconstancy and forgetfulness of the masses signify that they are cured of the totalitarian delusion, which is occasionally identified with the Hitler or Stalin cult; the opposite might well be true" (Arendt, 1962, p. 306). Also she adds, "The totalitarian regimes, on condition that they are in power, and the totalitarian leaders, as long as they are alive, "command and rest upon mass support" up to the end. Hitler's rise to power was legal in terms of majority rule and neither he nor Stalin could have maintained the leadership of large populations, survived many interior and exterior crises, and braved the numerous dangers of relentless intra-party struggles if they had not had the confidence of the masses" (p. 306).

Therefore, in respect of second approach, some enormous political criminals like Adolf Hitler are not natural criminals because they commit crimes under mass support not alone. As according to Hannah Arendt, "neither the Moscow trials nor the liquidation of the Rohm faction would have been possible if these masses had not supported Stalin and Hitler" (p. 306). That is important to know that whatever criminals, like Hitler, have committed cannot be convinced regardless of mass support.

In this case, something like ideology can show that an alienated man can be necessarily the idol of leaders, since he has impoverished himself by transferring his living powers into things outside of himself, which he is forced to obedience in order to retain a modicum of his self, and, in the last analysis, to keep his sense of false identity. (Fromm, 1966, pp. 48- 49)

Since the leader like Hitler who has the power over people has no more than two eyes, two hands, one body...; he has indeed nothing more than the special right that people give him to control them. As according to Etienne De La Boetie, "the tyrant, indeed, has nothing more than the power that you confer upon him to destroy you. Where has he acquired enough eyes to spy upon you, if you do not provide them yourselves? How can he have so many arms to beat you with, if he does not borrow them from you? The feet that trample down your cities, where does he get them if they are not your own? How does he have any power over you except through you? How would

he dare assail you if he had no cooperation from you?" (Boetie, 2008, p. 15).

Therefore, to highlight the conception of "the doll of authority" as the major feature of pre-freedom, it can be translated into volunteered slave that means the person is satisfied with its unfree condition since the one does not have any idea about himself which make friction with another idea. Indeed, it seems that the person in this state must be a real slave; he must be ready for doing everything like killing, torturing and so forth or even to sacrifice him or herself.

### **5. Fragile Security**

The Third method by which a person is kept in the condition of pre-freedom is the feeling of security. That is, despite the fact that the person is not free in the pre-freedom condition, he is not alone or isolated. That is to say, people in this state have the feeling of security. The feeling of security, which is at the heart of the pre-freedom state, is nothing but the form of thought that lets people live based on blind obedience without thinking or even doubting. Thus, it has effect on their political beliefs and customs including how they behave. As long as they do not like to choose another one and they keep their promises, they all can be under the light of the strong feeling of security. But the key critical question is that can the feeling of security be permanent or not?

As it was mentioned, people in the pre-freedom condition belong to a strong authority in different forms like the members of Nazi party that because of their belonging they could obtain the strong feelings of security. Moreover, it makes no difference at all if one obtains this security and reduction of fear by means of domination or subjection. Just the mere feeling that a strong authority rules on the outside, gives the person in question rest and a feeling of stability in an uncertain world. In other words, security which is promised by leaders and authorities is a chain which prisons people in the condition of pre-freedom.

In this case, people only have one way to live. In fact, they do not need to think or even doubt because there is only one choice. It means everything has to be according to authorities' decision not anything else. To put it more simply, all actions from birth to death can be clear in the process of their life because people are placed into a social order. In fact, they have no an individual personality, but realize their place in the social hierarchy. They feel a sense of belonging and recognize what can be expected of them (Fromm, 1984, pp. 35- 36). As a result, the person is only conscious of himself as a member of his group or class and they are belonging to a group that is why they have the feeling of security. Belonging is a chain and its freedom means being in the pre-freedom condition. Indeed, though the person is not free, the community structure gives person the feeling of security and therefore the person feels secure.

When a person is in the pre-freedom period, s/he is no longer alone. Indeed, one seeks to derive the feeling of power and security from the upper power by the blind following. One of the most shocking examples of this condition can be seen in the rise of National Socialism in Germany during Second World War because the majority of German submitted to the power of a leader who promised them a good life and security.

Therefore, in this view, people can gain the more feeling of security by the more sense of belonging to the original oneness with groups, organization, ideology, or something like that. They feel more security because their group is responsible for everything. That is why they try to unite themselves with the world in the some political group or organization in political respect.

As it was mentioned, the key critical question is that can the feeling of security be real security or no? If it is not what is it? It cannot be real security since it is based on illusion. This kind of security is just a temporary situation and much more important it is not independent security because it depends on group or upper authorities that it does not derive from them. In other worlds, having this kind of security keeps people not on their toes and do not help them to face challenges of political issue independently that can be called the fragile security.

This kind of security cannot be defensible because of many things. First, the man has to give up his self in exchange to an authoritarian person that is a pseudo-solution for being secure. Secondly, the cost of fragile security is nothing but individual's life, the highest price of human beings. When a person gives him to the security by such ties with the some political group he destroys his humanity and the integrity of his individual self.

The real security cannot be driven from authorities by people. For real security can only stem from the individual self. Man must derive security from himself. Therefore, people should drive it from themselves. Only when they obtain that security they will be secure. Only then they will be in full independent security that can be called real security. As a result, the promised freedom through security, being a doll of authorities and acceptance of dependent identities are chains which keep people in the condition of pre-freedom. To be free, one must get out of pre-freedom and reach to the stage of ability of choice and analysis instead of sheepish obedience. People will

do it once they think and act independently.

Based on what was mentioned above, the secure feature of pre-freedom has a twofold aspect: first, the person feels a sense of belonging that make him sure or certain. Second, this security is a fragile security that cannot be defensible. If the bonds of security have been severed; human beings have to find means to overcome the feelings of powerlessness and aloneness that is why it is not a real security.

## 6. Conclusion

In this study, the term of “pre-freedom” as an essential concept was coined to understand the internal condition of unfree human being. This state is shown as a primary stage in which people have no independent identity, no strong security, etc. In other words, people are associated with others not independently but by means of primary ties for this reason that they have no image of themselves by themselves. This state was explained under three major features like “the dependent identity”, “the doll of authorities”, and “the fragile security” that can be reviewed as follows:

Firstly, it was argued that under the condition of “dependent identity” people are not aware of themselves based on their attempts. Secondly, under the term “the doll of authority” people would be likely to accept the order of their leaders undoubtedly. Finally, despite the fact that the person is not free, the community structure gives him the feeling of security that is not real security but the “fragile security”.

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