

Analysis of the Need for Responsibility for Selection Based on Liberalism and Determinism

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Abstract. In reality, people's responsibility is deterministically increased. To better deal with responsibility, this article critically analyzes modern liberalism from the perspective of classical liberalism. This article finds that as long as science serves politics, the responsibility of the individual is infinitely heavy. As a result, people's responsibilities should be lightened, and science should be properly separated from politics. This discovery renews thinking about modern liberalism and determinism.

Keywords: Responsibility; Liberalism; Determinism; Genetic factors; External world.

1. Introduction

This article talks about the relationship between liberalism and determinism. As for determinism, it refers to people's mindsets that one's actions depend on genetic inheritance and external environment instead of personal free will so that people would take on fewer responsibilities. However, in reality, people's responsibilities are increased according to determinism. To better deal with responsibilities, this essay critically analyzes modern liberalism from the perspective of classical liberalism.

Liberals believe that people's responsibility for adverse consequences relies on whether they come from their free will (Norrie, 1983). If personal capabilities and preferences are determined by genetic inheritance and external factors, they seem to take charge of their actions no longer. However, concerning responsibility broadly, liberalism does not mean people are free of responsibilities. For example, although psychopaths are legally irresponsible for their crimes premised on modern law, they would be sent to a mental hospital for treatment and isolation from ordinary people. In this case, they will be restricted and monitored, which increases their responsibilities.

Beginning with a discussion on modern science, this essay will explore why determinism is formed and augments people's responsibilities with the development of knowledge and technology. Then, whether freedom is possible in modern society is discussed based on Kant's theories. Altogether, it concludes that one's responsibilities are ubiquitous and inevitable both in determinist societies and nowadays when neoliberalism is popular worldwide (CFI Team, 2021). Therefore, we should prevent turning science into constraints to clarify the limit of freedom and maximize freedom within the limit.

2. Relationship between Modern Science and Determinism

This section analyzes how modern political practices lead science to deviate from its original purpose and prove itself the absolute truth that is theologized. Science has constantly been iterating, so scientific subjects in this essay are merely scientific judgments within a specific discourse system. As no ultimate issue exists in science, the absolutist application of science in modern societies is thought to increase one's responsibilities. Science is a systematic and logical approach to learning how the universe functions. (Bradford & Hamer, 2022). Therefore, science is a research method unrelated to theology or ultimate questions like whether God exists. Since the advent of modern science, one of the science goals has been disenchantment. On the contrary, theology includes nothing but ultimate issues that vague everything else (Spinoza, 2007). Nevertheless, any issue on theology can neither be proven nor falsified by pure persons. Thus, modern science characterized by disenchantment reaches transcendence. The difference between theology and science is that science clearly instructs political practices, exemplified by the publication of Ethics that provided logical and moral guides for people (Buijs, 2021). If we call Physics that Newton developed science, it is same

as sciences back in Middle Ages when they coexisted with religion without disenchantment (Lindberg, 1995). It was not until the Enlightenment in the 18th century that disenchantment began to prevail (Horkheimer et al., 2002).

This paragraph will explain that modern science is based on humans' rationality, displacing God with humans. Up against the deteriorating ideological crisis of Christianity in the Middle Ages, science took the lead as the modern religion (Strauss, 1966). Due to its theological properties, they deduce that humans are both empirical and transcendental, given that they attempt to self-govern with laws and rules beyond experiences. (Foucault et al., 2007) The danger lying under modern science is the formation of dogmatism similar to theology. Rousseau traces back to its origin, and science was derived from ancient philosophy (Rousseau, 2008) when Socrates claimed he knew nothing (Fowler, 2013). However, with the argument about laws promulgated by men, modern science is put into practice disregarding its philosophical tradition and roots (Cooper, 2018). Therefore, it is inevitable for modern science to appear in the form of determinism. According to the Marxist economic determinism of the former Soviet Union, productive forces are the determinant of recorded human history (Hodges, 1980). This is an example of a scientific theory deviating from philosophy through dogmatism. Misinterpreting historical materialism contributes to significant historical development (Marcuse, 1968). Meanwhile, the original historical materialism taught a profound lesson that abrupt upheavals in history fail to be controlled (Althusser et al., 2006).

Theologized determinism in modern science provides references for governing, and all truth is temporary because modern science can only be falsified but never proven. Thus there is no confirmation for any natural law, with modern science far from determining people's decisions. However, in reality, to implement practices, absolute truths are necessary for humans. A battlefield general must be resolute in playing strategy to enhance morale instead of being suspicious as a scientist. Otherwise, the whole army would be paralyzed and conquered. If modern science admits the individual limitation for not being absolute, it no longer satisfies people's need for a determinant. Since absolute truth comes from theology and political theology in the form of science, it leads to misappropriation that is hard to identify (Beer, 2020). There is always absolute truth in political theology, so is its counterpart, falsehood, that creates antagonism. People in a political system have to be politically correct to avoid persecution since the laws are proven by modern science with absolute certainty. Modern science can be abused as a pseudoscience, just as Nazi fascists believed Jews were born inferior and started a holocaust (Marcuse, 1968). The essence of modern science remains the same in the current society, although with less cruelty. Unlike ancient Greek philosophy that the pursuit of science was the emblem of free-thinking, modern science has become a determinism which constrains personal thoughts and spirits. It has also become the yoke on liberty even though it gets rid of God's restraints.

In conclusion, the modern determinism stemming from modern science limits the pursuit of freedom.

3. The Possibilities of True Freedom in Modern Institutions

Focusing on the consumerism and neoliberalism of the 21st century, this section demonstrates that one burdens heavy responsibilities with his behaviors significantly determined under this system. The determinism in modern science does not vanish with the elimination of communism and the Nazis, but instead, it turns more prevalent. This section proves philosophers' foresight of this situation and the challenge of determinism.

The first to realize the lack of freedom in modern society is Rousseau, who contends that privatization incurs gaps in wealth, power, etc., which leads to moral inequality and conventions constraining personal actions and wills. He summarized his opinions as "people are born free, and everywhere he is in chains" (Rousseau, 1923). He also clarifies that classical science is fundamentally the same as philosophy, with the pursuit of truth as its ultimate goal, while in modern science, truth has become a tool rather than a goal (Rousseau, 2008). In his book *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences*,

Rousseau's theory on science is subversive in the 21st century. It puts forward that science brings all harm without benefits because it merely pursues the truth disregarding its connections with societies. Politics is taking advantage of science, and it requires science to make political decisions instead of staying neutral. Besides, science should give up the eternal and uncontrolled truth exploration and become the foundation of political systems (Lindberg, 1995). This explains why Athenians executed Socrates for his negative impact on the city-state: because he purely pursued the truth and did not consider the political community (Fowler, 2013). Based upon Rousseau's theory, Kant discovered the acute conflicts between modern science and freedom, paving the way for his attempt to reconcile such conflicts in *Anthropology From A Pragmatic Point of View*.

Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* is the backbone of modern science, demonstrating how people produce knowledge and to what extent people can know about the world. People can put it into political practices only with the objective and practical knowledge. Kant believes this reflects our perception of the world -- a phenomenon (Kant et al., 1998). In other words, scientific knowledge combines one's world experience with a priori logic. He proposed the concept of "synthetic a priori judgment" as propositions that are known for reason and experience, thus creating knowledge (Kant et al., 1998). For example, given the axiom $1+1=2$, we can deduce that $2+2=4$, independent of experiences. It does not tell us anything new about the world, and no scientific knowledge is produced. Synthetic a priori judgment resorts to humans' a priori logic of causality, the causal laws, and scientific theory in Kant's philosophy, which means that natural science is a complete system of objective and practical causality (Jütten, 2012). Only within the causality system is scientific knowledge invincible. Nevertheless, any change in an element would affect many other elements in this system, and therefore no freedom can be achieved (Lindberg, 1995).

In modern capitalist societies, Taylorism advocates scientific management to maximize output. For example, workers are given a fixed amount of food daily to ensure productivity without extra costs; relationships between coworkers are not allowed as they would get distracted (Littler, 1978). This scientific management still applies in current societies even when neoliberalism prevails, and communism and the Nazis have outmoded. Keeping science and philosophy away from politics is what Aristophanes criticizes as Socratic philosophy that is apolitical (Strauss, 1966). However, only in this way can living people truly pursue freedom, which accords with Kant's theory that philosophy is about life's pursuit of something – truth, for philosophers – itself (Kant et al., 1998). This self-discipline is rooted in the universal law of pursuing truth rather than personal stakes involving country and nation (Kant & Ferrer, 1998). Therefore, this pure philosophy and science are not necessarily objective but practical, and they keep people exploring and criticizing.

4. Conclusion

From the responsibilities brought by science, it can be seen why science has become a detriment in modern societies. This essay's criticism mainly focuses on how politics turns science into laws and constraints to stipulate one's responsibilities. As a result, little space for freedom is left. Science should be more independent from politics so that it could unfold neutral scientific research. Although science can be harmful, according to Rousseau (Rousseau, 2008), as long as science serves politics, personal responsibilities would be infinitely heavy. Therefore, people's responsibilities should be reduced, and science should be properly separated from politics.

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