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ARE FREEDOM AND LIBERTY TWINS?

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SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH HAVE A UNIQUE opportunity: They get to choose between "liberty" and "freedom." No other European language, ancient or modern, offers such a choice.[1] German knows only *Freiheit*, French only *liberté*, and so on. But what is the choice worth? Almost all political theorists writing on these topics in English assert or assume that the distinction makes no difference. Sir Isaiah Berlin, for instance, in his famous essay on liberty, declares that he will "use both words to mean the same."[2] Maurice Cranston, more attentive to semantic detail, nevertheless concludes that, "in English usage the words 'freedom' and 'liberty' are virtually interchangable." Which to employ, he says, "is usually a matter of literary style," but he specifies no stylistic criteria, mentioning only that "'liberty' tends to be used in legal and political contexts, 'freedom' in philosophical and more general ones."[3] Context may well be a clue; yet freedom of speech and press, say, are surely much discussed in political contexts, and English philosophers have long disputed about liberty and necessity. Nor is there anything either philosophical or general about a free lunch.

Among the many theorists equating freedom with liberty there is, however, one striking exception. Hannah Arendt considered precisely this conceptual difference central to her most urgent theoretical concerns, and took our blindness to it as symptomatic of fundamental modern debilities.

Who is right: Arendt or everyone else? How to adjudicate such a dispute? Most people might well say, if asked, that they use the words interchangeably, but that proves little. People generally cannot give an explicit account of the regularities of their language, which they consistently observe in speaking. Modern scholarship offers two tools for investigating semantic differences: etymology and the analysis of ordinary usage. Neither tool is very useful unless applied in technical, painstaking detail. That the tedium may be worthwhile in this case is

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suggested in advance by Arendt's claims. Accordingly, this article begins with them, proceeding, in turn, to etymology, conceptual history, and ordinary usage before drawing what conclusions it can.

* * *

In *On Revolution*, Hannah Arendt sharply distinguishes the meaning of "freedom" from that of "liberation" and "liberties." Though perhaps a truism, she says, it is worth reemphasizing "that liberation and freedom are not the same; that liberation may be a condition of freedom but by no means leads automatically to it."[4] Liberation is "negative," while "a positive notion of freedom . . . would transcend the idea of a successful liberation." The latter, at most, renders one "free from oppression" but not "free," period.[5] Its "fruits are absence of restraint and possession of the power of locomotion."[6] Its fruits are liberties, and even if constitutionally guaranteed, remain "not powers of themselves, but merely an exemption from the abuse of power."[7] Even the politically crucial First Amendment is "of course essentially negative."[8] Liberties can be enjoyed in private isolation and can exist even without democracy, under a monarch or in a feudal hierarchy, though not under tyranny or despotism.[9]

The "actual content of freedom," by contrast, is "participation in public affairs, or admission to the public realm." It requires a "political way of life," which means "the constitution of a republic."[10] Such bald declarations, however, belie the complexities of Arendt's distinction and the difficulties of correlating it with her other central categories: action, the political, and the public. What Arendt tries to delineate, whether she is distinguishing freedom from liberation, or political from social, or public from private, or action from behavior or labor or work, is always a constellation of three main themes, each directed against a characteristic blind spot in our modern thinking.

First, against our debilitating sense of helplessness, of historical inevitability, Arendt stresses the human capacity for action and creativity, for making a difference, intervening in events, starting something unprecedented. Thus Arendt's "freedom" means spontaneity and initiative.

Second, against our overwhelming tendency to think in terms of efficiency, utility, and material causation, Arendt stresses how human interaction differs from working on objects. To us, spontaneity and initiative are likely to suggest technical innovation, scientific discovery,

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perhaps artistic expression. But Arendt's concern is initiative in our relationships, in nonmaterial culture: meaning rather than causation. Here the problems are not merely technical but moral and political; here not only means but goals are at issue, and the ultimate stakes are not merely what or how much we can have but who we shall be. Arendt's "freedom," then, concerns doing rather than making (*praxis* rather than *poesis*), innovation in the nonmaterial media of meanings and relationships.

Third and most important to Arendt, against our privatization, our flight into the personal, psychological, and introspective, she stresses the public, external, and political. Sometimes, as in passages already quoted, Arendt claims flatly that freedom must be political. Political life is "the only realm where men can be truly free," and "political freedom, generally speaking, means the right 'to be a participator in government,' or it means nothing."[11] More often, and more modestly, it's a matter of degree: Freedom can appear in many forms and places, but its highest and fullest development occurs only in the political realm.

Arendt gives surprisingly little justification for so strongly linking freedom and politics. Free action must aim at "glory" or "principle," she says, and these presuppose a public, an audience to honor what has been done. Activities driven by necessity or aimed at some practical, technical goal can succeed even without human recognition, but, accordingly, they cannot fully manifest freedom.

Between the lines, however, one can detect a further justification: Political life offers the potential for maximizing both the first and the second of Arendt's three themes, both initiative and interpersonal relations. Politics consists in nonmaterial relationships and activities: institutions and conventions, rules and practices, deeds and words. Material constraints are at a minimum. Politically, we are able to do whatever we can induce each other, and ourselves, to do. Politics also gives the greatest scope to initiative because people collectively can create things far more extensive, important, and lasting than any individual's deed. Politics may be less efficient than other modes of human organization—say, military or bureaucratic ones—but it nonetheless offers greater scope for initiative, precisely because, in politics, everything is not subordinated to a single, indisputable goal. Goals, means, principles—everything is up for dispute. At the same time, the political actor, unlike the engineer, never acts alone, confronting inanimate material, but as one person among others equally capable of initiative, who must be taken into account as persons. Arendt's

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"freedom," then, cannot be enjoyed in isolation, but requires a collectivity of peers, recognizing each other as fellow-initiators. It must be public and it must be shared.

In all three of these respects, Arendt maintains, it is hard for us to get freedom right, and we confuse it with other, related ideas. Even if truisms, the distinctions have become obscure to us. At various points, Arendt blames abstract philosophy, social science, and liberalism for this obscurity, but, most of all, she ascribes it to our having lost the activity and experience—and consequently the understanding—of the political.[12] "The entire modern age has separated freedom and politics," she says, so that,

> it has become almost axiomatic even in political theory to understand by political freedom not a political phenomenon, but, on the contrary, the more or less free range of nonpolitical activities which a given body politic will permit and guarantee to those who constitute it.[13]

We tend to assume "that freedom begins where politics ends," to construe it in terms of guaranteed protection for our privacy, and to

> measure the extent of freedom in any given community by the free scope it grants to apparently nonpolitical activities, free economic enterprise or freedom of teaching, of religion, of culture and intellectual activities.[14]

But such negative freedom from political life is precisely what Arendt identifies as liberties, the fruits of liberation. So our loss of the political and our depoliticization of freedom result in the confusion of these concepts.

As so often, Arendt suggests that the cure lies in returning to ancient or original understandings. She undertakes to "trace the idea of Freedom historically," and makes various explicit etymological claims about it.[15] It is exciting to find a theorist of Arendt's power, with her historical erudition and love of words, proposing to clarify a semantic difference lost to us. But a more careful reading reveals trouble: The distinction Arendt stresses does not correspond in any simple way to the difference between the "free-" family and the "liber-" family of words; she herself does not consistently maintain it, nor do her etymological claims support it.

First, while opposing "freedom" to "liberation" and "liberties," Arendt never opposes it to "liberty."[16] Second, she acknowledges that the word "freedom" has more than one "sense," and that one of its senses

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(the "negative," as distinct from the "positive sense") corresponds semantically to "liberation." Indeed, Arendt says the passion for positive, political freedom "can only arise where men are already *free in the sense that* they do not have a master."[17] Thus she acknowledges that there is, after all, a "freedom that comes [simply] from being liberated."[18]

Third, in other respects, too, Arendt herself follows ordinary usage even contrary to her own distinction. She writes in the conventional way of certain constitutional guarantees and personal rights as "freedoms": freedom of speech or movement, freedom from want or fear.[19] She continues to use various semantic markers and modifiers that should, according to her distinction, be redundant. Sometimes she capitalizes "Freedom" to mark her conception of it; sometimes she uses expressions like "public freedom," "political freedom," "positive freedom," or "true freedom." Sometimes, on the other side, she writes of "personal liberties," "private liberties," and "negative liberties."[20]

Still, if we have lost awareness of an important distinction, we may need such redundant reminders. Arendt might even want to argue that ordinary usage is no guide at all in such matters, since it reflects our ideologies and illusions. Yet what can serve as an alternative authority? Arendt's resort to etymology is disappointing. Her claims either refer to "freedom" in such a general way that one cannot tell whether they are intended to ignore, include, or contrast with "liberty"; or else they refer specifically to the Greek *eleutheria*, which is the ancestor of neither English word, and thus cannot help to distinguish them.

Arendt's claims about what freedom originally meant are also confusingly multiple: (1) that it was external and observable rather than inner or psychic, "a worldly, tangible reality," (2) that it distinguished the status of a free man from that of a slave, (3) that it was a bodily condition, a healthy person's capacity for movement at will, (4) that it meant unimpeded movement more generally, including both physical capacity and social opportunity, the latter being denied to a slave. What mattered most about nonslave status was that it allowed one "to move, to get away from home, to go out into the world and meet other people in deed and word."[21] These last phrases are familiar from Arendt's accounts of participatory citizenship, and, indeed, she also claims (5) that freedom originally meant political participation. "The realm of politics and human affairs in general" was freedom's "original field," where it had "always been known . . . as a fact of everyday life." Originally, "in Greek as well as Roman antiquity, freedom was an exclusively political concept."[22]

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In all of this, Arendt's only reference to a non-English word is to *eleutheria*, which she identifies as the ancient Greek "word for freedom."[23] She rejects the most common modern derivation of *eleutheria* from the notion of a genetically related "stock" of people, as too "uncomfortably close" to Nazi racism, to "the notions of German scholarship during the nineteen-thirties when [this hypothesis] first saw the light of day."[24] Preferring the "Greek self-interpretation" that derived the word from an expression meaning "to go as I wish," she concludes, "there is no doubt that the basic freedom was understood as freedom of movement."[25]

This notion of unimpeded movement, however, undermines rather than supports Arendt's distinction. On the one hand, she lists the "physical fact" of a healthy body capable of movement and the social fact of nonslave status, whose point is also being able to "move . . . get away from home," as the original meaning(s) of "the idea of Freedom."[26] On the other hand, she explicitly classifies "absence of restraint and possession of the power of locomotion" as mere fruits of liberation falling short of freedom.[27] Even more confusingly, she calls "*freedom* of movement . . . unchecked by disease or master . . . originally the most elementary of all *liberties*."[28]

In addition, Arendt repeatedly insists that freedom did *not* mean unimpeded motion or nonslave status to the Greeks, but something else to which these were mere prerequisites: citizenship in a *polis* among peers.[29] In making this point, Arendt sometimes writes as if the Greeks spoke English. They thought, she says, that the citizen's freedom had to be

> preceded by liberation: in order to be free, man must have liberated himself from the necessities of life. But the status of freedom did not follow automatically upon the act of liberation.[30]

Yet the Greeks had only one word for these ideas: *eleutheria*. Did it mean freedom or liberation or both or neither? Arendt's account is both intriguing and confusing. Coming to terms with it will require looking at etymology, conceptual history, and ordinary usage.

* * *

That "freedom" and "liberty" are interchangeable is prima facie implausible because the two words have entirely different ancestries. The former is Germanic, transmitted to us by the Anglo-Saxons. The

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latter derives from the Latin by way of Old French and was brought into English by the Normans.

All the etymologists seem agreed that the "free-" family of words comes from an Indo-European adjective they reconstruct as **priyos*, from the verb **pri*, to love. **Priyos* mean something like: one's own, the personal, but with a connotation of affection or closeness rather than of legal property. Emile Benveniste says it was used of personal possessions, of parts of one's body, but also of people with whom one had an emotional connection. Thus, "according to context, it can be translated sometimes by 'his own' and sometimes by 'dear, beloved.'" Its various European derivatives also include words for wife, friend, to delight or endear, and—in religious discourse—"a sort of mutual belonging" between gods and humans.[31]

In Gothic, however, the derivatives of **priyos* split into two distinct families, one of which includes words for *love* and *friendship*, the other words meaning *free* and *freedom* (or liberty).[32] The etymologists hypothesize that the latter meaning may be due to Celtic influence, may "perhaps even [be] a direct borrowing," since in Celtic the derivatives of **priyos* mean only free, not dear, and derivatives with this meaning are found in no other language group.[33] But, by what logic, what semantic transitions did the Indo-European word for *own* or *dear* come to mean free, whether in Celtic or some other language?

Postpone that controversial question for a look at "liberty," which derives from the Latin *liber*, free. There were *liberare*, to free or liberate; *libertas*, liberty or freedom; *liberos*, the free man; and its masculine plural, *liberi*, which meant children, offspring. There was also a Roman god, Liber, whom Benveniste identifies as the god of vegetative growth and specifically of viniculture. The etymologists agree that Latin *liber* derives from the Venetic **(e)leudheros*, which they hypothesize came from the Indo-European verbal root **leudh-*. That root has derivatives in various European languages with meanings like the (or a) people, a gens, but also verbs meaning to grow or develop. There was a Venetic goddess, Louzera, the Latin equivalent of whose name would make her the counterpart of the god Liber.[34]

Most—though not all—etymologists regard the origins of Latin *liber* as closely paralleling those of Greek *eleutheria*, and they derive the latter, too, from the Venetic **leudheros*. This is plausible partly because the fully developed ranges of meaning of the Latin and Greek word families are closely parallel (as, indeed, they are to the range of meanings of the Anglo-Saxon ancestor of the "free-" family, *frēo*). That range

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includes nobility (of birth or character), unobstructed movement including that of objects, the opposite of constraint, the opposite of foreign domination, the opposite of domestic tyranny, lawful self-government.[35] But as to which meaning is the earliest, and when and how it developed from Indo-European roots meaning, respectively, *growth* and *own* or *dear*, are much disputed questions. For our purposes, the many, complexly interrelated theories may be summed into three: one centering on group membership and slavery, one centering on unimpeded motion, and one centering on sexual pleasure and potency.

The most comprehensive and now most widely accepted theory takes the oldest sense of all these words to be a status classification, the contrast between slave and nonslave, which, in turn, depends on a notion of group membership. First suggested by Otto Schrader in 1898, this theory is more fully articulated by Benveniste.[36] Beginning with the notion of growth in Indo-European **leudh-*, Benveniste notes that several of that word's derivatives mean *accomplished* growth: *stature*, *figure*, that which has been shaped in a particular way by growth. In still other instances, the same idea shows up as "a collective notion such as 'stock, breed,' or 'growth group' to design[ate] an ethnic group, the totality of those who have been born and grow up together." This would explain derivatives of **leudh-* that mean a people or gens as well as Latin *liberi*, offspring.[37]

From this idea of a growth group or stock, Benveniste reasons that the earliest meaning of both Latin *liber* and Greek *eleutheros* must have been the distinction between those who, being born of the stock, are protected by its law and thus not subject to enslavement, and the others—outsiders, who are slaves or potentially enslavable. Similarly, in the development of *frēo*, one's own, dear folk—the in-group—are distinguished from the aliens, slaves, or enslavable.[38] Other senses of these words, the theory goes, emerge by analogy, as the restraints masters impose on slaves are assimilated to other kinds of obstruction and constraint. There is, however, much disagreement about when and how the important extensions of meaning happened.[39]

A second general theory, less broad in that it addresses only the Latin and Greek etymologies, derives *liber* and *eleutheros* from the idea of unimpeded motion. Adopted by Arendt as well as Georg Curtius, Max Pohlenz, and T. G. Tucker, this theory originates in the ancient *Etymologicon Magnum*, which traces *eleutheros* within Greek only, to the phrase *eleuthein hopos ero*, I go where I will, from the verb stem

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eluth-, to go or come.[40] But what is the etymology of that verb, and (how) is the Greek development related to that in Latin? Arendt doesn't say; the other scholars have conflicting views.

For Pohlenz, although Latin *liber* does come from Indo-European **leudh-*, the Greek word must have some altogether different "pre-Hellenic origin," perhaps not "Indo-Germanic" at all.[41] Tucker, by contrast, keeps the Latin and Greek derivations parallel and within Indo-European. Their mutual source is **leudh-*, he says, which did mean growth, but its "primary notion [was] that of 'extending,' 'opening out,' or 'coming forth.'" Its "natural notion" was the idea of "openness, width, or looseness." Hence Tucker links it with Indo-European verbs meaning to spread, open out, (make) flow. And in Latin—which is his main concern—he links *liber* with words for pouring liquid, libations, but also with words for pleasure, desire, sexuality, and love.[42]

That link is central to the third general etymological theory, which does undertake to explain the Germanic along with the Latin and Greek development. For Richard Broxton Onians and Theodore Thass-Thienemann, the original meaning of these words is neither group membership nor unimpeded motion, but sexuality. In all three cultures—Latin, Greek, and Germanic—they argue, sexuality and procreation were symbolically linked to, first, liquidity and flow and, second, the head, supposed locus of the generative capacity (*genius*). Both these symbols figure centrally in ceremonies of enslavement and emancipation; thus they connect also with the contrast between slave and nonslave. The essence of slavery is constraint on sexuality and procreation—the generative capacity and its social confirmation.[43] Neither "liberty" nor "freedom" originated "primarily as a sociopolitical concept," Thass-Thienemann concludes; both "emerged out of unconscious libidinal fantasies." However different their actual etymologies, their "psychological etiology" is the same, and key to their meaning: the absence or removal of "shame, guilt, anxiety, and frustrations originating from the prohibitive superego."[44]

The etymological origins of "freedom" and "liberty" remain disputed, then, and thus cannot authoritatively settle anything about the essence of these concepts. Besides, reading the etymologists demonstrates that there is no clear correlation between etymological and either semantic or political views. Arendt stresses political participation as the essence of freedom, and rejects the group membership etymology. Raaflaub shares her political view of freedom, but for that very reason favors the group membership theory. Dieter Nestle even argues that this theory proves

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eleutheros to have been polis-referential and thus "political" from the first.[45] Yet Benveniste combines this same etymological theory with a notion of freedom Arendt would reject as mere liberation.[46]

Depending on which etymological theory one adopts, one will endorse or reject Arendt's derivation of *eleutheria*, but none of the available theories takes her political notion of freedom as the earliest known meaning of any of these words. Whether about slavery, unimpeded motion, or sexuality, these words did not start out meaning participation in political self-government.

* * *

How and when did they become political? Even the distinction between slave and master or noble and commoner, of course, concerns power and privilege and is, to that extent, political. All group membership is, to some extent, like political membership. But as these words develop historically, they take on more explicitly and fully political meanings such as the opposite of foreign domination, the opposite of domestic tyranny, lawful government, participatory government, citizenship. How do these develop?

Begin with the fact Lewis stresses, that the distinction between master and slave—whether it be the earliest or merely early—becomes "moralized." These words come to designate not merely social status, but also the conduct, character, and circumstances appropriate to that status. They come not merely to designate but also to justify status, and—by the same token—to serve as standards for criticism. *Eleutheros*, *liberos*, and the Germanic ancestors of "freedom" all become moralized in this sense; the first two even develop companion terms, *eleutherios* and *liberalis*, which carry only the moralized meaning.[47]

One feature of the masters' character singled out for semantic emphasis in all three languages is generosity, munificence, as in modern English "liberality."[48] In all three languages, also, whether by extension from the moralized status meaning or from unrestricted motion, these words come to designate conduct that is informal, unrestrained, appropriate only among one's own, and—as a pejorative corollary, conduct that is excessively, inappropriately informal, as in Sheridan's "not so free, fellow!" or Shakespeare's "liberall villaine."[49]

About the origins of explicitly political meanings, however, the etymological historians are tantalizingly ambiguous. The Greek development gets the most attention, starting with the interpretation of two

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ambiguous passages in Homer and two in Solon (though Raaflaub calls attention to two much earlier occurrences of the ancestor of *eleutheros* in Linear B).[50] The abstract noun *eleutheria* did not appear until the time of the Persian War, as the Greeks tried to articulate what was at stake: not being enslaved, of course, and not being ruled by foreign domination, but perhaps also already what was distinctive about the Greek way of life. This would include, by contrast with Persian ways, lawful and impersonal rather than arbitrary and despotic rule, open and collegial public life (even if still restricted to a narrow elite) rather than a sacred, inaccessible priest-king.[51]

In the subsequent class struggles at Athens between the elite and hoi polloi, between oligarchic and democratic factions, Raaflaub says, *eleutheria* was employed only by the democrats and only relatively late, in the mid-fifth century. In this respect it differed from concepts like justice and equality, of which each faction had its own version.[52] The oligarchs may well have originated the moralized status meaning and the term *eleutherios* but did not apply them politically.[53] The moralized meaning "was rooted in social status and values rather than in political life."[54] *Eleutheria*, then, being exclusively the democrats' concept in politics, came to reflect their demands: direct and active participation in political life by all male adult citizens so that "the whole people" governs itself. This included the ideas of lawful, impersonal rule and collegiality already implied in the contrast between Greek and Persian ways, but it went much further. It implied legal and political equality, including entitlement to vote on public decisions, to make proposals, to speak in assemblies. It implied rotation in office, short terms, accountability, equal access to office, and even selection by lot.[55] Eventually, though perhaps only in the later contrast between Athenian and Spartan ways, it also included private or social freedom, as expressed, for example, in Thucydides's account of Pericles' funeral oration: "The freedom which we enjoy in our government extends also to our ordinary life," where each can do "what he likes."[56] In short, *eleutheria* meant democracy.[57]

Hence it was primarily a "collective term," pertaining to the city rather than the individual. Already focused on a shared way of life in contrast to Persian rule, it remained so in the hands of the democrats: "the demos rules (i.e., all the citizens are involved in governing the city), therefore the city is free."[58] *Eleutheria* was a condition shared among the citizenry and embodied not so much in particular laws as in an entire constitutional system and ethos. "Only starting from this holistic beginning can individual active and passive rights of the citizen also be connected with eleutheria."[59]

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Far less is known about the early history of Latin *libertas*, both because written literature develops relatively late at Rome and because virtually all of its early works are lost.[60] Raaflaub does, however, trace its later political development, contrasting it to the history of *eleutheria*.

Unlike Athens, Rome was almost constantly engaged in or expecting war; partly for this reason, Raaflaub argues, the Roman nobility remained far more powerful than the Athenian. There was far more deference among the lower classes; patron-client relationships played a far stronger and more lasting role; so did family and gens, and particularly the *patria potestas*, not only over women and children but even over grown sons; there was far more internalization of discipline and duty in all social strata. As a result, the Roman aristocracy was more willing to compromise than the Athenian, and the Roman plebs were more strongly necessitated to do so than were the Athenian commons.[61] In addition, the loot from Roman conquests facilitated compromise and quiescence by giving the aristocracy something to distribute in return for military and social discipline.[62] In Rome, consequently, though political struggles were intense, they occurred against the background of the shared assumption that the people were only one element in a constitutional balance. The struggles concerned where, not whether, the balance should be struck.[63]

Consequently, *libertas*, an instrument in these struggles, had more to do with protections against the abuse of power than with access to power itself. More precisely, unlike Athens, Rome developed two rival political notions of *libertas*, one articulated by the nobility and another by the plebs. The aristocratic notion was directed as much against the ambitions of powerful individuals as against the claims of the commons. Thus, for the nobility, *libertas* meant adherence to the traditional order, lawful rather than arbitrary or personal government, checks and balances to prevent the accumulation of excessive power in any hands, equality before the law—but only in a context of unquestioned social and political inequality. It implied political equality among the aristocracy, perhaps, but not among all citizens.[64]

But even the plebeian understanding of *libertas* was not, as in Athenian *eleutheria*, a broader extension of equality, office, and power to all. The Roman plebs struggled not for democracy but for protection, not for public power but for private security. Of course they sought public, institutionalized guarantees of that security. But *libertas* never meant political participation, an extension of equality from legal to political or social rights, let alone equal access to office, voting, or debate.[65] For both classes, Raaflaub summarizes, *libertas* was "passive,"

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"defensive," "predominantly negative." It was also "extraordinarily strongly fixated on institutions and rights and therefore connected to specific laws," which made it both plural or composite and legalistic. "For the most part, the content of *libertas* can be virtually disclosed by the compilation of laws."[66]

Raaflaub's contrast between the political development of *eleutheria* and *libertas* corresponds closely to the line Arendt drew between freedom and liberties. And of course "liberties" does derive from *libertas*. Unfortunately for Arendt's thesis, however, "freedom" does not derive from *eleutheria*. Far less is known about how the ancestors of "freedom" acquired explicitly political meanings than about the Greek and Latin terms.

Lewis's excellent, brief comparison of the three word families touches on politics only once. Where the issue is the freedom or liberty of a collectivity, Lewis points out, *libertas* and *eleutheria* refer "chiefly, if not entirely" to autonomous states or city-states, but the medieval ancestors of "freedom" refer "nearly always" to some corporate entity within a feudal political jurisdiction (like a guild or town), or to the Church, which cuts across such jurisdiction. They thus imply not political autonomy but certain guaranteed immunities from interference by the jurisdictional overlord(s).[67] The medieval Germanic terms also undergo a further development unparalleled in the ancient ones. Since the members of a corporate body share in its privileges, a new member receives the "freedom of" that body, becomes a "freeman of" it, or is "free of" it. Hence, in translations from ancient sources, "freedom can also simply mean citizenship."[68]

From Lewis's account one would have to conclude that the earliest political meanings of the ancestors of "freedom" had more in common semantically with what Arendt calls "liberties" than with what she calls "freedom." But Lewis's examples are from relatively late, centuries after the earliest dictionary examples of freedom as political self-government.[69] There are Middle English examples from the thirteenth century, but there are none in dictionaries of Old English or Anglo-Saxon, which suggests that this meaning may have developed in the century and a half after the conquest. One would like to know more about when and how: Was it in contexts of remonstrance and nostalgia, like those of the thirteenth-century *Sachsenspiegel* on the Continent and John Barbour's *The Bruce* of 1375 in Scotland (the one a very early example of this meaning in the German *vri*, the other the earliest example of it in the *Oxford English Dictionary*)?[70] The question becomes all the more

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interesting when one realizes that the *liber-* words brought to England by the Normans carried no such meaning! The notion of communal political autonomy, so central to ancient *libertas*, had fallen into disuse and apparently disappeared; dictionaries of Old French and Anglo-Norman, at any rate, list no such meaning for any word in the *liber-* family.

* * *

At first the conquerors were simply foreigners in England, speaking their own, entirely distinct language. Or rather, like the conquered natives, they were a people of two languages: All of Europe used late Latin for legal, administrative, and religious matters, but even clerics and rulers lived their practical daily lives in the vernacular, and most folks knew only that. For a couple of centuries the vernacular of England's rulers differed from that of the ruled. The conquerors spoke Norman or Old French; their descendants spoke what is called Anglo-Norman, which is classified as a dialect of French. Not until the fourteenth century did all classes in England once more share a single language, combining Anglo-Saxon with Anglo-Norman.

When *liber-* words met *frē-* words in this way, their semantic range was remarkably similar. There were a few significant differences, however, and by the fourteenth century, further differences had developed. In general one would expect that the emerging "liber-" family, tool of the rulers, would play a role initially in contexts of government, law, administration, and at court; in all these contexts the spoken Norman, and later Anglo-Norman, would be reinforced by written and sometimes spoken Latin. The "free-" family would be more likely to retain an exclusive role in the concerns of practical daily life, particularly that of the underlings, including physical work.

> So one at once suspects that "liberty" will be connected with more formal matters than its Anglo-Saxon equivalent. (The same may be said of such pairs as "commence" and "begin," "initiate" and "start." . . . Thus the difference between "freedom" and "liberty" is analogous to the difference between "justice" and "fairness".)[71]

More precisely, the Anglo-Saxon *frē-* and the Norman *liber-* word families had these meanings in common: Both meant the opposite of slavery and, therefore, of various more abstract constraints; both carried some moralized status meanings, designating conduct or

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character appropriate to the masters; both referred to special privileges and exemptions granted to corporate bodies by a higher authority; and both were used in religious contexts for the capacity of choosing between good and evil. But though both could refer to the *libre arbitre* in this way, that meaning played a much larger role in the Norman word family than in the Anglo-Saxon one. Indeed, the *liber-* family so much emphasized the capacity to choose (virtue or) sin, that some of its words actually designated sinful conduct: agnosticism, conduct in pursuit of the passions, lecherous or gluttonous conduct, as in the modern "libertine." The Anglo-Saxon *frē-* family did not have these meanings, and while it could refer to the choosing capacity, its main religious meaning was the release that Christ offers from the bondage of sin or the letter of the Mosaic law. It emphasized not choice but grace.

Another difference concerned social status. While both word families carried moralized status meanings, Anglo-Saxon *frē-* words could also designate noble birth or status itself, while Norman *liber-* words could not. That meaning of Latin *liber-* had long since fallen into disuse; it is not found in Old French.[72] But the Anglo-Saxon word family soon lost its capacity for designating actual noble status as well, with the decline of the feudal order. It also soon lost its moralized status meanings, but the *liber-* family kept them, as in modern English "liberality" or the "liberal arts." In short, after the Normans displaced the Anglo-Saxon ruling class, their words soon took over the designating of "noble" qualities.

A third significant difference is that the *frē-* family soon came to mean without cost or charge, while the *liber-* family never did. This had never been part of the meaning of Latin *liber-* or its Norman descendants (nor of *eleutheria*). Lewis thinks that it emerged in Anglo-Saxon, "doubtless" from the idea of unconstrainedness; but the meaning is not listed in dictionaries of Anglo-Saxon. There is an ambiguous Middle English example from 1225; the earliest example in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is dated 1340.[73]

Fourth, the *frē-* family soon developed (or perhaps already had in Anglo-Saxon) various more concrete and physical meanings: unobstructed space, unhampered movement, including the motion of inanimate objects. These meanings had been part of Latin *liber-* (thus, as Lewis points out, "the sea, in Ovid, as opposed to the rivers, is the plain of freer—*liberioris*—water"), but they apparently disappeared in the formation of Old French and were not redeveloped after the Normans came to England.[74]

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A fifth difference is that, from the Anglo-Saxon on, the *frē-* family could characterize action as spontaneous, readily or gladly done, done of one's own accord, even zealously done. The "liber-" family did not carry these meanings, despite its use for the capacity to choose between sin and goodness.[75] This difference is particularly mysterious because here the English "liber-" *lost* a meaning that was found not only in Latin *liber-* but also in Norman and Anglo-Norman. One would like to know why: Did the new rulers have no use for such a category?

Sixth, and even more puzzling, a grammatical difference: The "liber-" family did not have a general adjective comparable in function to "free," even though such adjectives existed in Latin, Old French, and even Anglo-Norman. Why did Anglo-Norman *liberal*, which meant not only liberal but also free as well as willing or zealous lose all the latter meaning in English? Did the rulers have no use for a general adjective? Or is it that as "liberal" gradually monopolized the moralized status meanings, it came to be reserved for them alone, all "lesser" functions being left to the underlings' word?

Finally, the political meanings. At the conquest, as already mentioned, both word families could signify authoritatively granted privileges and exemptions, and neither had any other political meaning. Anglo-Saxon *frē-* had never acquired, and Old French *liber-* had lost as it emerged from Latin, the ideas contained in ancient *libertas* and *eleutheria* of communal self-government, whether the absence of external domination or the presence of internally lawful or even participatory government. Both word families eventually (re)acquired such meanings. But according to the dictionaries, the "free-" family did so centuries before the "liber-" family. As already noted, there are Middle English examples of such use in the "free-" family from the early thirteenth century; the earliest examples of anything like this meaning in the "liber-" family date from the fifteenth century. Dare one hypothesize that the conquered had reason to speak of what they had lost, while the conquerors and their descendants knew much about dominating but neither experienced nor cared to discuss the mutuality of shared self-government among peers?

In any case, it seems that in the first centuries following the conquest, freedom was for the conquered natives a relatively blunt, tangible, and total condition that one either had or lacked, almost an aspect of what one *was*, whether an external physical condition of unobstructed space or movement, or a legal status of not being subject to another, or a psychic state manifested in spontaneity. For the conquering elite, by

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contrast, liberty was more formal and legal, a matter of degree and detail, a collection of specific rights and privileges granted or withheld, even if truly appropriate only to those of high birth and correspondingly noble character. Both the legalistic and the pluralistic connotations as well as the moralized status meaning were already found in Latin *liber-*, as Raaflaub shows, but in English they became isolated in a distinct word family, no longer semantically bound, for instance, to the unimpeded movement of objects, or to actions spontaneously and gladly done.

* * *

Examining ordinary usage—the contexts where an expression might actually be spoken and sounds completely natural—one at first finds little difference between "freedom" and "liberty."[76] The former may be somewhat more at home in prepositional phrases. The latter may be somewhat more likely to occur in the plural. We speak of "civil liberties" rather than "civil freedoms," for example, while the 1960s featured "freedom riders" rather than "liberty riders" as well as the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and a song about "freedom over me." Yet earlier there were Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Four Freedoms." And Patrick Henry declaimed, "Give me liberty or give me death!" Has there been a shift in usage over time in this respect? We do tend to speak of American slaves as having been freed rather than liberated, while at the time of the Civil War both words were readily employed, along with "emancipated."

Such differences are tenuous and hard to interpret. But one must look beyond the general nouns to other words formed on the same stem. We are, after all, concerned not merely with two words but with two concepts, shaped by the penumbra of connotations of their surrounding word families. A semantic difference in the verbs or adjectives need not mark a significant conceptual distinction, but it may. One must look and see.

Begin with the verbs, "to free" and "to liberate." While often interchangeable, they do display a significant difference already encountered in the etymology: The former can mean removing obstacles to physical movement, even to the movement of inanimate objects; the latter almost never does. Thus our hero manages to free—not liberate—one hand from the bonds with which his captors bound him. One frees—rather than liberates—the lines of a ship, the propeller tangled in

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weeds, the jammed gear lever, the nut immobilized by rust. "Liberate" can apply to objects. In chemistry it means to release an element from combination. And in popular speech there is the originally ironic use from World War II, as meaning to confiscate for one's own use ("I already liberated a wrist watch, three bottles of wine, and a chicken"). But these are exceptions. In general, inanimate objects cannot be liberated, but some can be freed.[77]

When an object is freed, it may be said to become free. It may even be said to have freedom to move ("That loosens it some, but it still doesn't have the freedom to swing all the way over"), though there may be a slight sense of strain or oddness here. But inanimate objects cannot have (gain, lose, and so on) freedom, *tout court*, without some modifying phrase (nor can they have, gain, or lose liberty or liberties).[78]

Next, note that the "liber-" family includes two nouns without counterpart in the "free-" family: "liberation" and "liberator." "Liberation," which entered English relatively late, the earliest dictionary example being from the fifteenth century, has no "free-" family equivalent.[79] There are expressions such as "freeing," "setting free," "giving freedom," and their passive counterparts, but they really correspond to "liberating," "setting at liberty," and so on rather than to "liberation." If one needs a noun for the act of giving or the experience of getting liberty *or freedom*, therefore, "liberation" is likely to be used (though again it will not do for objects). To "liberator," there does correspond the noun "freer," one who frees, but it is infrequently used. Can the existence of two such words in the "liber-" family be taken as suggesting that liberty is more the sort of thing that can be bestowed on others, while freedom must be taken or exercised for oneself? Yet one certainly *can* be said to free someone (not to mention objects).

Still more striking semantic differences are found in the adverbs, for "freely" and "liberally" hardly overlap in meaning at all. This is, of course, because the latter derives from "liberal" rather than "liberty," but it is the only adverb the "liber-" family has. The oldest and still the most common meaning of "liberally" is generously, without stint, though it can also mean in a manner suited to the well-born, or in the manner of a liberal. "Freely" can mean generously, too, but this is only one of its four extant meanings and not the most common. Its oldest and most common meaning is spontaneously, readily, of one's own accord—a meaning without counterpart in the "liber-" family. Thus donating liberally and donating freely may on occasion coincide, but the former is likely to indicate a generous gift, the latter an uncoerced one. However

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interchangeably a theorist may claim to use "freedom" and "liberty," it is a safe bet that (s)he will not use the adverbs that way.

This is even more true of the adjectives, which have almost entirely distinct meanings. "Liberal" carries the moralized status meanings of what is appropriate to the elite, including generosity, leisure (as in the "liberal arts"), open-mindedness; it can also mean adherence to the views and policies these imply. These are not part of the meaning of "free"; and the corresponding noun, "liberality," has no counterpart in the "free-" family. Conversely, the "liber-" family has no general adjective that stands in relation to liberty as the adjective "free" stands to freedom. One may become free by being freed, but one does not, in general, become liberal by being liberated. In general, having freedom coincides with being free, but having liberty neither implies nor is implied by being liberal. The "liber-" family does offer the past participle, "liberated," but its real counterpart is "freed," not "free"; one can be free without having been or being freed.

Because the "liber-" family offers no general adjective, there are no counterparts in it to the many adjectival phrases and compounds formed with "free" (from freestone peaches to freebooters and free-quarter) by which to detect fine differences in meaning. "Free" must serve both word families: Even in contexts where the noun is "liberty" and the verb "to liberate," if a general adjective is needed, "free" will be used. Should one then conclude that the two families are radically different with respect to adjectives or that they must be very similar for a single adjective to be able to serve both?

Some uses of the adjective "free" can be readily paraphrased by expressions from the "liber-" family, but others cannot; the latter reveal further semantic differences. Where "free" is equivalent to "freed" and the verbs are interchangeable, "liberated" can be substituted. In many contexts, "free" is equivalent to "at liberty." Where "free" means unstinting, "liberal" is equivalent. But these expressions cannot serve in the phrase "free of"; nor can "free" be replaced from the "liber-" family where the topic is inanimate objects (free-fall, the free end of a rope, a free-standing structure, the free expansion of a gas, a dust-free environment), or where "free" means without cost (free admission, the freeloader, the free ride, and the free lunch), or where it means spontaneity or readiness of action (a free gift, a free confession). The adjective "free," then, is not just broader and more general than any adjectival locution in the "liber-" family, but broader than all of them put together.

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Still another consequence of the lack of a general adjective in the "liber-" family is that while one can have (acquire, lose, gain, and so on) either freedom or liberty, in general, one can *be* (become, remain, and so on) only free, not "liber-." Or rather, of course one can be liberal, liberated, at liberty, but these expressions mean something quite different from, and more specialized than, being free. Being liberal is only distantly related to liberty, being liberated is only one way of acquiring it, and being at liberty covers only a small part of the range of being free.

In particular, there is no equivalent in the "liber-" family to a free person in the sense of psychic freedom: inner autonomy, ego-strength, authenticity. It is not that only the "free-" family can have psychological reference, for "liberal" can be characterological in its moralized status sense. In its older connotations of magnanimity or nobility of character it might even partly overlap with psychic freedom, though it tends to suggest severe, stoic self-control rather than spontaneity. But even in the sense of magnanimity, being liberal is not the characterological realization of liberty, as being free can be the characterological realization of freedom. And in its now more common sense of generosity, being liberal is but one character trait among others, rather than a general condition of the psyche.

In sum, the semantic differences between freedom and liberty suggested by ordinary usage are multiple, sometimes subtle and hard to interpret, and complexly interrelated. Further work could doubtless improve some of the questionable examples and tentative generalizations present here,[80] but it is unlikely to split the two concepts apart neatly along some single fault line. Still, it is worth summarizing what has been learned.

First, freedom is more likely to be holistic, to mean a total condition or state of being, while liberty is more likely to be plural and piecemeal. Second, freedom is more likely than liberty to be something psychic, inner, and integral to the self. This might tempt one to conclude that liberty is more external and objective, freedom more psychological and subjective. But almost the opposite might also be said, because—third—freedom includes unobstructed space and movement, even of inanimate objects, as liberty does not. An inanimate object cannot suffer psychic conflict or be bound by rules; its freedom can only be physical. In this respect freedom seems more external and objective than liberty.

Fourth, one might venture the hypothesis that, because freedom can concern both the psyche and inanimate objects, and it thus seems both

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more and less objective than liberty, it will seem more complex, mysterious, and "deeper," while liberty will seem to reside securely on the rational surface of things. Thus freedom would be more likely than liberty to generate philosophical puzzlement and to invite metaphysical speculation about its essence.[81]

Liberty seems to connote something more formal, rational, and limited than freedom; it concerns rules and exceptions within a system of rules. It concerns neither objects, incapable of rule-governed conduct, nor the depths of the psyche from which spontaneity springs. At most, in liberality, it implies firm, rational control of those mysterious depths and of the dangerous passions found there, not their expression in action. In other words, although liberty means the absence of (some particular) constraint, at the same time it implies the continuation of a surrounding network of restraint and order. It concerns exemptions within a system of rules: permissions. That is why—in perhaps the only instance where "freedom" flatly cannot be substituted for "liberty"—military leave, and particularly naval shore leave, are called "liberty." A sailor goes on liberty, not on freedom; the release is temporary and limited.

Thus liberty and freedom contrast with different kinds of abuses. The commonly mentioned abuse of liberty is license, the seizing of a spurious permission, *taking* liberties; while freedom abused suggests something like anarchy or chaos, the loss of all boundaries. Freedom threatens to engulf the self, to release uncontrollable and dangerous forces out of the social underclass or the psychic underworld. Liberty implies an ongoing structure of controls, whether of external laws and regulations or the genteel self-control of the liberal gentleman. That, no doubt, is part of its appeal to liberals and Liberals, one reason why John Stuart Mill wrote his essay "On Liberty" rather than on freedom. Radicals, regarding the ills of the polity as systemic, are more likely to be suspicious of the piecemeal reforms, formal guarantees, and ongoing restraints implicit in liberty and to prefer the risks of freedom.

But such generalizations are problematic. Hannah Arendt is hardly a political radical. And political connotations shift with time and history. In the era of the French Revolution, as the meaning of *liberté* expanded and shifted, doubtless drawing its English cousin "liberty" after it, liberals *were* radicals, and Liberals were Philosophical Radicals. In the same way, Third World struggles for independence today are "liberation movements" (and only yesterday the women's movement concerned "women's liberation"), most likely because they began in French

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colonies and were first publicized on a world scale in French, but also because they came so soon after—and claimed an analogy to—the "liberation" of Europe from Nazi occupation in World War II. Meanwhile, our government and the American right speak of antirevolutionary mercenaries in Central America and Africa and of rebellious groups in Eastern Europe as "freedom fighters," presumably on analogy with capitalist "free enterprise" and the "free world."

* * *

Arendt is right, then, and the other theorists are wrong about whether liberty and freedom differ. How much a theorist's neglect of the differences matters doubtless depends on that theorist's claims and purposes. Take Sir Isaiah Berlin's canonical "Two Concepts of Liberty." Berlin's claim about the two nouns is, as already noted, modest: not that no difference exists, but only that he himself will use them "to mean the same."[82] Even this, however, turns out not to be true. First, not surprisingly, Berlin almost always uses "freedom" when explicating the views of a German theorist, "liberty" when discussing a French one (who, indeed, would substitute "freedom" in the expression "liberty, equality, fraternity"?).[83] More important, however, are the regularities relating to the substance of Berlin's argument.

That argument, in brief, distinguishes between a "negative" and a "positive sense" of liberty (or freedom). The former is defined as the absence of interference by others, the latter as concerning *which* people may interfere. The latter is supposed to include both democratic self-government and (for reasons not fully explained) psychic self-mastery. The bulk of the essay undertakes to trace as to how this last idea has been extended, step by theoretical step, into doctrines that rationalize oppression and despotism, the very opposite of true liberty (or freedom). The true and "fundamental sense of freedom [or liberty]," Berlin says, is "freedom from chains, from imprisonment, from enslavement by others. The rest is extension of this sense or else metaphor."[84]

Explicating the "negative sense," Berlin invokes the authority of ordinary usage, appealing to what might "normally" or "naturally" be said, as distinct from what would be "eccentric." Yet the specific claims he makes here are not in accord with ordinary usage. He employs words from both families in making these claims, though the "free-" family predominates; but the claims are false with respect to the "free-" family,

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though they are, or would be, true with respect to the "liber-" family.[85] In this section, Berlin really does use the two families interchangeably, but thereby undermines some of his own claims.

When he turns to the "positive sense," and particularly to psychic self-mastery, he employs the "free-" family almost exclusively.[86] This is in accord with ordinary usage; indeed, many expressions in this section would sound distinctly odd if the "liber-" family were used instead (consider "freedom as self-mastery," "freedom as resistance to [or escape from] unrealizable desire," "freedom as rational self-direction").[87] Berlin is in a bind: For the "positive sense" to include psychic self-mastery, it has to be a sense of "freedom." For the "negative sense" to be as Berlin characterizes it, it has to be a sense of "liberty." But, for Berlin's essay to work at all, they have to be two fundamental senses of a single word (or of an interchangeable pair of words).

As for Arendt, while she is right to insist on significant difference in meaning, she does not get that difference right in terms of ordinary usage, and her forays into etymology are not helpful. If her main concern is the constellation of themes suggested earlier—spontaneity, interpersonal relations, and politicalness—then she is right to contrast it to liberation, for these themes do go beyond the removal or absence of oppression, beyond anything that can be given to or done for us by others. But an important part of the semantic difference here lies within each word family rather than between them. Arendt's "freedom" goes not only beyond "liberation" and "to liberate," but also equally beyond "to free" and "be freed." Not everyone (let alone everything) that is free, or has been freed, has freedom.

Similarly, Arendt is right to oppose her concern to "liberties," since that word implies specific, multiple guarantees, while she intends a general state, even a way of life. The "free-" family does have more holistic connotations. But, again, an important part of the difference lies within each word family, between the singular and the plural. Thus Arendt might have contrasted her "freedom" to "freedoms," or even called it "liberty" and contrasted it to "liberties."[88] Indeed, "liberty" would have offered her this advantage: unlike "freedom," it would have ruled out the inner, psychic concerns Arendt wants to exclude.

The real issue is not, however, whether Arendt chose the right word. There is no right word, let alone word family, corresponding neatly to Arendt's constellation of themes and only to that. If she is to have a single label for the constellation, "freedom" may well be the best choice. The real issue concerns the advantages and costs of such labeling and the

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tone in which it is done; it concerns the relation of ordinary usage to political theory. Both Arendt and Berlin by turns invoke and spurn ordinary usage (and perhaps etymology), wanting the support of its authority but impatient with what appear to be its constraints.[89] They aim not at linguistic scholarship but at political education, and they want to get on with that task. At times the complexities of ordinary usage seem at best a distraction from, at worst an obstacle to, it. And, clearly, some of Arendt's and Berlin's deviations from ordinary usage do yield rhetorical advantages, giving their arguments a perspicuous simplicity and an aura of authority. The regularities of ordinary usage seem, by comparison, confused and politically and pedagogically inconclusive. But the theorists also pay a considerable price for their rhetorical gains.

First, where they depart from ordinary regularities, those regularities continue to echo in their readers' minds, producing confusion. Despite Berlin's explicit declaration, for example, readers are likely to continue assuming that when he writes "liberty" he means liberty (rather than freedom) and when he writes "freedom" he means freedom (rather than liberty). Second, those regularities continue to echo in the theorist's mind as well, so that she or he periodically reverts to ordinary usage, creating further confusion. When Arendt, for example, mentions a "sense" of "freedom" that means precisely what she earlier claimed "freedom" does not mean, the reader is at a loss. Third, lacking explicit awareness of the ordinary regularities, the theorist cannot know the full semantic or rhetorical consequences of changes introduced and may well undermine one argument while striving to enhance another. Berlin's self-defeating appeal to ordinary usage is a case in point.

Other costs are less obvious and easy to demonstrate, but more serious. One concerns the theorist's relationship to the reader and the nature of political education. Neither Arendt nor Berlin, after all, is a mere propagandist, out to convince readers of some proposition. They do want to convince, but they also want to educate and empower their readers for independent investigation, judgment, and (at least in Arendt's case but probably also in Berlin's) action. Their impatience with ordinary usage may facilitate the former goal but impede the latter. It may be rhetorically effective to forestall objections by stipulating your own special usage, as Berlin does, or by pretending access to a word's lost, original, and true meaning, as Arendt does. But such devices will not empower—indeed, they will tend to undermine—the reader's independent judgment. They are likely to drive readers' objections

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underground rather than resolve them; and they sacrifice the potential educative power of making contact with the reader's own tacit knowledge and inarticulate experience.

Finally, neither Arendt nor Berlin is engaged merely in political education. Their theorizing is always also an *investigation* of intellectual and political problems. And that task, too, may be hampered by impatience with the complexities of ordinary usage. What seems like getting on with the substantive job may instead misdirect it. In many cases, if not all, a theorist's deviations from ordinary usage are not random errors, the result of carelessness, but rather mark—and mask—substantive problems in the argument. Berlin avoids problems by insisting on sameness where ordinary usage indicates difference; Arendt avoids problems by insisting on simplified difference where ordinary usage indicates a complex mix of sameness and various differences.

Berlin's disregard of ordinary usage, we saw, hides the fundamental issue of whether he has in fact identified two distinct aspects of a single concept, one of them subject to dangerous theoretical extrapolation: whether there are two and only two relevant aspects, whether he has got them right, whether they are aspects of a single concept, whether and how one of them is more dangerous than the other, and so on. Arendt's deviations from ordinary regularities hide the fundamental issue of whether freedom (or action, or politics) has preconditions or is a perpetual, ineradicable human potential: whether it presupposes liberation or the securing of liberties, whether it can be caused or brought about, whether its loss was inevitable, whether and how that loss can be reversed, whether and how it is related to human needs, interests, and desires, and so on.

Until one knows what the hidden problems are, one cannot begin to assess the costs of keeping them hidden. Until one knows what the existing linguistic regularities are, the impulse to deviate from them should therefore be suspect—not as sin against scholarship or truth but as a clue to some problematic assumption or unresolved difficulty. There are indeed significant differences in meaning between "freedom" and "liberty," significant differences in fact between freedom and liberty. Whoever undertakes to write about these crucial human and political concerns would do well to give respectful attention to those differences and to the language encoding them, which is—after all—the theorist's own.

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NOTES

1. Non-European languages may offer choices in this semantic area. I am told, for instance, that Japanese does so, though the Japanese distinction does not correspond to the English one. For help with this essay, I thank Norman O. Brown, C. Douglas Lummis, Michael Paul Rogin, John H. Schaar, George Shulman, and Sara M. Shumer.

2. Sir Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," in *Four Essays on Liberty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 121. For another example, see Charles A. Beard, "Freedom in Political Thought," in *Freedom: Its Meaning*, ed. by Ruth Nanda Anshen (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1942), 7.

3. Maurice Cranston, *Freedom* (New York: Basic Books, 1967), 32. Compare Benjamin Gibbs, *Freedom and Liberation* (London: Sussex University Press, 1976), 10, who says that the two terms "now have slightly different nuances of meaning" but does not specify what these are.

4. Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Viking Press, 1965), 22.

5. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 25, 22.

6. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 25.

7. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 141, quoting James Fenimore Cooper, *The American Democrat* (1838).

8. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 25.

9. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 25, 33.

10. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 25.

11. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 110, 221.

12. Hannah Arendt, "What Is Authority?" *Between Past and Future* (Cleveland/New York: World, 1961), 91-141, at 95; Hannah Arendt, "On Violence," *Crises of the Republic* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972), 103-98, at 142; Hannah Arendt, "What Is Freedom?" *Between Past and Future*, 143-71, at 145, 155; Arendt, *On Revolution*, 22.

13. Arendt, "What Is Freedom?" 150; Arendt, *On Revolution*, 22.

14. Arendt, "What Is Freedom?" 149.

15. Hannah Arendt, *Willing*, vol. 2 of *The Life of the Mind* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), 5.

16. Except in one passage referring carefully to that particular "notion of liberty implied in liberation"; Arendt, *On Revolution*, 22. At least once, *liberty* is used to mean what Arendt elsewhere calls *freedom*; Arendt, "What Is Freedom?" 155. Other occurrences explicate the view Arendt opposes; Arendt, *On Revolution*, 24, 26.

17. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 121; my italics.

18. Arendt, *Willing*, 203. Still another sense occurs in Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 245.

19. Arendt, *Willing*, 25, 279.

20. Arendt, *Willing*, 121, 221, 236, 279.

21. Arendt, "What Is Freedom?" 148; Arendt, *Willing*, 5.

22. Arendt, "What Is Freedom?" 146, 145, 157.

23. Arendt, *Willing*, 19.

24. Arendt, *Willing*, 220 n. 27.

25. Arendt, *Willing*, 19.

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26. Arendt, *Willing*, 5; Arendt, "What Is Freedom?" 148.

27. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 25.

28. Arendt, *Willing*, 200; my italics; but note that this was an unfinished work, published posthumously, so one should expect some carelessness and misformulation in it.

29. Arendt, *Human Condition*, 32; Arendt, *On Revolution*, 24, 22; but note that these passages concern *isonomia*, not *eleutheria*. See also Arendt, *Human Condition*, 26, on a time in polis life before "action and speech separated," when speech was not yet primarily "a means of persuasion" but simply "the specifically human way of answering, talking back and measuring up to whatever happened and was done."

30. Arendt, "What Is Freedom?" 148.

31. Emile Benveniste, *Indo-European Language and Society*, trans. by Elizabeth Palmer (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1973), 266.

The initial asterisk indicates words that linguists have reconstructed—that is, hypothesized—for whose actual existence there is no independent evidence.

32. Benveniste, *Indo-European*, 266-267.

33. Benveniste, *Indo-European*, 266-267. See also Sigmund Feist, *Vergleichendes Wörterbuch der gotischen Sprache* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1939); Pier Giuseppe Scardigli, *Die Goten, Sprache und Kultur* (Munich: C. Beck, 1964), 54; Wolfgang Krause, *Handbuch des Gotischen* (Munich: C. Beck, 1953), 55.

34. Benveniste, *Indo-European*, 263-264.

35. C. S. Lewis, *Studies in Words* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 111-117, 124-125.

36. Otto Schrader, "Anzeiger," *Indogermanische Forschung* IX (1898), 172-173. Arendt is thus mistaken in ascribing the origin of this theory to the Nazi era.

37. Benveniste, *Indo-European*, 264.

38. Although Benveniste hypothesizes a group-based origin for "freedom" as well as for *libertas* and *eleutheria*, he also says that the former evolved along quite different lines, using notions relating to the individual and not to the society. Emile Benveniste, *Le vocabulaire des institutions indo-européennes, I. économie, parenté, société* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1969), 325. I present my own translation of this somewhat cryptic passage.

Benveniste points out that in ancient Iranian, too, the "word for 'free'... properly signified 'born of the stock.'"; *Indo-European*, 267. Similarly in Indo-Iranian, the word that "free men apply to themselves as opposed to slaves," is also the self-designation of the community, "the antithetic form to . . . 'stranger, slave, enemy.'"; *Indo-European*, 299, 301. Here Benveniste takes the distinction between slave and nonslave to have preceded the ethnic self-designation of a people. But Dieter Nestle thinks that the same word originally meant friendly, true, pious, sweet, and only later nonslave. He also mentions a Langobardian word that first meant fellow-warrior and later came to mean nonslave; *Eleutheria, I. Teil: die Griechen* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1967), 7.

Perhaps initially only the masters, those of the stock or beloved group, spoke the local language so that their self-designation literally coincided with nonslave status. Or perhaps the self-designation of an elite simply dominated the language so that words that literally meant the stock or beloved group were used even by the underlings in the society to designate only the masters. The latter was Nietzsche's view in *The Genealogy of Morals*. Orlando Patterson claims that the concept of freedom was first developed by the slaves, but gives no supporting evidence; *Slavery and Social Death* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 98, 340, 342.

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39. The etymological accounts are cryptic and inconsistent, and they derive from a very few, ambiguous passages. Compare Lewis, *Studies*, 114; Benveniste, *Indo-European*, 264, 299; Kurt Raaflaub, "Zum Freiheitsberiff der Griechen," *Soziale Typenbegriffe im alten Griechenland und ihr Fortleben in den Sprachen der Welt* (vol. 4), ed. by Elisabeth Charlotte Welskopf, (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1981), 108-405, at 186-188, 191-92; Kurt Raaflaub, "Democracy, Oligarchy, and the Concept of the 'Free Citizen' in Late Fifth-Century, Athens" *Political Theory* 11 (November 1983), 517-544, at 521; Nestle, *Eleutheria*, 7-14, 20, 24-27, 29-30; Christian Meier, "Die griechische Polis" in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, vol. 2 of *Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, ed. by Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, and Reinhart Koselleck (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1975), 426-429.

40. Arendt, *Willing*, 220 n. 27; Georg Curtius, Grundzüge der Griechischen Etymologie (Leipzig: B. G. Tuebner, 1879), 496-497; Max Pohlenz, *Freedom in Greek Life and Thought* (New York: Humanities Press, 1966), 181n; T. G. Tucker, *Etymological Dictionary of Latin* (Chicago: Ares, 1976), 139.

41. Pohlenz, *Freedom*, 181n.

42. Tucker, *Etymological Dictionary*, 139.

43. Richard Broxton Onians, *The Origins of European Thought About the Body, the Mind, the Soul, the World, Time, and Fate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951), 472-480. Theodore Thass-Thienemann, *The Subconscious Language* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1967), 207-216.

44. Thass-Thienemann, *Subconscious Language*, 216.

45. Nestle, *Eleutheria*, 11, 14.

46. Benveniste, *Indo-European*, 264.

47. Lewis, *Studies*, 21, 111, 113, 115.

48. Lewis, *Studies*, 113, 115-16.

49. Lewis, *Studies*, 116, quoting Sheridan, *St. Patrick's Day*, II, ii; Raymond Williams, *Keywords*, rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 180, quoting Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*, IV, i.

50. Benveniste, *Indo-European*, 264; Nestle, *Eleutheria*, 14, 19-30; Raaflaub, "Zum Freiheitsbegriff," 189, 192-193; Meier, "Griechische Polis," 426.

51. Kurt Raaflaub, "Freiheit in Athen und Rom: ein Beispiel divergierender politischer Begriffsentwicklung in der Antike," *Historische Zeitschrift* 238 (1984), 529-67, at 563; Raaflaub, "Zum Freiheitsbegriff," 195; Nestle, *Eleutheria*, 31, 34; Meier, "Griechische Polis," 426.

52. Raaflaub, "Freiheit in Athen," 543, 563.

53. Raaflaub, "Democracy," 527-536; Nestle, *Eleutheria*, 16-18.

54. Raaflaub, "Freiheit in Athen," 544-546, 563.

55. Raaflaub, "Democracy," 529.

56. Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War* (New York: Random House, 1951), 104; Raaflaub, "Freiheit in Athen," 546, 564, my translation; Meier, "Griechische Polis," 427.

57. Raaflaub, "Freiheit in Athen," 545-546; Raaflaub, "Democracy," 521.

58. Raaflaub, "Freiheit in Athen," 563-564; Raaflaub, "Democracy," 521; Meier, "Griechische Polis," 428.

59. Raaflaub, "Freiheit in Athen," 546, my translation; I use the Greek *eleutheria* to avoid the problem of how to translate *Freiheit*. Of course the evolution of *eleutheria* does not stop at this point. For later developments, see, for example, Kurt Raaflaub, "Athen's 'Ideologie der Macht' und die Freiheit des Tyrannen," *Xenia* 8 (1984), 45-86.

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60. Raaflaub, "Freiheit in Athen," 532; Jochen Bleicken, "Römische libertas," *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, vol. 2, 430.

61. Raaflaub, "Freiheit in Athen," 553-556.

62. Bleicken, "Römische libertas," 431.

63. Raaflaub, "Freiheit in Athen," 541-543.

64. Raaflaub, "Freiheit in Athen," 547-549.

65. Raaflaub, "Freiheit in Athen," 542, 546-550, 560, 562. See also Chaim Wirszubski, *Libertas as a Political Idea at Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), 11-15.

66. Raaflaub, "Freiheit in Athen," 550; Bleicken, "Römische libertas," 432-435.

67. Lewis, *Studies*, 124-125.

68. Lewis, *Studies*, 125.

69. Hans Kurath, ed., *Middle English Dictionary* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1953). Of course, the fact that we lack an earlier example never proves that a word was not used in a particular way earlier.

70. On the *Sachsenspiegel*, see Christopher Dipper, "Ständische Freiheit: Jura et libertates," *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, vol. 2, 448; Herbert Grundmann, "Freiheit als religiöses, politisches und persönliches Postulat im Mittelalter," *Historische Zeitschrift* 183 (February-June 1957), 23-54, at 50.

71. Paul Ziff, *Semantic Analysis* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1960), 190. The order of "freedom" and "liberty" in the last sentence of the passage seems to have been reversed.

72. I have consulted J. Bonnard and A. Salmon, eds., *Lexique de l'ancien Français* (New York: G. E. Stechert, 1928); Albert Dauzat, Jean Dubois, and Henri Mitterand, eds., *Nouveau dictionnaire etymologique et historique* (Paris: Larousse, 1964); A. J. Greimas, ed., *Dictionnaire de l'ancien Francais* (Paris: Larousse, 1969); Robert Kelham, ed., *Dictionary of the Norman or Old French Language* (East Ardslay, UK: Tabard, 1978); Louise W. Stone, William Rothwell, T.B.W. Reid, eds., *Anglo-Norman Dictionary* (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 1983).

73. Lewis, *Studies*, 117. I have consulted Arthur R. Bordeu, Jr., ed., *Old English Dictionary* (University Press of America, 1982); and T. Northcote Toller, ed., *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, 1954/1898).

74. Lewis, *Studies*, 113, quoting Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, I, 41. Lewis implies that such use also applies to *eleutheria*. If one consults the *Oxford English Dictionary* for uses of "free," meaning the unobstructed motion of inanimate objects, the earliest under Sense 14 ("Of material things: Not restrained in movement") is from 1590, but under Sense 8 ("Of actions, activity, motion, etc.: Unimpeded, unrestrained") there is an example from a 1400 book on surgery: "The necke schall have his free mevynge." Such meanings are not explicitly listed in the Old French dictionaries I have consulted, though—in the absence of illustrative examples—it is difficult to tell whether they are meant to be included in a brief definition like that of Old French *liberal*, meaning modern French *libre*.

75. Arendt points out the important difference between two ways of conceiving freedom in action: as a choice between preexisting alternatives or as the creation of something new; *Willing*, 29, 32, 132.

76. Concerning what is meant by "ordinary usage," see Ziff, *Semantic Analysis*, 2, 15-38; and my *Wittgenstein and Justice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), esp. 7-21.

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77. Animals can be freed or liberated. The latter may sometimes sound somewhat mannered ("Opening the cage, he liberated the bird"), but it need not, in appropriate context. Quail raised in captivity and released for hunting or for the training of hunting dogs are "liberated quail."

78. Note, however, Sense 10 of "freedom" in the *Oxford English Dictionary* ("Physics: Capability of motion"). In fairy tales, of course, inanimate objects can do anything.

79. The *Oxford English Dictionary* mentions only a Latin derivation for "libération," but Williams identifies its immediate forerunner as the French *libération*; *Keywords*, 181. Apparently there was no such word in Old French, though there was in Latin. One dictionary of Old French does list a noun, *liberacion*, but defines it as meaning liberality; Bonnard and Salmon, *Lexique*. The earliest dictionary examples of modern French *liberation* date from the fourteenth century; the earliest *Oxford English Dictionary* example of the English word is from 1440, and the *Middle English Dictionary* also gives fifteenth-century examples.

80. Just as I have, of course, benefited greatly from past work. In addition to the sources cited, I found particularly useful Alan Ryan's "Freedom," *Philosophy* XL (April 1965), 93-112.

81. Any such effect would presumably be reinforced by translation from Continental European philosophy, where German metaphysics addresses *Freiheit*, while French lucidity reasons about *liberté*. (More recently, of course, the French, too, have sought out the murky depths.)

82. Berlin, "Two Concepts," 121.

83. Berlin, "Two Concepts," 136, 151-154, 163-164.

84. Sir Isaiah Berlin, "Introduction," *Four Essays*, lvi. It is not clear whether Berlin intends this as an etymological claim, and, if so, whether only about "freedom" or about "liberty" as well.

85. Berlin, "Two Concepts," 122. One suspects that he thought these claims true because he first formulated them in terms of liberty, then inserted the word "freedom" into some of them, assuming it would make no difference, or even trying deliberately to use the words "interchangeably"; the passages occur immediately after his declaration that he will so use them.

86. "Liberation" and "liberty" occur once each (the latter in a sentence referring back to the "negative sense") and "liberates" twice; words from the "free-" family occur 15 times; Berlin, "Two Concepts," 141-146; the exceptions occur at 142, 144.

87. Berlin, "Two Concepts," 134, 146, 136, 145.

88. Patrick Henry, one supposes, had something like Arendtian "freedom" in mind when he asked to be given either liberty or death. But then again, maybe not; after all, he asked to be *given* it.

89. "Perhaps," because it is not clear whether Berlin's reference to a "fundamental sense" is intended etymologically; see note 84, above.

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