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About the Magazine

"Sapientia" is a quarterly philosophical magazine published by the Department of Philosophy at Pondicherry University. This thought-provoking publication serves as a platform for intellectual discourse, exploring a diverse range of philosophical themes and ideas. The magazine not only contributes to the academic dialogue within the philosophical community but also invites readers to engage with profound questions that shape our understanding of the world. "Sapientia" stands as a testament to the Department of Philosophy's dedication to promoting philosophical inquiry and enriching the discourse surrounding timeless philosophical concepts.

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From Advisor's Desk

Art is the expression of the heart, and literature - the expression of the mind. Art and literature allow one to express everything that is dear to an individual. The purpose of this Magazine is to inspire students to express their inner ideas, and awaken their latent creative and speculative skills. It is the outcome of tremendous effort by the students who have been collaborating for days to make this publication a progressive one and for contributing to the pride of Pondicherry University.

I congratulate Dr. Velmurugan K for his initiative to start *SAPIENTIA* – a Philosophy Quarterly Magazine; and wish it all success in the years ahead.

Dr. B. R. Shanthakumari

Professor

From Advisor's Desk

Having the opportunity to contribute to Pondicherry University's quarterly philosophical magazine, "Sapientia," is a great honour. The department magazine encourages creative expression, critical thinking, and writing skills among students. The magazine includes the distinctive and inventive ideas of our youth. Participation in extra- and co-curricular activities and academic success are both essential parts of the educational process. It has also been brought to my attention with great pleasure that the Philosophy Department at Pondicherry University is making efforts to encourage the overall growth of its student body. Please accept my sincere appreciation to all the professors, Scholars, students, and staff who have been working so hard to make our department one of the best in the university.

Dr. S. Indira
Professor

From the Coordinator's Desk,

I am delighted to share with you an exciting endeavour that brings together creativity, philosophy, and expression. Our philosophy department's very own magazine, "Sapientia," is themed on human freedom. Human freedom is a unique power to transcend boundaries, challenge perspectives, and build conversations. Through this magazine, we celebrate diverse forms of freedom that thrived and stood with time. We want to capture the essence of human freedom in all its creative forms. Creativity takes courage. We encourage all the students, faculty, and staff to actively engage with this creative piece of work, which was courageously brought to life by a hardworking team of writers, editors, and designers. I wish the team great success for all future editions.

Dr. Velmurugan K
Assistant Professor

From the Editor's Desk,

We are delighted to present the inaugural issue of "Sapientia," the University Magazine of the philosophy department. The prominence and standing of a department are determined by the competence and achievements of its faculty and students. The responsibility of an educator is to foster the growth and progress of students' aptitudes and capacities. The Philosophy department members exhibit their literary prowess and philosophical perspectives in this publication. We extend our sincere appreciation and gratitude to all individuals who have contributed significantly to the achievement of this endeavour. We are extremely appreciative of the faculty and administration of the philosophy department for their support, encouragement, and autonomy with regard to our work. In closing, we would like to extend our sincere appreciation to every author who contributed articles to the magazine. We wish you every sincerity that the subsequent pages are a pleasure to peruse. Despite our utmost diligence in compiling this paper, we sincerely apologize for any potential errors that may be present. We eagerly anticipate your contributions, ideas and suggestions.

Kiran
Research Scholar

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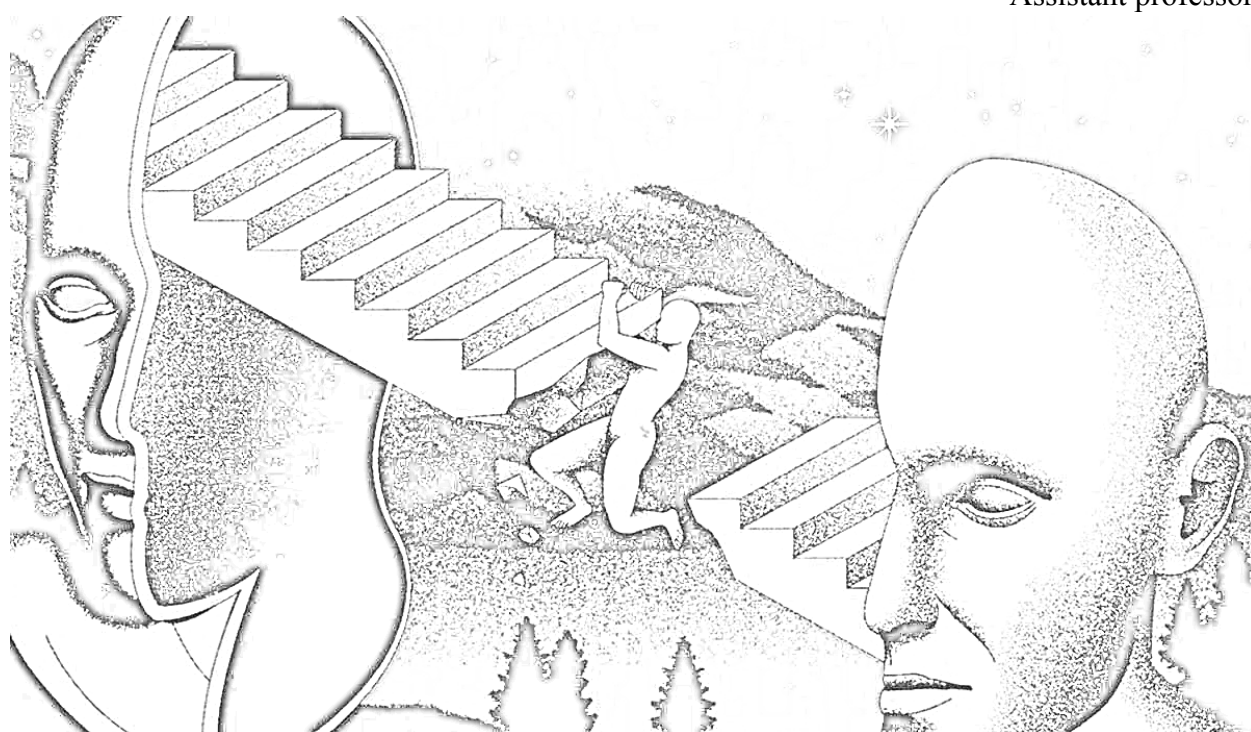
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Dalit Freedom: Unravelling Existential struggles through Sartrean lenses.



Dr. Velmurugan K
Assistant professor



From the time of Thucydides until the time of Rousseau, philosophers have been attracted by the concept of freedom. The fundamental questions surrounding freedom—whether individuals are free, should be free, and the implications of such freedom—have been investigated and discussed throughout the history of political thought. Isaiah Berlin's "Two Concepts of Liberty," which distinguishes between negative and positive freedom, is a key lens

through which this topic is frequently interpreted.

According to Berlin, negative freedom is defined by the lack of obstacles, barriers, or constraints, particularly those imposed by external forces. Positive freedom, on the other hand, is defined as the ability to act in a way that empowers individuals to take control of their own life. This distinction sets the ground for delving

into the complexities of political freedom and its numerous manifestations.

Philosophers such as Hobbes and Locke struggled with the difficulties given by the inherent conflicts of human objectives in nature. Hobbes advocated a social compact in which individuals give up most of their rights to a Leviathan while maintaining only the essential right to self-preservation. In contrast, Locke advocated for a broader protection of individual liberties, including property rights.

Rousseau defined positive freedom as persons desiring to be their own masters, realizing their full human potential, and living virtuously. Overcoming self-love (*amour propre*) in favor of self-preservation and self-mastery (*amour de soi*) is required. While these approaches offer useful insights into the nature of liberty, Isaiah Berlin's paradigm, while informative, may not fully embrace the philosophical dimension of liberty.

Sartre's Existential perspective on Freedom;

Enter Jean-Paul Sartre, whose singular viewpoint establishes a strong link between freedom and the concept of self. According to Sartre, perceptions of freedom stem from beliefs about what makes the self. Unlike his predecessors, Sartre begins with a distinct understanding of the subject and ends with a distinctive vision of freedom.

Sartre's philosophy is based on the idea that awareness is aware of something. It is a free 'ego,' a nothingness-characterized empty entity. Sartre distinguishes between being-for-oneself (conscious being) and being-in-oneself (unconscious being). The former is determined, whereas the latter has complete freedom and consciousness.

Sartre faces a basic dilemma in the company of others. The gaze of others rejects one's subjective self, resulting in humiliation and subjectivity loss. Individuals who lie to themselves, deny their freedom, and escape responsibility are examples of "bad faith" according to Sartre.

Sartre's arguments call into question existing dichotomies between realism and idealism. His emphasis on the subject's role in defining freedom adds a significant dimension to political theory that is often missed. His ontological approach operates at a level that parallels Chantal Mouffe's difference between politics (ontic) and "the political" (ontological).

According to Mouffe, politics is concerned with conventional practices and policies at the ontic level, whereas "the political" is concerned with the ontological level, shaping the conditions for comprehending politics. Sartre's ontological stance expands the discourse by emphasizing the importance of the subject in defining freedom.

Dalit Liberation: Intersecting Sartrean Existentialism

The Dalit perspective on freedom is profoundly intertwined with their unique historical and social context. The Dalit community, historically marginalized and subjected to social discrimination, brings a distinctive lens to the discourse on freedom. Sartre's notions of "bad faith" and the "problem of others" offer a compelling framework to analyse the Dalit struggle for freedom.

In Sartrean terms, "bad faith" refers to individuals lying to themselves, denying their freedom, and avoiding responsibility. Applying this concept to the Dalit

experience, one can see how social structures and oppressive norms force Dalits into a form of collective bad faith. The societal gaze, laden with prejudice and discrimination, compels Dalits to internalize derogatory narratives about their own identity. In their quest for survival within a hostile social order, Dalits might succumb to a distorted self-perception, accepting the imposed inferiority as a form of self-deception. This internalization of societal biases reflects a pervasive bad faith that obstructs the Dalit community from fully realizing their freedom.

Moreover, Sartre's "problem of others" takes on a nuanced dimension when considering the Dalit perspective. The presence of others, especially those from privileged social groups, becomes a constant source of alienation for Dalits. The societal gaze, rather than a neutral observation, becomes a tool of ill treatment. The othering of Dalits, the reduction of their subjectivity to predefined stereotypes, and the imposition of a collective identity contribute to the erosion of their freedom. In Sartrean terms, this is a fundamental threat to Dalit subjectivity, as the gaze of others defines them as objects, robbing them of their individual agency.

Conclusion and road to freedom:

The gaze of the dominant caste functions as a constant reminder of the Dalits' relegated status, pushing them to the periphery of society. This external imposition of identity not only denies Dalits the opportunity to define themselves but also perpetuates a cycle of discrimination and subjugation. Sartre's concept of shame,

arising from the gaze of others, becomes a lived reality for Dalits, emphasizing the profound impact of societal perceptions on their subjective experience.

In the pursuit of freedom, Dalits grapple not only with systemic structures but also with the deeply ingrained prejudices and biases of the broader society. The struggle against this external imposition of identity parallels Sartre's assertion that individuals seek to define themselves authentically, resisting reduction to mere objects.

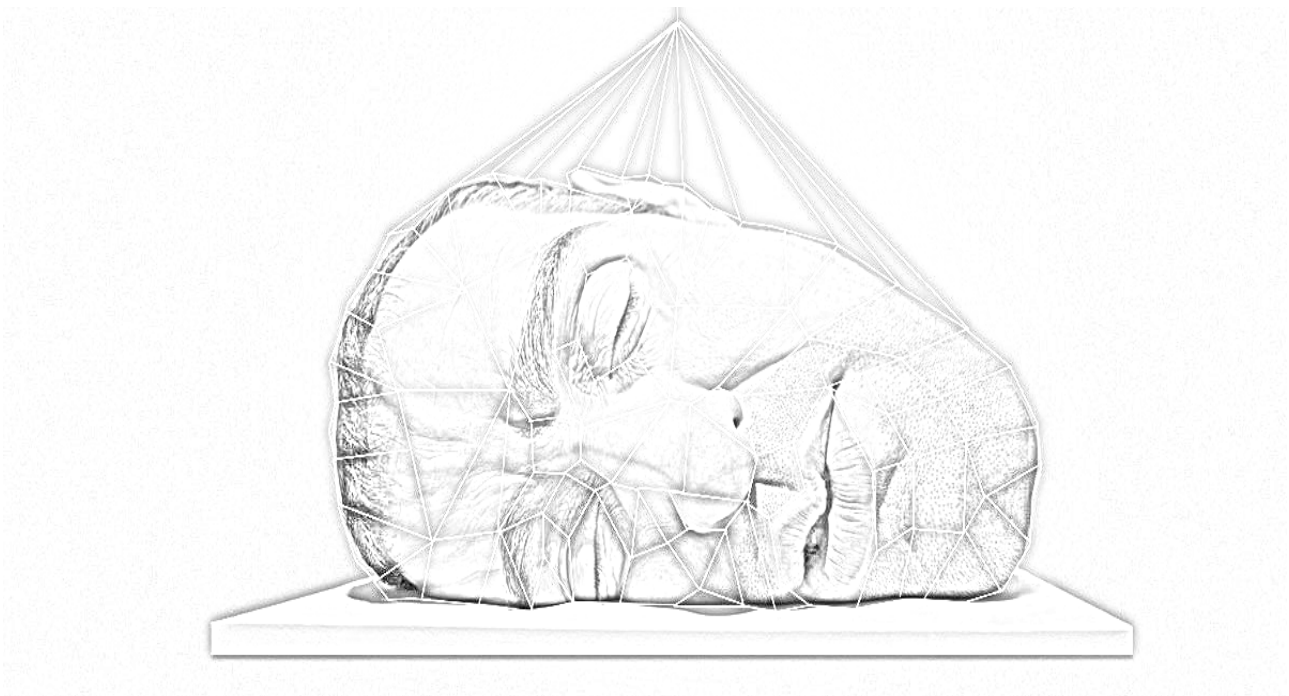
Dalits, therefore, navigate a complex terrain where societal expectations, prejudices, and differential practices create a constant tension between their authentic subjectivity and the imposed objectification. The fight for freedom involves dismantling not only systemic barriers but also challenging the deeply rooted stereotypes perpetuated by the gaze of others.

The Dalit narrative enriches Sartre's existentialist philosophy by illustrating the collective dimensions of bad faith and the problem of others. Their struggle is not only for tangible rights and opportunities but also for the freedom to define themselves on their terms, free from the shackles of societal prejudices and differential norms. Integrating the Dalit perspective into Sartre's framework broadens our understanding of how freedom is negotiated and contested within the intricate dynamics of societal power structures.

Navigating Hyperreality: The Illusion of Choice- Reading Baudrillard



Anjali A Prakash
Ph.D. Scholar



*“How real is our choice in hyperreality?”
- Jean Baudrillard (1929-2007)*

In the grand theatre of life, the notion of choice often stands as a pillar of autonomy, a testament to our freedom. Jean Baudrillard invites us to unplug from the

comfortable illusions we’ve embraced and unravel the mystery of the illusion of choice that resonates with our daily experiences.

Imagine strolling down the supermarket aisle, bombarded by a dazzling array of choices. The colors, the packaging, the promises- it all feels so liberating. But is

it? It's not just about picking a cereal; it's about the stories these products tell. Your click on the virtual shelf may shape a narrative beyond what you intended.

What does freedom mean to you in a world saturated with choices? Do you feel liberated, or is it a scripted kind of freedom?

Jean Baudrillard welcomes us to the modern landscape of choices: hyperreality, where our view of freedom is both a beacon and a mirage. A realm where choices are curated, reality scripted, and symbols and signs overpower substance. Hyperreality, in Baudrillard's cosmic lexicon, refers to a state where the distinction between what's real and what's simulated becomes blurred—a space where the copies of reality are so compelling that they overshadow the original. It's a world where signs, symbols, and media images shape our perceptions more profoundly than the physical, tangible reality itself. For Baudrillard, hyperreality isn't just about flashy simulations but a complex interplay of signs and symbols that redefine what's considered real: each symbol is a pixel in the grand mosaic of hyperreality.

While we believe our decisions are made autonomously, the hyperreal environment tends to predict them. We navigate a world that appears tailor-made for us, where our choices are predicted, commodified and fed back to us in an endless loop. These narratives, carefully constructed by society, often leave us questioning the authenticity of our decisions. We are forced to rethink our boundaries of freedom to examine whether our choices are

an actual expression of autonomy or a rehearsed response to hyperreal stimuli.

In the Symbolic Circus, Baudrillard juggles symbols and signs, showing how our lives have become a spectacle. Look around- how many choices do you see that might be more symbolic than substantial?

Picture a vibrant trend, each corner filled with acts that challenge your perceptions and redefine the boundaries of meaning. The curators of *the code* juggle the very concepts that shape our understanding. The digital realm like trapeze artists swinging between the tangible and the intangible, creating a visual symphony of semiotic marvels. The Symbolic Circus isn't just a spectacle; it's an exploration of the illusions that shape our reality. It is a philosophical adventure that challenges you to question, marvel, and rethink what you thought you knew.

In the enigmatic realm of hyperreality, signs, and symbols cease to be mere messengers of meaning; they metamorphose into elusive shape-shifters, whispering secrets that transcend the boundaries of the tangible. Signs and symbols collaborate in a grand carnival of representation. Here, a stop sign may not merely signify a pause in traffic but could evoke deeper existential reflections. A brand logo transcends its commercial origins, becoming a cultural totem laden with collective desires and aspirations. Every sign and symbol in the vast canvas of hyperreality takes up its prescribed meaning in the complex network of symbols and signs.

Reflect on a recent choice you made. How much of it felt like your script, and how much seemed dictated by societal expectations?

In the theater of hyperreality, our daily choices are scripted with invisible ink; the lines blurred between the genuine and the simulated. For example, in the hyperreal script, the breakfast choices you make, once seemingly trivial, become scenes laden with symbolic significance. The cereal box isn't just a container of grain; it's a narrative of health, lifestyle, and perhaps a dash of childhood nostalgia. Your coffee preference transforms into a caffeinated sonnet, expressing not just taste but a curated identity.

Once a practical selection, the wardrobe is now a costume carefully chosen from the hyperreal wardrobe department. Each outfit contributes to the ongoing play of self-presentation, weaving a tale about who you are, who you want to be, or who you want others to perceive. Similarly, choosing between cars, bikes, or any transport isn't just about logistics; it's a narrative fork in the road. And so, the hyperreal script unfolds, with each choice a carefully crafted line, a stroke in the masterpiece of daily performance.

In politics, the ballot becomes a theater of illusion. We cast our votes, believing in the power to shape our collective destiny. Behind the façade of democracy, a simulation unfolds where the illusion of political agency conceals the absence of true alternatives.

Scroll through your social media. Do you see the reflection of your true self or a curated persona?

The social media masquerade: in the age of social media, we curate our lives with precision. Every post, every like, every filter- an illusion of choices in constructing our online identities. Jean Baudrillard provocatively questions us, "Is this the authentic 'you,' or are you performing in a hyperreal theater of your own making?"

Digital space has become a platform that propagates narrative scripts, a matrix of simulated choices, and pseudo-autonomy. This begs the question: Is digital space a global liberation or a traversed hyperreal space that imposes boundaries on our freedom?

What's your take on breaking free from the hyperreal script? Is it possible, or are we destined to play our roles?

Picture this: as the protagonist, you are stepping out of the hyperreal script and onto a stage of unfiltered existence. The first scene unfolds as you reject the expected breakfast choices, opting for a concoction of flavor that resonates with your soul rather than societal norms. The cereal box becomes a canvas for creativity, not conformity.

The wardrobe is no longer a costume dictated by trends but reflects your unique aesthetic. In this act of rebellion, you choose attire that expresses your individuality, dismantling the hyperreal wardrobe and embracing the authenticity of personal style. As you commute, you break away from the

expected script. The routine journey transforms into an adventure, an exploration of alternate routes and modes of transport. The hyperreal narrative loses its grip as you literally and metaphorically reclaim the driver's seat.

Breaking free from the hyperreal script is not just about making choices; it's about rewriting the entire storyline. Your life becomes a narrative of genuine experiences, unfiltered by the constraints of societal expectations. Each decision is a brushstroke on the canvas of your existence, creating a masterpiece that is uniquely yours.

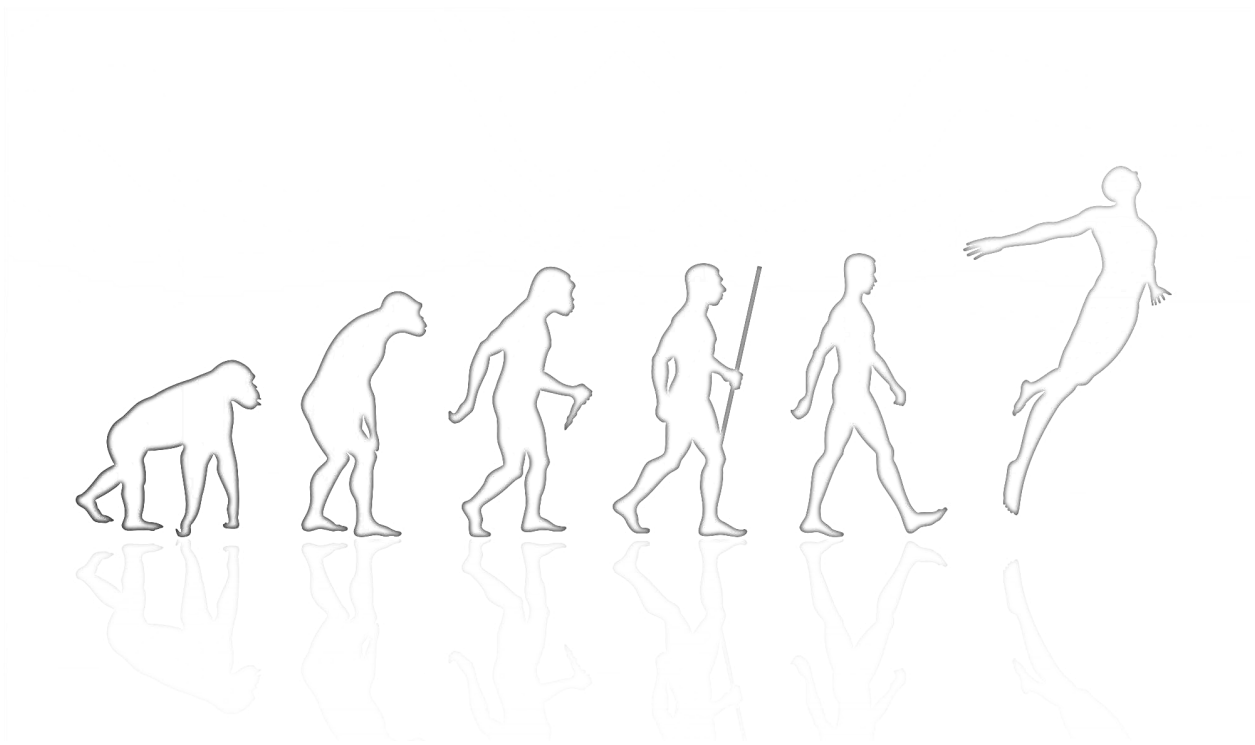
In a world scripted by hyperreality, where every choice seems preordained by societal expectations, breaking free becomes a revolutionary act of self-liberation. It's a daring dance of authenticity in a choreographed reality.

In this act of defiance, you become the author of your story, ripping apart the scripted pages of hyperreality and embracing the spontaneity of the unwritten. Breaking free is not just a rebellion; it's a celebration of authenticity, a bold declaration that your life is not a performance but a genuine, unscripted masterpiece.

Challenges and Opportunities for Human Freedom in the Twenty-First Century



S. Indira
Professor



In the dynamic landscape of the twenty-first century, the concept of freedom, which is intricately intertwined with human existence, undergoes ongoing redefinition. The concept of freedom becomes ever

intricate as we grapple with the consequences of technological advancements, worldwide interconnectedness, and societal upheavals. This essay explores the multitude of factors

that influence human autonomy in contemporary society, considering both the advantageous prospects and challenges that characterize our present-day reality.

Technological Progress:

Striking a Balance Between Convenience and Concerns

The swift progress of technology, particularly in the domains of social media, internet connectivity, and artificial intelligence, has transformed the world into a global village. Although these technological improvements enhance communication and ease, they also give rise to significant privacy and surveillance issues. The advantages of artificial intelligence must be weighed against the ethical considerations and security hazards it presents, requiring a delicate equilibrium between progress and individual liberty.

The impact of globalization on cultural exchange and inequality:

Globalization facilitates the exchange of traditions and cultures, hence enhancing global interconnectedness. The advantageous aspects of cultural exchange, meanwhile, are accompanied by significant challenges, such as exploitation and injustice. The need to strike a harmonious equilibrium between personal autonomy and communal safety becomes progressively crucial as political environments undergo transformations, exposing the intricate dynamics between worldwide influences and individual freedom.

Social Movements: Catalysts of Change and Challenges to Liberty:

In recent times, there has been a surge in social movements advocating for civil rights, environmental justice, and the

liberation of future generations. These movements emphasize the significance of liberty for excluded individuals, necessitating a careful equilibrium between societal progress and individual liberties. While advocating for these causes, it is crucial to effectively navigate the intricacies of upholding freedom while also upholding the principles of fairness and equitable treatment.

Education: Information Empowerment:

The strength of education lies in its ability to empower individuals with knowledge and information. The accessibility of the internet enables individuals, especially in the realm of education, to gain knowledge and enhance their capabilities. The process, however, requires ingenuity and critical thinking. Ensuring equitable opportunity for all is achieved by bridging the gap in access to digital technology. As we utilize the potential of information for educational objectives, the significance of effective governance grows to safeguard personal freedom.

Traversing intricate moral landscapes: Ethical predicaments:

The advancement of science, namely in the field of genetic engineering, gives rise to significant ethical considerations. The ideals of freedom are challenged by concerns such as informed consent, cloning, and the ethical treatment of animals. To ensure that freedom is not compromised in the pursuit of innovation, it is crucial to achieve a harmonious equilibrium between scientific progress and ethical deliberations.

Economic Inequality: An Obstacle to Fair and Just Freedom:

Economic disparity significantly restricts individual freedom, particularly in accessing essential services such as

healthcare. To ensure equitable distribution of freedom, it is necessary to address systemic issues and advocate for responsible government. To uphold the principles of personal freedom, the advancement of self-governing technology must align with principles of responsibility and security.

The intersection of human rights and national security in the context of migration:

The movement and migration patterns of refugees demonstrate the interconnectedness between human rights and national security. We must carefully weigh the need to protect individual liberties against the imperative to fulfil national security obligations, which is a crucial factor in the international context.

In conclusion: Preserving Human Freedom in an Intricate World:

The concept of human freedom plays a dual role as a guiding light and a contested arena inside the intricate network of challenges and possibilities in the 21st century. Successfully navigating the complexities of technological progress, globalization, social activism, education, ethical dilemmas, economic disparities, and migration requires meticulous consideration. We must be aware of the intricate equilibrium needed to ensure that progress does not compromise individual freedom while striving to safeguard freedom in its most unadulterated state.

Human Being : The Existential Enigma



Dr. Jonah Raja

Escande Chair

Christian Asian Studies



Ever since human beings have learned to record the life events and have become conscious of themselves, they have realized the enigmatic nature that they possess in themselves. Every individual realizes that one is a unique, unparalleled, unexplainable, unfathomable reality i.e. a “Self”. The impending expediency continues to baffle the attempt of the individual to intellectually unravel the complexities embedded in the constitution of a “human being” who gradually evolves into a “human person” who in turn delves into the recesses of one’s own ontological constitution in search of the “essence” which defines what one is in oneself.

The intellectual trails that remain frozen in time are the indelible witnesses to the fact that humanity irrespective of its boundaries in terms of culture and costumes, space and spatial specificities, language and literature, philosophy and politics, religion and religiosity, history and society, has ever endeavoured to decipher depth and decode its ontological genetics viz. its “essence”. It is also indisputably evident that every individual from the point of one’s birth is aware of the reality that one has the existential exigency to live as an “individual” with intellection, freedom and will, which have the potency to make the individual to think, to choose and to decide respectively. Consequently, a human being ever remains an existential enigma both to ‘oneself’ as well as to the ‘other individuals’ whom one is in relation with.

Every step that has been taken by humanity to cohesively and harmoniously coexist and relate with the “other beings” in the premises of Nature, necessarily implies that, although it is a part of Nature, it distinguishes itself on account of its unique faculty of intellect, from the “other beings” which only “are” since they are not constituted of “consciousness, intellection and freedom”, while only the human individuals “exist” i.e. they exist as human beings with all the faculties that constitute every individual as a “conscious, intellectual and free” being. Nonetheless, in the past, an intellectual necessity entailed either a ‘description’ or a ‘definition’ of a ‘human being’ and subsequently, many intellectuals, scientists, philosophers, writers ventured into this odd and onerous, exigent and eloquent task of definitely describing and decisively defining a ‘human being’ and thus were born the various branches of human knowledge on who a human being is.

An individual human being, whether “a rational animal” as defined by Aristotle (384 – 322 BCE), or “a thinking thing” as defined by René Descartes (1596 – 1650), or “a ‘being-for-itself’ with absolute freedom” as defined by Jean Paul Sartre (1905 – 1980) or “*Dasein* - a being experiencing ‘thrownness’, a being ‘destined’ to die and a being experiencing ‘temporality’” as defined by Martin Heidegger (1889 – 1976), the ontologically constituent component viz. ‘freedom’ is common to all the descriptions and definitions of a human being. The Post-Modern and the current understanding

of a human being is very much determined by the inappropriate conceptualization of the ‘constitution of a human being’ and the ‘constituent component viz. freedom’. It is undoubtedly incumbent that neither time nor space nor society nor culture can ever deplete or delete ‘freedom’ from the human beings.

Thus, one may even state that what is ontological in the constitution of an individual, has become expedite in every sphere of one’s existence and that of the other ‘existents of Nature’. Therefore, freedom is the *sine qua non* condition for an individual to exist as a ‘human being’. There is no evidence either in the political or in the intellectual history of humanity to affirm that any race at any part of this viable globe ever was willing to forgo its freedom. On the contrary, in the course of human history, either due to autocracy or despotism or anarchy, the freedom of the individual(s) or race(s) was forcefully either deprived of or denied to them, for political, racial, commercial motives.

Benedict De Spinoza (1632 – 1677) is of the opinion that “something is free if it exists because of the sole necessity of its nature and it alone determines its nature”. Freedom is absolutely necessary for the progress in Science and in liberal arts.” – (J. De Finance, “Freedom”, in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Second Edition, Vol. 5, p. 938). The present scenario sends the signal that while everyone is, more than ever before, conscious of one’s freedom, one forgets that freedom is the ontological right of the “Other”. It necessarily entails that what is ontological can be neither denied nor

deprived of. If what is ontological in a person can be denied, then that ‘rational being’ with the ontological necessity of freedom ceases to be i.e. the person can no longer be person with all one’s inclusivity.

In the constitution of a ‘human being’, the faculty of ‘intellect’ does demand its inseparable and indescribable relationship with ‘freedom’. In the context of a dominance under which humanity is forced to live, freedom of the intellect necessitates that “it is a capability and right of every man”. – (H. Küng, “Freedom, Intellectual”, in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Second Edition, Vol. 5, p. 942). Intellectual freedom in its pragmatic sense can be described as being free from all the hurdles to think. The same intellect that has innovatively succeeded to create its own replica viz. Artificial Intelligence, suffers from a definite domination exerted by its own creature and is at the verge of being sacrificed at the altar of sovereignty wielded by Artificial Intelligence. The evolution of the ‘human intellect’ to its acme through its trodden as well as untrodden trajectories in order to actualize its ‘final cause’ has arrived at inexhaustible possibilities which are positive and productive, and rampant and rational. It is time for every ‘individual person’ to re-establish one’s constitutive propensity to utilize one’s intellect to seek wisdom and truth and sagaciously advance towards one’s own wellbeing and vouch safe for the wellbeing all those whom one lives with.

Every individual, being a ‘psychosomatic being’ i.e. a synthesis of a ‘psyche’ (ψυχή - *psucké*) and a ‘body’ (σώμα

- *soma*) and therefore a being of bundle of emotions one among them being a longing for 'relationship' which is either tangible (human relations relationship) or intangible (the relations with the Divine or with what exceeds sensible perceptions), is also a 'relational being' utilizing one's relation with the other human beings as the basis for one's relation with the Divine. Thus Martin Buber (1878 – 1965) reduced human existence to word 'meeting' i.e. 'relationship' and stated: "All real living is meeting". ... Relation is mutual." – (Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, Trans. by Ronald Gregor Smith, pp. 11, 15). The relationship exercised in freedom enables one to relate with what one believes in. Therefore, every individual possesses the freedom to relate

with the 'Other' who is either a 'human being' or 'Divine being' and chooses one's means of relationship which is 'social' or 'religious' respectively. The very etymology of the word '*Religion*' which is derived from the Latin word '*religare*' (to bind), explicates that any religion is intended to relate the human individual with the Divine and therefore, abrogates the superiority of one religion over the other. It is respect for the freedom of the other in turn abolishes any type of enmity among the members of humanity. If one were to choose 'religion, as the means to relate with the Divine, and if this were to be realized, then there shall be no strife among human beings and will create an amicable living since as Buber said: All real living is meeting".

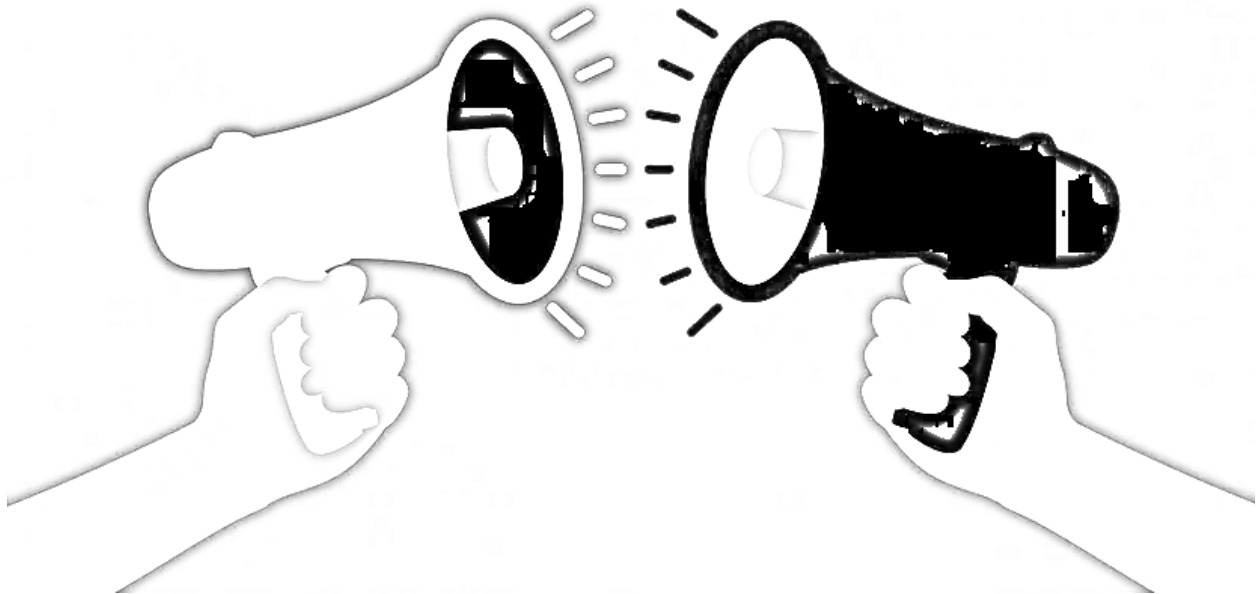
Free Speech Unveiled

Navigating Complex Terrain of free Speech and responsibility



Kiran

Research Scholar



One of the most significant topics we'll be hearing in our regular interactions is freedom. In recent times, freedom, like truth, has become extremely vital, particularly in public conversation.

There are various types of freedom, including the freedom to speak, write, and think. We hear children declare they need their freedom to eat chocolate because the

word freedom is so commonly used. As a result, it is critical to comprehend the various definitions of freedom that we encounter in our daily lives. In this essay, I'd like to explain what one of the most commonly used expressions of free speech implies.

There is a widespread notion that the primary ingredients of democracy are elections and the media. Both are significant because they stand out for free speech and expression, among other things. Voting anonymously is portrayed as free expression rather than free speech. Free speech is defined as the freedom of the media to express all viewpoints.

Is free expression truly the essence of democracy? Is it really necessary for a long-term democracy?

There is a natural conflict between free speech and democracy. If free speech is merely defined as the freedom to say whatever one wants, it is clear that it is not a significant social practice. Through free speech, one can deceive, disseminate misinformation, chastise, and instill hatred. In such instances, free expression is referred to as gossip. Rumors and fake news are hidden behind the mask of free expression. It is referred to as speech with ulterior motive. It is incorrect to refer to this particular expression of freedom as free speech.

So the answer to the question of what is truly free speech is found in our meaning of the term "free" in free speech.

What exactly is free speech? Can we say whatever we want? We can't always say what we want because all speech is limited. Language, vocabulary, syntax, and even the physical health of our mouth all limit our ability to communicate. We are constrained by biological and cognitive mechanisms associated with cognition and its presentation via language. We are socially constrained, and we are not free to express ourselves. Certain statements are not permitted in specific locations. A cricket commentator cannot suddenly give a lecture on language philosophy, claiming that he is protected by free speech.

In addition to these constraints, all speech comes at a cost. When we speak something, we pay a price. It can be good or awful, but we must still pay. We are not free to say whatever we wish. Even in personal relationships, if we say something, we must pay the price, even if it is truthful. When someone speaks openly, relationships turn to wars. So what we really want to emphasise is that free speech is speech that comes with no strings attached. Free speech is speech that has no monetary cost. The speaker has no control on the price. People these days are quick to take offence when they hear something. So true free speech requires "conditions in which no hearer takes offence and intimidates the speaker."

True freedom is not the freedom of the speaker to say anything he wants; it is

the listener's responsibility to enable the speaker to express whatever he wants. When we demanded our right to free speech, we meant the right to stop others from restricting us from speaking. The duty for free speech passes from the speaker to the listener, which is a fundamental part of the concept of free speech.

Criticism as accountability:

Defamation is not free speech. However, challenging the administration for the sake of the country is not the same as defaming an individual. Such criticism is not limited to being our right ; it is more of an obligation in democratic countries. There is no such thing as defaming a government in the purest form of democracy; the criticism may be incorrect and unjustified. Because free speech is intended to make democracy effective , it is not truly about individual freedom to speak whatever one wishes. Democracy is about governing others on their behalf. It is the social system of government's public duty. Collective action is the foundation of democracy, and true freedom in democracy is the right to select who will govern us on our behalf. As a result, we are all potential rulers, and any of

us may be the country's leader. Free speech is the technique we use to ensure that they provide proper governance on our behalf. Democracy will be possible with this level of free speech.

Those in authority must answer to those who are not in power. This is the power of free expression. This free speech is about controlling who is in power, not about individual freedom. The price we demand is that people in power allow us to say whatever we want about them, not as individuals but as elected officials.

The power formula:

The purest kind of free speech protects only those types of expression that hold those in power accountable. This type of free expression safeguards the most cherished democratic principle. Free speech is pursued not as an end in itself, but as a way of sustaining any democracy. People who refuse to hear criticism of a government, a government programme, or an elected representative are acting undemocratically. In general, we dilute free speech for our own gain in non-power contexts. Speech, in order to keep authority in check, must be subsidised and should let go by those in power.

‘Not All Man’: An Analysis of Aristotle’s View on ‘Man’



Sourav Surendran, M.P.
Research scholar



Introduction

What does it mean to define a term, possibly 'man' or 'human', that symbolises something? What are the implications of the act of defining a term, particularly in the context of philosophy? I consider that we

construct, though not directly, a boundary, a closed one, while we define a term. We are actually limiting the term's meaning (typically the objects it denotes).term), which is being defined within the limits of this boundary. All such boundaries, as they

are closed ones, causing something within and something beyond to remain. Hence, every definition points not only to what is within the boundary but also, indirectly, to what was left beyond the scope of the boundary. Accordingly, every attempt to apprehend the 'within' is also an attempt to understand the 'beyond'. Therefore, I consider that when it comes to any effort of defining the term 'man', it would be a partial or incomplete way of 'doing philosophy' if we focus on the 'within' aspect alone, as history has made enough 'boundaries'. This article endeavours to analyse the process of constructing a boundary, though implicitly, that dichotomised the 'within' and the 'beyond' during the formation of a definition, particularly that of 'man'. In the current world, we could see many such boundaries being built. In the political sphere, economic sphere, or arguably everywhere. Moreover, such boundaries, politically speaking, are powerful enough to provide man with freedom, power, and justice. Sometimes they are capable of even taking away a man's most basic rights. Like in the case of citizens and refugees. I consider Aristotle's view of 'man as a political animal' an epitome in this aspect.

The definition

"It is evident that the state is a creation of nature and that man is by nature a political animal. And he who by nature and not by mere accident is without state, is either above or below it. He is a tribeless, lawless, heartless one." (The Politics, 1981)

The above view of Aristotle, as I mentioned in the introduction, constructs a

boundary.

Accordingly, he is clear about what he kept within and beyond this boundary. He could be seen as addressing, in the first part of his view, what he placed inside the boundary. On the other hand, in the second part, he points to those who are left out during the process of establishing these limits. Let me consider the first part of Aristotle's definition: "It is evident that the state is a creation of nature, and that man is by nature a political animal." This part incorporates two different but interconnected views. On the one hand, states, for Aristotle, are natural. It is not something that is created by the conscious effort of human beings. Likewise, man, for him, is a political animal by nature. An in-depth analysis would show how these two views serve to be a justification for one another. To understand this, one must begin with the normal meaning of the later remark: "And man is by nature a political animal" and go deeper into the details of its contextual meaning (in the context of ancient Greece). Though Aristotle was interested in inquiring into the dynamic realm of becoming, what he provides in this assertion is not an ontic or empirical account of human beings. Aristotle, arguably, proposes or presupposes a condition that has to be met by an entity in order to be deemed a denotation of the word 'man'. Accordingly, this condition explains the interrelation of his two basic views: "Man by nature is a political animal" and "the state is a natural creation". I shall now consider his view that "man is by nature a political animal", as an attempt to find out the 'condition' that I mentioned here. This is considered to be one of the

most celebrated views. of Aristotle that directly or indirectly strengthened later western political thoughts. It even seems compatible with the basic idea of democratic nation states as it remains implicit, explicitly, with man being political by considering it a natural phenomenon. However, as I mentioned, failing to look at both sides of the boundary established by the very act defining a term, only provides a partial or incomplete understanding. I consider it a mistake, especially when one does philosophy. Hence, I shall make an attempt here to look into 'the within' and 'the beyond' aspects of Aristotle's view of man.

Slaves and non-Greeks

Slaves were considered to be the possession of masters in ancient Greece. For Aristotle, Slaves were nothing more than "ktema epsuchon" or "property that breathes." He believed that The majority of human beings may be enslaved without injustice because they are slaves. nature. Furthermore, Greeks considered themselves superior to non-Greeks. Plato's distinction between the intelligible realm and the realm of opinion as well as his concepts like 'lumen' and 'philosopher king' should be understood in light of this intellectual superiority. and socio-political dominance of Greeks over non-Greeks. Thrasymachus definition of Justice, as the interest of the strongest, shows this disparity. When approaching Aristotelian By keeping this in mind, one could easily understand who was inside the boundary. of man and who were neglected from being the meaning of the term man. The definition given by Aristotle, "Man is

by nature a political animal", seemingly creates a boundary or a circle of political animals that keeps all 'human beings' inside or within the limits of its borders, along with leaving all the non-human beings, including animals, birds, and possibly gods and demons beyond its borders. In this respect, there seems to be no issue. with this definition; rather, it appears to be impartial. However, a closer examination, considering the social conditions and geopolitics in Greece, would reveal that the term 'man' This definition had already been defined. Specifically, Aristotle's definition: "man by nature is a political animal" presupposes an inner definition of the general term 'man'. That is to say, Prior to constructing the boundary of a political animal, he established another boundary by presupposing the definition of the term 'man' Although the term 'political animal' symbolises All man, the presupposed definition of the term 'man' does not denote all man. Accordingly, for Aristotle, or as the Greek conscience is concerned, 'not all men' were qualified enough to be placed within the boundary of the term 'man'. Which itself means that not all men (in its modern sense) were considered men. This definition itself placed a faction of the people out. of the limits of the boundary while recognising only a few to be inside the scope of the boundary constituted by the term 'man'. This presupposition by Aristotle, in fact, was a precondition for the construction of the boundary or circle of 'political animal'. Also, this precondition is the connecting link between the two different definitions in the first part of the entire assertion, which I mentioned above.

The state being a natural creation, those who are within the state or those who constitute the state turns out to be naturally political. On the other hand, when Aristotle's man is a political animal, By nature, the territory that man inhabits naturally constitutes a state. This is the reason why. I considered the two different parts of Aristotle's view to be interconnected and to be the ground for one another. On top of that, those who belong to the state are in no way apolitical. Also, those who are naturally political would undoubtedly be a part of the state. Consequently, One who is not part of the state could not be a political animal, and one who is not a political animal by nature, is not a part of the state. Since slaves and non-Greeks are not part of the state,

They are not political animals, and since they are not political animals, as far as Aristotle is concerned, they cannot be considered men. Besides, if being a political animal is natural, Then, to some extent, not being a political animal should also be natural. Therefore, non-Greeks are naturally apolitical, and slaves are naturally slaves. When only Greeks were regarded as man and, hence, political animals, all the others who lived in territories that were less than a State were considered less than men and, therefore, not political.

Conclusion

History has always proven, indisputably, that in every culture, society, and human civilisation, Either ancient, modern, or post-modern, the exteriorisation of many is a 'property that breathes' was not really a 'natural' phenomenon. The example of Aristotle's view on man is, arguably, elucidates how a seemingly innocent account of 'man' turns out to be reflective of the fact how normal and reasonable the act of oppression and otherisation to the dominant class of an ancient civilisation. Moreover, what makes this even more significant is the fact that that such boundaries have been and are being made all around us, even in this new world in which we live. There are forces that define us that are capable of taking away our freedom and identity. us. But it won't be explicit. They might take away our freedom but still recognise us as humans. But, without freedom in all its meaning, where is justice in being recognised as humans? And above all, is human freedom or human identity, in its most basic sense, something that has to receive approval or recognition from someone?

Freedom of a man in Gandhian thought



Amit

Research Scholar



Evaluating freedom and peace from a Gandhian standpoint. From a Gandhian standpoint, evaluating peace and freedom requires accepting nonviolence as the primary way of realising these goals. It entails realising that only nonviolent

measures can bring about true peace and that freedom encompasses not only political but also moral and spiritual emancipation. Gandhi was a strong believer in the transformational power of love, compassion, and forgiveness to bring about enduring

freedom and peace for both individuals and society.

If we look at the model of freedom, it differs from person to person; for many, the idea of freedom is internal and philosophical. It has something to do with the mind, so its expression is “freedom of mind”. To others, it means simply the absence of violence; it is generally associated with war, and the absence of war is taken as a synonym of freedom. The reason for taking a Gandhian view point and not any other thinker, philosopher, or scholar is that the contribution of Gandhi is that he changed the very meaning of freedom. In other words, he has revolutionised the concept and practically demonstrated its use on a massive scale. Although Gandhi has not used terms like conflict resolution, conflict transformation, and so on, he is acknowledged as one of the precursors of conflict resolution techniques. Gandhi’s vision of the ideal society is that of a non-violent and democratic social order in which there is a just balance between individual freedom and social responsibility. The purpose of this article is to identify what the meaning of freedom is; it will try to identify the concept of freedom as explained through a Gandhian perspective.

By adhering to his teachings, we can progress toward a culture in which disagreements are settled amicably and people of every socioeconomic class are given the freedom to lead lives marked by dignity and harmony. The ideology of Mahatma Gandhi placed an emphasis on nonviolence while still recognising the need to fight against injustice. He was of the opinion that acts of violence only served to breed other acts of violence and that the only way to establish genuine peace was to put an end to the vicious cycle of hate and retribution. Gandhi’s goal was to create an ideal society in which every individual could live peacefully, appreciating one another’s differences and adopting the ideals of love and compassion. He worked to achieve this goal by pushing for nonviolent techniques of dispute resolution. Ultimately, spiritual and moral emancipation were the goals of Gandhi’s vision of independence, which included but was not limited to political liberty. People may help build a society where everyone has the freedom to live with respect and dignity by forgiving others and working on themselves to achieve inner peace. However, throughout human history, several wars have put this ideal of freedom

in jeopardy. The systematic murder of millions of innocent people during World War II because of their beliefs or ethnicity is an extreme illustration of human brutality and prejudice. This counterexample demonstrates that there will always be those who choose to reject and oppress others based on their own views or biases, even in the presence of love and compassion.

In the words of Gandhi, people may overthrow unjust regimes and create a more just and compassionate world by teaching nonviolence and striving for justice. In this ideal world, freedom is not something that one person seeks but rather something that benefits everyone. Through Gandhi's teachings, we learn that genuine freedom exists not just in the exterior sphere but also in the release of one's own mind and spirit. For example, Gandhi's nonviolent resistance campaign in India was not only concentrated on obtaining political freedom from British control but also on transforming the hearts and minds of his fellow citizens. Gandhi called on his followers to let go of their resentment and hostility against the British invaders as he led them in nonviolent demonstrations and acts of civil disobedience. Not only did this result in India's independence, but it also kicked off a

worldwide uprising for equality and social fairness. On the other hand, a detailed counterexample to Gandhi's vision may be observed in the advent of authoritarian governments that limit individual liberties and perpetuate structural injustices. This development provides a stark contrast to Gandhi's ideal. Nonviolence and activism may be greeted with severe repression in such countries, which impedes the breakdown of oppressive structures and the formation of a society that is fair and caring.

By practicing nonviolence and pursuing justice, people may break free from the shackles of hate and wrath that bound them. Gandhi recognised that genuine freedom requires not just external conditions like political autonomy but also internal ones like spiritual emancipation. He thought that genuine freedom might be attained by practicing love, forgiveness, and empathy, and that doing so may motivate others to do the same. Gandhi's words serve as a reminder that personal liberation is an ongoing process of introspection and development. In the United States, civil rights activists like Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks used Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence to advance equality for African-Americans. They opened the path

for greater equality and civil rights for all people with their nonviolent protests and acts of civil disobedience, which challenged repressive structures like segregation. Through their activities, they proved that genuine freedom is not simply about removing physical chains but also about eliminating mental barriers and establishing social justice for all. However, it is crucial to understand that not all people are able to break free from the ties of hatred and fury. It might be challenging for some people to overcome their negative feelings and make room in their hearts for love, forgiveness, and empathy. True freedom and tranquility are not easy to come by, especially when external influences, such as systematic tyranny and injustice, play a role. There are times when outside forces thwart one's efforts to develop their self-awareness and personal growth.

By embracing Gandhi's ideas, we may train ourselves to be more tolerant and accepting of people from all walks of life and points of view. Through acts of kindness and compassion, we may contribute to a more peaceful and harmonious world. Let us not forget that the smallest of our acts may have the greatest of effects, and that by working

together, we can carry on Gandhi's legacy and create real, long-lasting change in the world. By doing so, we may promote harmony and build a society in which diversity is embraced rather than feared. By living in accordance with Gandhi's principles, we may encourage others to do the same and initiate a chain reaction of good change.

From a Gandhian viewpoint, rethinking peace and freedom entails accepting non-violence and realising that the only way to attain peace is via nonviolent methods. Love, compassion, and forgiveness, in Gandhi's view, are transforming energies that may lead to permanent peace and liberation for people and communities. People may help build a society where everyone has the freedom to live with respect and dignity by forgiving others and working on themselves to achieve inner peace. A society based on fairness and compassion may be established when its members actively promote nonviolence and strive for justice to bring down oppressive regimes. The lessons we may learn from Gandhi are a reminder that internal freedom is just as important as exterior freedom. By living in accordance with Gandhi's ideals and striving for a society in which everyone

is treated with compassion and understanding, we may carry on Gandhi's work and effect real change in the world.

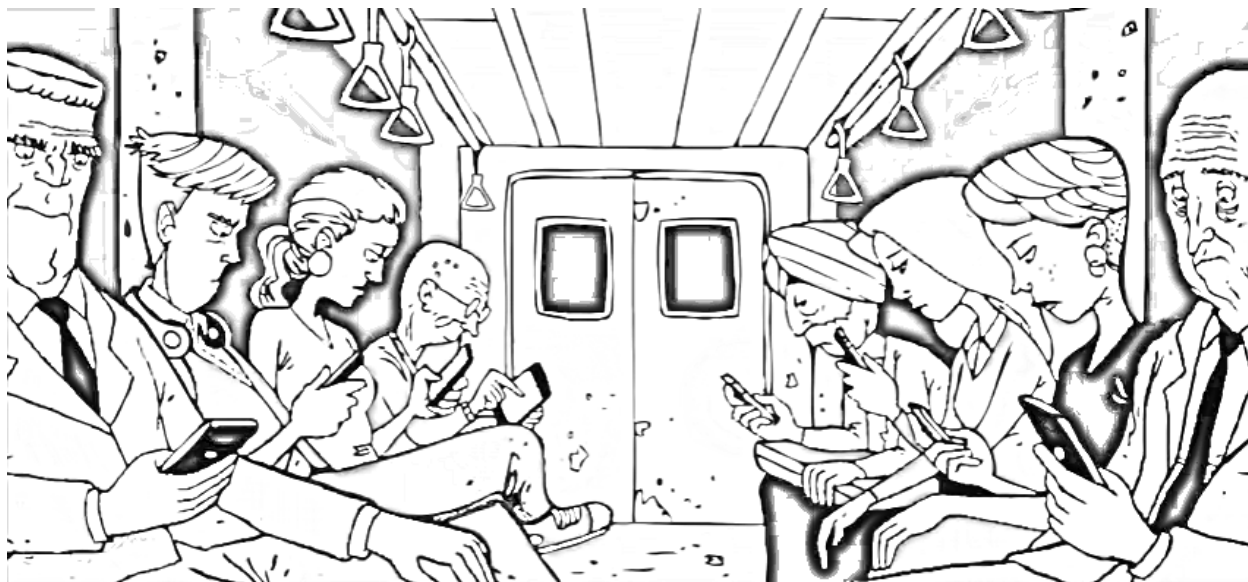
In Gandhian thought, man is free. According to Gandhian thought, a man's freedom involves more than just the lack of physical or governmental restraints; it also involves the release of one's inner thoughts and feelings. According to Gandhi, the only way to acquire real independence is through

the cultivation of self-discipline and self-control, as well as the diligent pursuit of truth and nonviolence. He stressed the need to overcome selfishness, hatred, and ego in order to achieve true independence and create a more just and peaceful world. Ultimately, Gandhi's thought emphasised that freedom is not a destination but a lifetime path towards self-realisation and spiritual enlightenment.

Freedom of Perception in the age of Mass Media



George
Research Scholar



Introduction

Mass media, which serves as the primary means for information dissemination to the public in a broad sense, works using its dynamic interplay between the sources of information, mode of media, presuppositions of individuals, and the way of presentation. This interplay has a vital role in the process of perceiving content through mass media. This connection between different aspects of the mass media can work even when the creators of the content are not engaging in the act of content creation with the intention of making use of this interplay. This

interconnection is one of the most significant advantages of mass media. We become subject to this interconnection through the conditioning we have been exposed to and sometimes organically. This article intends to analyze the features of mass media and its success in creating and manipulating mass opinions by leading the masses not to perceive them independently but in an already tailored way.

Manipulation and Filtration of Content

Walter Lippman mentioned in 1921, in his work *Public Opinion* that the media is a regular organ of popular government.

Lippman has argued that in a properly functioning democracy, there will be different classes of citizens. There is the first, specialized class of citizens who will run the system, and then there is the second class, which he calls the "bewildered herd," and this class is only supposed to be spectators at most of what the other class decides. Prominent philosopher and linguist Noam Chomsky, in his work *Media Control: The Splendid Achievements of Propaganda*, mentioned that this bewildered herd, which Lippman mentioned is controlled by the media, schools, and popular culture for the interest of the political class and decision-makers. Now, consider the role played by the media during the Iraq war. It had a profound impact on shaping public opinion. It helped the United States government by fearmongering the public with the idea of weapons of mass destruction. In the 2002 Chicago Council on Foreign Policy poll, 86 percent of people said they saw Iraq developing weapons of mass destruction as a serious threat. The concentration of media ownership or groups that own media results in a uniformity of the narrative. This uniformity is taken as objective reporting, and instead of enabling people to make intelligent decisions and see things as they are, this functions as consent manufacturing machinery. Chomsky framed this consent manufacturing mechanism into five filters of media. The media use these five filters and sometimes more to keep the "bewildered herd" under control. The capacity of individuals to perceive and think for themselves is suppressed by overloading with too much information that fits into the same narrative in a repetitive manner. Since

the ultimate control of the media houses is concentrated and ownership fits the first class mentioned by Lippman, the narratives will be the same across the media, even if there are differences in minor details or ways of presentation. In a study done on 55 countries by Open Society Foundations, they found that 31 countries have paid money to manipulate the media. Even without illegally paying the media, governments can gain bargaining power in the media by using state advertising. Ultimately, what happens is that the public, or majority, or "bewildered herd," ends up paying taxes that the first class, which is in control, can use to manipulate and manufacture the consent of the same taxpayers and protect the interests of the first class.

Mass Opinion, Free Will, and Individuality

Mass opinion is indeed the cause of political and human rights movements throughout history. Mass opinion inherently is not something wrong, but it becomes wrong when it is manufactured instead of evolving organically or building it based on proper and complete facts that are not alienated from the context. According to the studies of the English sociologist Ian Watt, the English novels of the late 17th and early 18th centuries, particularly the works of Defoe and Richardson, marked the beginning of an approach to literary production that consciously created, served, and finally controlled a market.' Today, this has grown into an industry itself where advertising methods like product placements are common, and sometimes large-scale movies end up depending on marketing

products to bring their work to the audience. This is the second filter of mass media mentioned by Chomsky in Manufacturing Consent. Not just by product placement but by any kind of advertisement. According to Chomsky, media costs more than what consumers pay, and that is where advertisements come in to fill the gap. And mass media firms are big corporations, and they are owned by bigger parent firms. And the goal of these firms is to generate profits, which leads to very few people deciding what should reach the end audience. These filters take care of the manipulation of objective, fact-based, independent journalism.

Another issue is the difference between the modes in which the audience consumes the media. It is impossible to detach from the collective experience of a drama in a theatre. Or a movie in a cinema hall. In these instances, we know that we are exposed and becoming a part of a collective experience. At the same time, when we consider the newer modes of content consumption, like different streaming platforms, we are not becoming part of this collective experience. But mass media works in such a way that it psychologically understands the audience, and the endless plots and subplots coupled with something serious happening every few minutes keep the audience from thinking on their own. As Adorno mentions in his essay *How to Look into Television*, “*the repetitiveness, the self-sameness, and the ubiquity of modern mass culture tend to make for automatized reactions and to weaken the forces of individual resistance.*” These automated reactions replace authentic experiences, eliminate the

individual's autonomy, and result in a tailored perception properly fitting the audience. According to Adorno, mass media consists of various layers that superimpose on each other, all together contributing to the results produced, and this calculative nature leads to the clear-cut meaning of the work. But the layer of hidden meaning should be considered more important than the overt one since the hidden meaning will escape the controls of consciousness but will sink into the mind of the spectator. This superimposition makes mass media different from autonomous art.

Social media

The Jasmine Revolution of Tunisia in January 2011 is often used as an example of social media being used as the people's mass media. It is a fact that Twitter was widely used for the exchange of communication and to inspire people for the revolution in December 2010 and January 2011. But that is not the case anymore. Social media is becoming more subject to censorship than ever. The mass media houses and marketing giants with the most sophisticated machinery have found their place within social media and learned how to be louder than the public. They decide what we should perceive and how we should do it while maintaining the public's false hope about social media. Even if nothing works, the government can shut down the internet to stop people from communicating on social media. Since 2016, India has accounted for 58 percent of all shutdowns documented in the Shutdown Tracker Optimization Project (STOP).

Conclusion

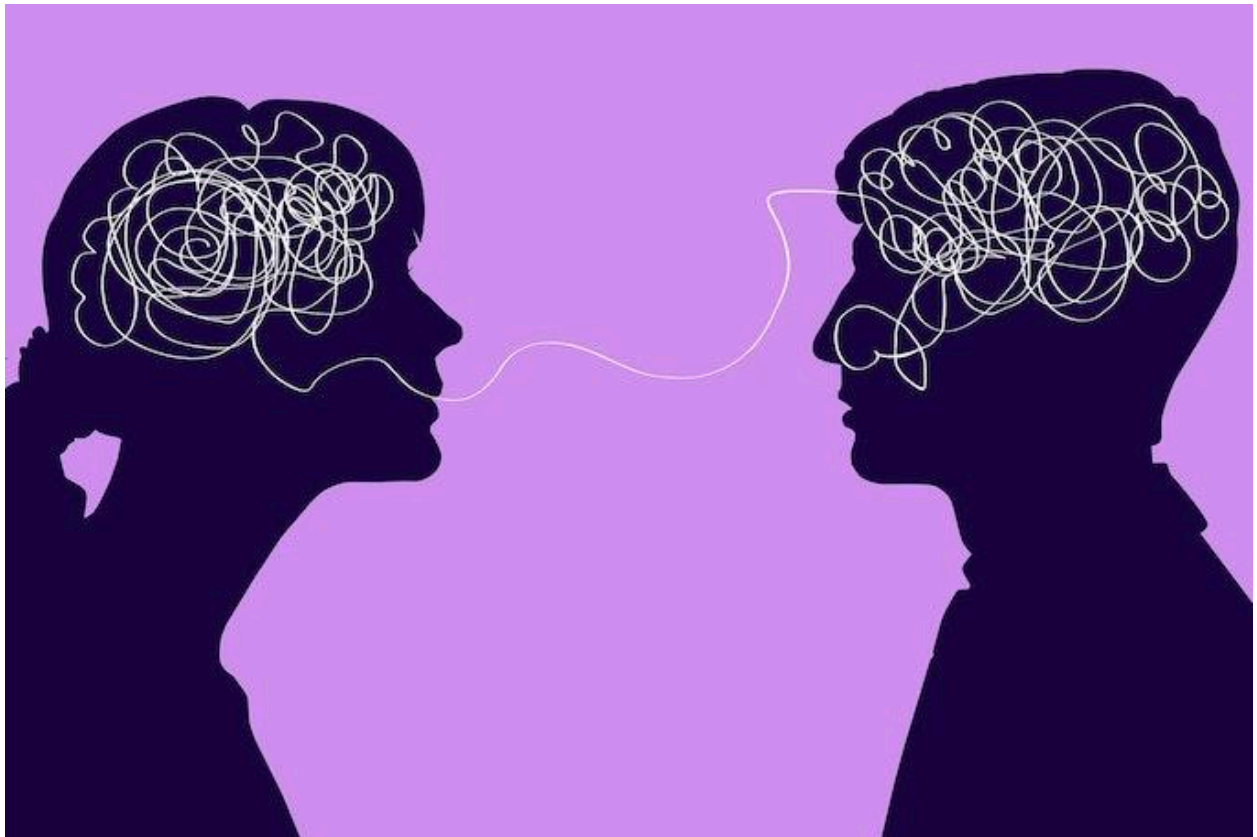
The danger of this all-pervading nature of mass media is that it does not just tell us what to perceive, but the fact that it tells us clearly about how to perceive it. Like canned laughter in TV shows, structuring the language of news that fits the narrative, and making use of all non-verbal communication cues. We think that we are paying for the product where we turn

ourselves into mere products. Mass media exploits the flaws of perception we have as human beings and sells it to the highest bidder. While features like dynamic interplay and multi-layered structure of mass media are factors in this exploitation, the most important factor that enables media to successfully control the narrative and our perception of actual social issues is the ownership concentration of media.

Exploring Liberty and Freedom with Interceptor and Geokiam: A Philosophical Stroll by the Shore



Kiran
Research Scholar



The beach sounds like a great place to swim, so I'm walking there from University.

Along the way, I ran into my friend Geokiam and asked him where he was going. The beach was also on his list. I wanted to see the sunrise, so I went for a walk with him. When we got to the beach, the sun was just coming up from where it had been hiding. It lit up the sky and the water below.

After that, my friend Geokiam told me it was a good day to go swimming. Should we go swimming? Then I asked Geokiam, "What is liberty?"

-Oh, Interceptor We barely started our day, and you started philosophizing. Let me light one smoke, and then I'll get back to you with a discussion.

Okay, go ahead, I said with a grin. I value my friendship with Geokiam because we can talk about anything, and no point of discussion is off the table. Irrespective of our disagreements, we value each other, for we both know that disagreement doesn't have to lead to opposition.

Once Geokiam was done with his smoke, he came back, and then

-He said, you want to know what liberty is? Isn't it the same as freedom? It is a very simple answer.

I think yes, but if they are the same thing, have we progressed in understanding our liberty?

-I guess they are the same thing.

Anyway, we'll go change our clothes and prepare for the swim. Once we are in the water, we'll continue our conversation and tackle the issue for the rest of the day.

-That sounds good, said Geokiam.

We went to the change rooms, and then we prepared for a swim, and we came to shore to go for a swim. By then, the sun had risen higher, and the water was warm.

As we swam for some time and then we were waiting in the upper part of the shore, I asked Geokiam, "Are we living in a free country?"

-Yes, he said.

What makes India a free country?

-We do not have a government that oppresses.

Then I asked: Does freedom from oppression really make us free?

-Yes, I think so.

Then, what do you mean by oppression? Quickly, I said we'd keep that definition aside because it has a negative value. We'll come to that later.

-Well, in this case, Interceptor, we can understand that freedom is not from something but also for something. When we are free from an authoritative government, we have the freedom to do things. That means freedom has both positive and negative meanings.

I understand what you are saying, Geokiam. That makes sense; we can choose, and we choose how to live our lives. We are allotted various freedoms to live our lives according to our choices.

Precisely, I said, Now tell me, Geokiam, with freedom, can we do whatever we want?

-I'm not so sure of that. If someone restricts me from doing something I like to do, then I feel I'm being restricted from exercising my freedom as an individual. Isn't that a violation?

Is that a violation? I asked. Do you think that freedom is really the freedom to do whatever you want? If everyone in our country does whatever he or she likes, won't that be anarchy rather than democracy? Indeed, it's very dangerous to live in such a society.

-Now, Interceptor, you know that I'll never endorse anarchy.

But Geokiam It looks like anarchy when we consider the definition of freedom you intended. That means that we need to ponder more about what freedom means. In our country, we keep hearing many leaders say that we are a country of laws. So, do you agree that we live in a free country? Do you think that freedom exists with certain limits?

I agreed with what Geokiam said.

Then I asked, can laws liberate? I think they can.

Consider the cricket game played on the ground. It has certain boundaries, and the game of cricket has some limits. The players can play around these limits, but they are free to do so within those boundaries and limits. These boundaries and limits of the game allow the player to find out his creative abilities; he may not be able to find those abilities without those restrictions or limits. In a way limits open freedoms.

-I never thought in that manner, exclaimed Geokiam.

So, we can agree that freedom consists of having limits.

-I agree with that, but some limits can be oppressive, right?

Absolutely Geokiam

-Then it means that having limits is not the thing, but right limits mean freedom.

"I think it is." Geokiam, good point.

-Then Geokiam asked, what are the right limits? Can we even find them, or will we just end up with the utopian concept of limits? Even in our country, everything is not perfectly right. It is true that we are free, but there are laws that are imperfect in preserving the truest form of liberty. While finding the right restrictions, we'll be able to know what goodness is and what justice is.

I absolutely agree with that, Geokiam.

-Then it would be a long road ahead.

Yes, it is, as I said. But that road is worth the journey, which we cannot abandon. We should go on that long road, not for ourselves but for our future generations.

-Yes, we should.

I want to mention something regarding proper restrictions. It seems that a free country is free to the extent of its citizens and its leaders being virtuous. And they can be so if they have inner freedom.

-I'm not so sure, Interceptor. Can you explain?

Absolutely, as we are discussing, laws will not allow certain kinds of actions in society, and then we agreed that freedom comes with restrictions; otherwise, we end up in anarchy. Then we thought that restrictions were needed for freedom, but the right kind of restrictions are needed for a flourishing society. For such a flourishing democratic society to be maintained, elected leaders should make laws, and those laws should be obeyed by citizens. So, people should be virtuous to elect the right candidate who can implement laws that allow for true freedom. To be virtuous, one must have a moral constitution to distinguish between good and bad; otherwise, how can they judge? That is what I meant by inner freedom (proper morality in an individual).

-I understood what you were saying, Interceptor. But how can we attain inner freedom?

That's a very good question. Geokiam, have you ever read Republic by Plato? This answers your question.

-Oh, but I haven't read it. What does it answer?

Humans have a rational part, a spirited part, and an erotic part. The rational part deals with thinking; the spirited part deals with higher passions like courage; and the erotic part deals with bodily passions such as desire for food. When individual appetites follow will and will follows reason, inner harmony can be attained.

-Geokiam asked So, liberty boils down to having the right limits, doesn't it?

I said absolutely, Geokiam. It's not about unrestricted freedom; it's about finding a balance between individual choices and societal well-being. It's the idea that true freedom starts within us. Our virtues, our moral compass, guide the limits we set for ourselves and the society we want.

-So, the journey for freedom isn't just about laws and rules? Geokiam questioned

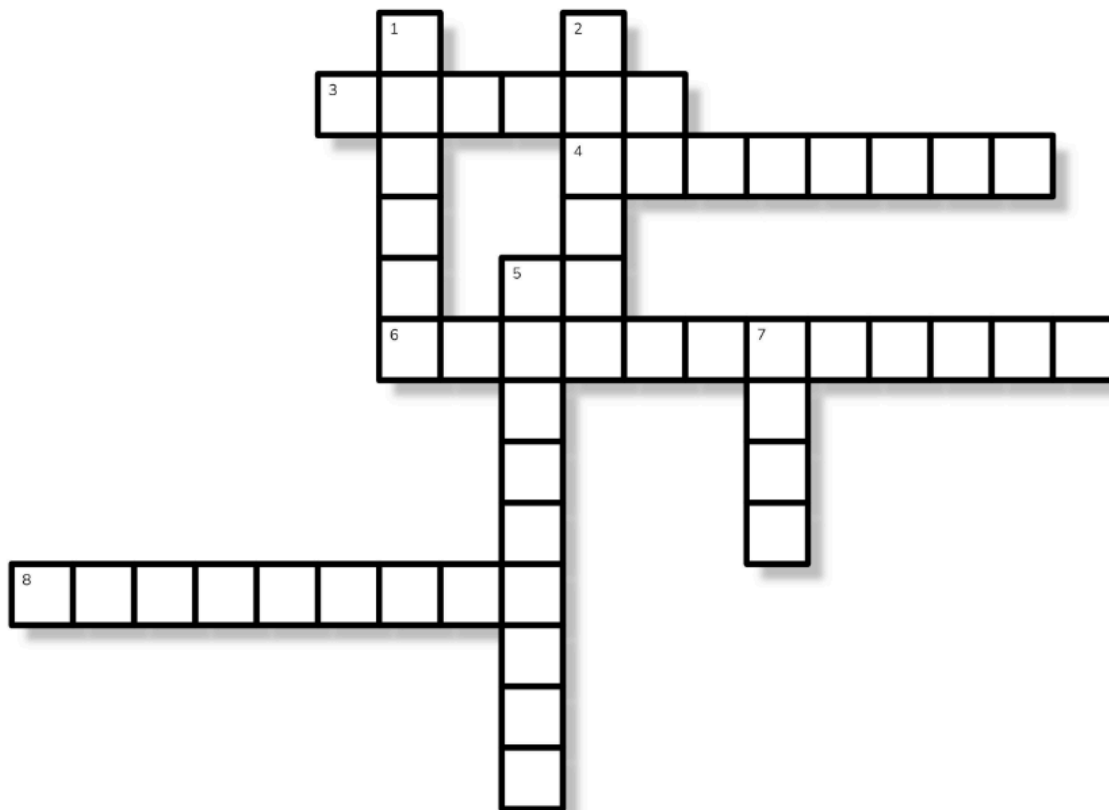
No, it's also about us citizens choosing leaders wisely, embodying virtues, and understanding that true freedom requires responsibility.

-Geokiam said "Inner freedom leading to outer freedom, that's profound".

It's the essence of our democracy, deeply rooted in our culture and values. I said

We agreed that a journey for true freedom, within and beyond, should be undertaken. Let's embark on it, not just for us but for the soul of our nation. As we returned to the shore after our swim, the sun was higher in the sky, and our philosophical journey continued, echoing the timeless pursuit of understanding the multifaceted concept of freedom.

SEEK AND YOU WILL FIND



Down

1. "Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire."
2. Father of philosophy.
5. God is dead.
7. It's better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied.

Across

3. Production for the masses not mass production.
4. Theory that deals with good and bad.
6. Theory of knowledge.
8. Cogito ergo sum.

Man's capacity for justice makes
democracy possible, but man's
inclination to injustice makes
democracy necessary. — Reinhold
Niebuhr