

10 On Freedom

The common popular conception of freedom is that freedom is like a container filled with an unlimited supply of “freedom” which we can or should be able to consume and enjoy as we wish. But, in practice, in a civilization of many participants, we can only access the container’s supply of “freedom” in various lesser amounts, our access being limited by governmental rules and regulations.

In this conception of freedom we could, if left to our own devices, be as free as we wish, bountifully accessing the full amount of the container’s supply of “freedom” without limit. For a single individual alone and away from all other individuals that conception would be valid.

But, that unlimited conception of freedom is completely wrong; it is essentially the opposite of the actual situation. Freedom is analogous to a balance scale, to the two balancing weight trays of the scale.



One side, one tray of the scale contains *My Freedom*; the other side, the other tray holds my *Fellow Man’s Freedom*. The greater that *My Freedom* is, that is the more that I can do as I wish, then the less is my *Fellow Man’s Freedom*, the more that he is restricted.

To illustrate, when I am driving a car my freedom is restricted by the traffic rules and procedures. I cannot drive however I wish, at any speed, all over the road. The reason for the limitations is clear. Without them the freedom of all other drivers, freedom to transport themselves safely to their destinations, freedom to have goods and materials effectively transported as needed, freedom to have the society operating for the benefit of all would all be lost or infringed.

Just as I wish that the behavior of other people be restricted so that they cannot harm me or interfere with me, so must my behavior be restricted so that I cannot harm or interfere with them.

This all means that “freedom” is the great equalizer. Only if the freedom or lack thereof of every member of society is equal to that of every other member is there true freedom. If some members of society are more free to do as they wish than the other members, then that society is not free; it is a society of tyranny of that some over the rest, dominating the rest.

Consequently it is quite hypocritical when advocates of free market capitalism hype about freedom and democracy. The existence of both simultaneously is impossible. Free market capitalism relentlessly pursues personal self interest without regard for the personal self interest of others. It pursues accrual of ever more wealth, which is ever more power which is ever more freedom for those holding the wealth and power, for those successful at the contest of free market capitalism. The wealth, power and freedom so accrued come at the cost of less wealth, power and freedom for others.

Thus the more free society is that operating on the principles of socialism not free market capitalism. The socialist society is closer than the free market capitalism society at being a society where all the members share the same freedoms and the same socially necessary restrictions and limitations, where equality of freedom exists.

Perhaps some day a future fully developed socialist society will have achieved material abundance and an educated population so that it then evolves into a communist society with true perfection of equality and freedom.

