

**BEING AND FREEDOM: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL CRITIQUE OF  
TRANSCENDENTAL PHILOSOPHY AND A DEFENSE OF HEIDEGGER'S  
ONTOLOGY OF FREEDOM**

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation undertakes a phenomenological critique of transcendental philosophy's conception of freedom and advances a defense of Martin Heidegger's ontology of freedom. Rooted in the phenomenological method, it explores the viability of a phenomenological ontology and interrogates how freedom is conceptualized through transcendental subjectivity. The study contends that the dominant discourses on freedom—ranging from classical liberal to postmodern frameworks—remain deeply embedded in notions of mastery, control, and subject-object dualism inherited from transcendental philosophy. These paradigms, rather than emancipating the subject, subtly reinforce structures of domination and exclusion.

By contrast, Heidegger's ontological approach to freedom offers a radically different path: one that grounds freedom not in agency or autonomy but in the primordial openness of Being itself. This ontological freedom is examined as the essence of human existence (Dasein), revealing its ethical and existential implications. Further, the dissertation interrogates whether contemporary liberation movements, especially in subaltern contexts, adequately reflect or obscure the deeper ontological structures that underpin freedom. Through this analysis, the study argues that only a phenomenologically grounded ontology of freedom can overcome the limitations of transcendental frameworks and open the way to a more authentic, non-dominative understanding of human liberation.

**Keywords: Being, Dualism, Inter-subjectivity, Ontology of Freedom, Phenomenology, Transcendental Philosophy, violence,**

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## **Introduction**

The question of freedom has managed to become one of the most daunting philosophical problems. This dissertation aims at making an ontological analysis of freedom. The analysis is premised on the claim that the dominant conception of freedom has obscured the essential structure of freedom. Precisely because the ontological method has not been employed in the analysis of freedom the existing philosophical discourses have not been able to grasp its essential structures which are conditions of possibility for the notion of freedom.

Freedom certainly appears to be a familiar concept but its very familiarity should make us wary of a misapprehension since it's the familiar which usually tends to elude us. Hence despite the boldness with which we confront the subject, it's essential to provide a general framework against which our understanding of freedom can be assessed.

Despite the fact that the problem of freedom has been at the center of many philosophical works within the history of philosophy, it still continues to elude a proper and complete understanding. I do not plan to settle this age-old question nor do I intend to repeat the various arguments that philosophers have forwarded. I pledge rather to shed light on a different aspect of such inquiry. While previous discussions on freedom have largely focused on the conceptual analysis of the term, I endeavor to make an ontological examination of freedom. Hence the paper is necessitated by the need to appreciate not just the conceptual elusiveness that characterizes freedom, but also the inevitability of confronting the seemingly vague relation between being and freedom.

The question of what it means to be free is not a subject that can or at least should be treated in isolation from the question of what it is to be human. The examination of this vague relation shall be conducted against the backdrop of the critique of transcendental philosophy.

Transcendental philosophy is a label generally attached to the philosophies of Kant, Fichte and early Schelling. In this paper, however, the expression is used to refer to the Kantian critical philosophy and to the Husserlian phenomenological approach to philosophy.

The dissertation examines these traditions with a view to analyzing the essential features which typify transcendental philosophy. Transcendental philosophy is characterized by the attempt to understand the fundamental structures of our ordinary experience- it's in a sense a

‘metaphysics of experience’ (Edie, 1964, p. 53). In the history of western philosophy we find various conceptions of the transcendental. Of these varieties three traditions stand out: The Greek, the Kantian and the Phenomenological traditions. These traditions differ considerably; yet they all contend that philosophy is ‘a search for the radical and foundational structures of experience and reality’.

Although the focus of this dissertation is limited to the examination of the second and third traditions, I would like to make an observation about the first variety of the transcendental. In the essentialist and objectivist philosophy of the Greeks, the transcendental is understood in terms of an ‘objective and experienced being. So the transcendental is conceived of as the objective structure of a transcendent reality’ (Ibid).

The Kantian tradition should be appreciated in light of Descartes’ decentering of metaphysics. Descartes was deeply disconcerted by the absence of certain way of acquiring knowledge. He turned to the thinking subject as the only accessible source of knowledge. It was on this apodictic certitude of the coincidence of self with self that Descartes tried to base certain knowledge.

Within the Kantian tradition the transcendental is understood as the objective condition of knowledge and experience. Unlike the Greek tradition, Kant does not take the transcendental to be the object of knowledge rather as ‘the immanent structure of knowledge’.

This tradition articulated the human condition largely from the perspective of the transcendental subject. As such freedom is understood to be the property of man. The dominant discourse pertaining to freedom is the Kantian conception of freedom. Kant identified freedom with the autonomy of the will which ultimately boils down to a willful mastery of oneself and others. This overly-hyped significance attached to mastery, I believe, is the direct consequence of the subject-object dichotomy which was born out of the Cartesian cogito and culminated in Kant’s transcendental subject. This dominant discourse on freedom is problematic for at least two reasons: first the conception of freedom as free will has given rise to the treatment of nature in general and human relation in particular as a field of battle wherein various processes of subjectification have been perpetrated. The second and equally distressing problem pertains to the resulting emancipatory discourse i.e. the enlightenment project. In his ‘Was ist Aufklärung?’ Kant defined enlightenment as ‘emancipation from self-incurred tutelage’. (1784, 1) Here one

needs to take note of the fact that freedom is taken to be a precondition for enlightenment i.e. it's only by achieving freedom that we can enlighten ourselves. However, this expression seems to be less concerned with the question of whether we possess the capacity to liberate ourselves or not- making its approach questionable, even worse it seems to betray an unjustified belief on the capacity of humans to free themselves from the actions and beliefs that condemned them to subjection. But most notably the universalizing tendency of the enlightenment project has been called into question.

The enlightenment project and its critiques, from within the western epistemological sphere as well as from without, have, invariably, endorsed freedom as a possession i.e. the property of the subject. While the former identifies it with the autonomous individual who is capable of determining his own ends, liberation philosophy and such other emancipatory discourses as postcolonial philosophy, set against the aspiration of the enlightenment project, see freedom as the property not of human beings but of the dominator, the subjugator and the colonizer. Nonetheless both liberation and postcolonial philosophies have been transfixed by the charms of the dominant conception of freedom enunciated by the enlightenment project. This dubious conception which they have subscribed to deems freedom to be 'the unconditioning of the other'. It implies a reversal of positions; such a reversal of positions which happens to be an essential aspect of freedom seems inextricably intertwined with 'exteriority' i.e. it involves 'the other' since I can only be free only in as much as an 'other' remains in a state of unfreedom. Consequently it's essentially dominating, subjugating and oppressing. The vicious circle which ensues from such a conception of freedom must be seen as the inadvertent legacy of the enlightenment project because the practices of freedom set themselves against the camouflaged irrationality of western modernity.

Thus it should be noted that the resentful responses from the peripheral south in the form of various practices of freedom, albeit diametrically opposed to the one proposed by the enlightenment project, are direct offsprings of the latter. Nationalist movements in general and anticolonial struggles in particular can be mentioned as some of these reactions against enlightenment project's procrustean penchant.

In an impulsive attempt to ensure the 'provincialization' of the dominant discourse, nationalist movements stood opposed to the supposedly absolutistic enlightenment discourse which, they

believed, threatened to annihilate the ontological and cultural specificity of the 'other'. The way these movements reacted to the epistemological and cultural onslaught of the enlightenment project echoes Dussel's unequivocal insistence on the need for the 'unconditioning of the other with respect to the world in which *I* am always the center' (Dussel, 1985, 44). Dussel further strengthens his position by saying that 'without exteriority there is neither freedom nor personhood. The fact of freedom, of free choice, is discovered only in the unconditioning of the other's behavior.' (Ibid, 45) The conception of freedom in terms of antagonistic relation between 'the same' and 'the other' is nothing other than a continuation of the misguided and vaunted enlightenment understanding of freedom as possession epitomized by mastery (of the self as well as the others). In the same spirit of resentment Dussel labels the Kantian emphasis on the mastery of the self 'the individualization of the collective personal experience' which he attributes to 'European bourgeois revolution'.

Although the influence previously enjoyed by the Kantian conception of man and his relation with himself and with the world seems to be on the wane, it still tends to betray its existence in the practices of freedom that are widely accepted in the post-modern world. This is to mean that these practices are more or less direct or indirect results of the transcendental conception of man introduced by Rene Descartes and brought to its full fruition by Kant. Accordingly a critique of these discourses will inevitably have to allude to the critiques directed at this foundational structure built by modern philosophy.

There're two ways through which the universalistic western philosophy may be challenged. We could make a wholesale rejection of it and try to attack it from without. But this can only succeed if one manages to acquire a critical tool from the non-western cultural and historical experience. The second path which one could follow is better expressed by Santos: 'there're various conceptions that were produced in the West but could not be included merely because they did not fit the political objectives of colonialism and capitalism'- this can be referred to as the attack from within- a path I chose to tread. Given the general acclaim Heidegger's work has received it would be naïve of me to contend that he forms a member of those stifled voices that Santos is alluding to. However one needs only a glance to the bulk of literature produced on the subject of freedom to discern the complete (if I may be so bold) absence of Heidegger's name. The radical nature of Heidegger's ontological analysis of freedom coupled with the neglect with which this

analysis has been treated left me with no other choice but to conclude that Heidegger's conception of freedom failed 'to fit the political objectives of colonialism (neocolonialism) and capitalism'.

It's my firm belief that the emancipatory discourses upon which our conception of freedom is contingent can be effectively challenged by embarking on an ontological analysis of the relation between being and freedom. Despite the apparent contradiction and self-destruction some detect in employing the phenomenological method for ontological inquiry, one can safely claim, following Heidegger, that earlier ontological inquiries failed precisely because they were not able to call upon this method. In a spirit of atonement Heidegger has carried out a highly meticulous analysis of ontology through phenomenology thereby adumbrating how the examination of Being illumines the understanding of freedom.

Despite the obvious fact that Heidegger does not deal with freedom (at least not explicitly) in *Being and Time*, some have suggested that freedom happens to be one, if not the only, of the objectives at which his work is directed. In line with this position I believe that we can work out a theory of freedom which emanates from a particular understanding of the being of human beings. More exactly it aims at forging a parallel between the ontological status of human beings and freedom.

It's within this context that we understand Heidegger's works on freedom as a critique of the constituting subject. While much of earlier literature on freedom focused on the conceptual and linguistic clarity of the notion, Heidegger's analysis can be seen as a big stride towards the ontological conception of freedom.

The failure to grasp the indispensability of making an ontological examination in the analysis of freedom, among others, has resulted in a rather problematic model of freedom. The conception of freedom in terms of the property of the will does not only undermine the primordial relation between being and freedom but it also obscures in the words of Arendt 'the phenomenal reality of worldly freedom'. The ontology of freedom, on the other hand, lends greater support to the affirmation of the 'worldliness and contingency' of freedom.

The dissertation analyzes the shift from the attempt to discover a fixed essence (undertaken by the philosophical projects of Descartes and Kant) to a study of the existential life of man- to the

study of man as a being which dwells, comports and interacts with others (successfully articulated by Heidegger's ontology).

Though this dissertation surveys the works of various phenomenological and existential philosophers, greater emphasis will be accorded to Heidegger. The generous use of Heidegger is aimed at unraveling the political implications of his works with a view to grasping the level of ontological commitment in his analysis of freedom. As Hubert Dreyfus asserts Heidegger happens to be ardent critique of the Cartesian idea of a self-transparent subject and the related Kantian ideal of autonomous agency- but his significance is not limited to refuting the Kantian conception of freedom as many have maintained. I shall argue, contrary to the overwhelming opinion that freedom remains to be at the core of his thoughts. On the basis of this argument I shall examine his works in order to show the progress history of philosophy has made towards unraveling the abstruse relation existing between being and freedom.

With the above objective in view the dissertation is divided into four parts and six chapters. The first part is divided into two chapters. The first chapter is a discussion of the genesis and structure of transcendental philosophy. I shall endeavor to examine the various models of transcendental philosophy from within the western epistemological spectrum. The analysis of the Cartesian Cogito and Kant's transcendental subject indicates the theoretical foundation of the dominant conception of freedom. The chapter insists on the elusive relation between the epistemological and ethico-political realms. To be more precise, it illumines the epistemological basis of the dominant conception of freedom. The second chapter examines the phenomenological method with two purposes in view. First it aims at showing the need for removing the transcendental enclosure of phenomenology.

The second part consists of one chapter which demonstrates the phenomenological method in action. This chapter undertakes a phenomenological analysis of the practices of freedom. This analysis operates on the assumption that the influence of the dominant conception of freedom extends to such diametrically opposed strands of thought as postmodernism. The examination of postmodernism and the conception of freedom it advocates aim at drawing a parallel between the Kantian/ dominant conception of freedom and postmodern counterpart. Furthermore, nationalism and the conception of freedom generally entailed by nationalist movements are discussed in this chapter. The discussion of these movements aims to indicate, inter alia, the specificity of the

human condition and the historicity of freedom. As such this chapter deals with the political implications of two apparently competing but actually complementing conceptions of freedom.

The third part is concerned with the ontological analysis of freedom. This part is categorized into two chapters. Even though ontological analysis may be interpreted in a number of ways, the use of the term in this dissertation must be appreciated in light of the attempt to examine the basic background assumptions which determine the field within which the notion of freedom is intelligible. Accordingly the fourth chapter lays bare the three basic assumptions that structure the context of freedom: epistemological claim, ethical claim and existential claims. Central to my argument in this chapter is that there's an inherent relation between the claim to possess truth (epistemological claim), the conception of the good (ethical claim) and a certain mode of existence (existential claim). The possibility of genuine freedom, by and large, depends on the successful articulation of these conditions.

The fifth chapter specifically focuses on Heidegger's rejection of the 'Kantian and by extension Husserlian meaning-giving transcendental subject'. The chapter examines Heidegger's existential analysis of Dasein. Most importantly it evaluates the existential and ontological notions of freedom that Heidegger's works sanction. Being-in-the-world and Being-with serve as the foundation for a 'subject dependent on shared social practices' which ultimately enables Heidegger to take due cognizance of the inter-subjective demand of a genuine conception of freedom.

The last part comprises of a chapter which focuses on a critical appraisal of phenomenological inter-subjectivity. It expounds on the two ways that Heidegger's ontological analysis of freedom can be complemented with. A discussion of Maurice Merleau Ponty points out Heidegger's failure to appreciate the significance of the body in the situatedness of Dasein. The second section analyzes Arendt's notion of political action with a view to demonstrating the need for an open space for freedom to make its appearance. Despite Heidegger's less vociferous but highly illuminating notion of freedom he could not provide the kind of space that a practical conception of freedom requires. Arendt should be credited with supplying the missing piece for practical freedom i.e. her analysis of political action should be appreciated against the backdrop of the ontological analysis of freedom which stands in need of the political space that Arendt's work vouchsafes.

## **PART ONE- TRANSCENDENTAL PHILOSOPHY AND THE CONCEPTION OF FREEDOM IT SANCTIONS**

### **CHAPTER ONE- The Genesis of Transcendental Philosophy and the Notion of Freedom-**

#### **1.1.The Epistemological Turn**

##### **1.1.1. An Introductory Exposition**

This chapter deals with the major tenets of transcendental philosophy with special emphasis on two of the major figures of modern philosophy- Rene Descartes and Immanuel Kant. The chapter examines the basic themes of Cartesian and Kantian philosophies with two major objectives in view. The first and probably the most important objective I set out to achieve under this chapter is to try and accentuate the development of the causal conception of freedom, which I will argue, owes its inception to Cartesian dualism. Next I will discuss the Kantian conception of the transcendental subject since no discussion on freedom would be complete without making an appraisal of the transcendental subject- especially one which tries to refute the idea of freedom as willful mastery. Accordingly this chapter discusses the major features of the transcendental subject and the various processes of subjectification it gave rise to.

Moreover, it seems fairly clear that both Heidegger and Foucault claim to be working against the model of freedom as autonomous rational willing. Hence a fuller understanding of Heidegger and Foucault's project (relating specifically to freedom) requires an appreciation of the transcendental Philosophical tradition they set out to overcome. More specifically these two thinkers posit their works on freedom, so argues Nichols, against 'the backdrop of the philosophy of the constituting subject' which they take to be the legacy of modern philosophy.

Descartes is rightly credited with the acclaim 'the father of modern philosophy' and despite the rejection of some of his ideas, he continues to engage students of philosophy in different parts of the world. One of his grand achievements has been the successful shift of the focus of philosophy from metaphysical questions to the problem of knowledge. From ancient philosophy down to the medieval scholasticism, philosophers have been taken by such metaphysical questions as the relation between the universal and the particular, form and matter, etc. In short, these philosophers were not as much interested with the question of 'what can be known?' as they were with 'what is real?'

It was Descartes who brought epistemological matters to the center of philosophy. It was not just the questions he posed that made Descartes so influential but also the way in which he stated the questions- instead of asking ‘what can be known? Or what can be doubted? As it was customary among previous philosophers whenever epistemological questions took center stage, he would rather ask ‘what can I know? Or what can I doubt?’ This seemingly trivial difference would prove, as we shall see in the course of this chapter, to be of enormous influence on subsequent philosophies.

The inauguration of modern philosophy signaled by Cartesian philosophy was necessitated, *inter alia*, by the need to cast doubt on authoritative knowledge. The Aristotelian influence further strengthened by the church, despite the great intellectual edifice it has built, was seen as a major obstacle to knowledge.

Descartes sought to lay the sciences on firm foundation by dispensing with the highly regarded traditional authorities. The lack of certainty pertaining to the existing methods of acquiring knowledge disconcerted him more intensely than even contemporary skeptics who viewed the possibility of certain knowledge as nothing more than wishful thinking. The reformation called into question the one certainty that people had settled in- religious truth. The skepticism current during Descartes’ time was a result mainly of the conflicting positions pertaining to religious truth. However Descartes was not content to limit his suspicion to religious truth- he saw no reason to believe that worldly affairs were better equipped to find certain knowledge than their religious counterparts. Eventually the enormous amount of opinions existing at the time allowed many to come to the belief that knowledge was not just possible but actually attainable. However this range of opinions gave Descartes, who was by no means immune from the skepticism current during his time, plenty of reasons to come to the contrary conclusion and attribute this difficulty to the absence of a reliable method by which the problem of knowledge can be overcome.

In the end ‘the long conflict with Scholasticism, which had been carried on with ever increasing energy and ever sharper weapons, was brought by Descartes to a victorious close’ (Flackenberg, 1893, 45). Descartes did not only abandon the supposed primacy of metaphysics but he also tried to pave the way for independent philosophical search for truth without appealing to authorities of

a secular or religious form. However, the success of this latter endeavor is very much questionable in as much as he tried to sneak God in the back door.

### **1.1.2. The Cogito**

In the First Meditation Descartes argued ‘..... I ought no less carefully to withhold my assent from matters which are not entirely certain and indubitable than from those which appear to me manifestly to be false, if I am able to find in each one some reason to doubt, this will suffice to justify my rejecting the whole’ (1955, 89). Nevertheless his claim that we should not accept anything about which we can entertain the slightest of doubts should not induce us to believe that Descartes renounces knowledge as unattainable. Although Descartes has been labeled a skeptic for his mistrust of what went by the name of knowledge, he differs from the latter not simply in the ultimate result he had achieved but also by the motive he had in mind. Unlike the traditional skeptic, Descartes ‘disputed only the certitude of the knowledge previously attained, not the possibility of knowledge’ (Flackenberg, 1893, 48), hence he should be seen as a skeptic only in a qualified sense.

With a view to winnowing out those beliefs about which it’s possible to have doubts Descartes employed the famous, or in some circles infamous, ‘methodic doubt’. This methodological instrument used two-fold argument to sort out all dubitable propositions- the dream argument and the evil-demon argument. To the extent that understanding Descartes’ line of argument gives us access to his dualistic approach to the problem of knowledge, I will discuss his response to the problem in greater depth.

In the dream conjecture Descartes wondered whether our ordinary supposition that we are awake and perceive things normally might be called into question. He argued that he was used to realizing to be an illusion in a state of waking what he thought to be real in a state of dreaming- so what guarantee is there that he’s not dreaming at that particular point in time? However, Descartes did not press the dream conjecture far enough for obvious reasons. For one, since whatever is conceived in a dream presupposes a state of waking one would be compelled to accept as real what one had questioned previously. But most importantly the dream argument fails to cast doubt on all beliefs that Descartes had hitherto held. ‘... Whether I am awake or asleep, two and three always form five, and the square can never have more than four sides, and it does not seem possible that truths so clear and apparent can be suspected of any falsity or

uncertainty' (Descartes, 1955, 92). So truths of geometry and arithmetic could not be affected by the dream argument; but does this mean that they're indubitable?

Passing the test of the dream argument by no means guarantees the certainty of a proposition like two plus three equals five because Descartes comes up with a stronger thought experiment in the form of 'the evil-demon' argument. The state of certainty in which we find ourselves regarding arithmetic and geometric truths, though enduring in the face of the first argument, seem to succumb to the second which Descartes explains in the following manner: '... some evil genius... has employed his whole energies in deceiving me; I shall consider that the heavens, the earth, colours, figures, sound and all other external things are nought but the illusions and dreams of which this genius has availed himself in order to lay traps for my credulity' (Ibid, 94).

Generally speaking, 'the doubt of Descartes is not the expression of a resigned spirit which renounces the unattainable; it is precept, not doctrine, the starting point of philosophy, not its conclusion, a methodological instrument in the hand of a strong and confident longing for truth, which makes use of doubt to find the indubitable (Flackenberg, 1893, 48). In the *Meditations*, which is of the profoundest originality, Descartes implicitly states his aim in using the method of doubt to be the craving for laying the foundation for all subsequent knowledge in the course of which he refutes not only those who held various beliefs without proper examination but also the skeptics who saw in the search for certain knowledge nothing more than a futile undertaking. One of the achievements of the *Meditations* involves its claim that 'knowledge alone is certain which is self-attained and self-tested—and this cannot be learned or handed down; it can only be rediscovered through examination and experience. Instead of taking one's own unsupported conjectures or the opinions of others as a guide, the secret of the search for truth is to become independent and of age, to think for oneself; and the only remedy against the dangers of self-deception and the ease of repetition is to be found in doubting everything hitherto considered true' (Ibid). As we shall see in the subsequent discussions Descartes' attempt to rid knowledge of any authoritative foundation -religious as well as historical- is coextensive with a belief, probably a far-fetched one at the time, in the capacity of the individual to attain truth without appeal to its traditional custodians (neither to the Church nor to Aristotle) - heralding the birth of the transcendental subject.

In trying to arrive at an indubitable truth, Descartes finally comes face to face with one clear and distinct idea viz. the thinking being or the cogito:

*'...of a surety I myself did exist since I persuaded myself of something (or merely because I thought of something). But there's some deceiver or other, very powerful and very cunning, who ever employs his ingenuity in deceiving me. Then without doubt I exist also if he deceives me, and let him deceive me as much as he will, he can never cause me to be nothing so long as I think that I am something... this proposition- I am, I exist, is necessarily true each time that I pronounce it, or that I mentally conceive it'* (Descartes, 1955, 96-97). So the existence of a conscious being is established as irrefutable truth.

By going into the realm of doubt much deeper than the skeptics, 'Descartes furnished philosophy with a settled point of departure in self-consciousness, offered her a method sure to succeed in deduction from clear and distinct conceptions, and assigned her the mechanical explanation of nature as her most imperative and fruitful mission' (Flackenberg, 1893, 45). Accordingly, Descartes was keen to point out that we are acquainted only with the contents of our consciousness laying the foundation for phenomenology. Though its contents may be denied consciousness itself would have to be granted.

The result of his meticulous inquiry is expressed in the following terms: 'I doubt or deny, then, that the world is what it appears to be, that there is a God, that external objects exist, that I have a body, that twice two are four. One thing, however, it is impossible for me to bring into question, namely, that I myself, who exercise this doubting function, exist- though 'everything may be a mistake; yet the being mistaken, the thinking is not a mistake. Everything is denied, but the denier remains' (Ibid, 47). Descartes has finally found a clear and distinct idea upon which he was desperate to erect the whole epistemological edifice.

Once the cogito is established beyond any form of doubt, Descartes undertakes the task of proving the existence of God and the external world. Proving the existence of God was crucial to his whole philosophy in much the same way as it was to scholastic philosophers though he does not claim to share their conviction that 'I believe to understand'. Descartes invokes various arguments to prove the existence of God two of which relied on the causal principle that he had

developed and it reads; ‘now it’s manifest by the natural light that there must at least be as much reality in the efficient and total cause as in its effect... And it follows, not only that something cannot proceed from nothing but likewise that what is more perfect- that is to say, which has more reality within itself- cannot proceed from the less perfect’ (Descartes, 1955, 113). This simply means that the idea of an infinite being which Descartes found within himself cannot be caused by him who is evidently a finite being, hence there must be an infinite being who is the only one capable of implanting this idea in him. I will return back to the issue of causation in the subsequent sections but for the moment it suffices to say that this causal principle is the distant progenitor of the conception of freedom as the property of the will.

The external world was another entity that Descartes felt hard pressed to prove. The external world does not only mean other minds and all other components of nature but it also included one’s body to the extent that its existence had not been proved by the method of doubt- what the cogito proved was that Descartes was a thinking being. In this regard one can say that he left the world worse than he had found it in so far as the problem of the external world did not exist prior to his methodic doubt (at least not in the way he formulated it) and his predecessors were all the better for it. But once Pandora’s Box was opened, there’s no going back that it left Kant wondering ‘it’s a scandal that no one is successful in proving the existence of the external world’. His response to this problem will be discussed in the subsequent sections.

### **1.1.3. Cartesian Dualism**

The clearest statement of the mind-body dualism is given in the Sixth Meditation though the primary objective of this last meditation is to distinguish between the action of the understanding and that of the imagination, as he calls it. ‘Because on the one side, I have a clear and distinct idea of myself in as much as I am only a thinking and unextended thing, and as, on the other, I possess a distinct idea of body, in as much as it’s only an extended and unthinking thing, it’s certain that this I {that is to say, my soul by which I am what I am}, is entirely and absolutely distinct from my body, and can exist without it’ (Descartes, 1955, 152). Despite the argument of some that Descartes’ separation of the mind from the body is not as total as the history of philosophy has made us believe, Descartes does not leave any room for imagination in expounding the complete separation of the mind from the body. As such, ‘mind and body are

perceived by the intellect to have mutually exclusive essences, thinking and nonextended as opposed to non-thinking and extended' (Hatfield in Emmanuel, 19).

Heidegger states the novelty of Cartesian dualism in the following manner 'Prior to Descartes everything that was present at hand for itself counted as a "subject"; but now the "I" becomes the privileged subject, that in relation to which the other things are determined as such' (Carr, 1999, 17). Evidently western philosophy is not alien to dualistic approaches to the problems of philosophy- it can be traced at least as far back as Plato- the legacy of whom has come down to the modern philosophy through Aristotle and scholastic teaching. 'In Aquinas, as in other writers, the influence of the ethico-religious dualisms and their philosophical elucidations is comingled with the Aristotelian distinction between matter and form' (Balz, 1918, 214). While some of them might have been motivated by philosophical interest the tendency of the others towards dualism can only be justified by appealing to a religious or scientific impetus - still others, to whose company Descartes belongs, might have been impelled by a combination of two or more of these reasons.

“When I examine the nature of body” Descartes wrote to one critic, “I just do not find anything in it which savours of thought” (Cottingham, 1992, 251). It's not simply the division of total reality into two categories that is responsible for a convoluted and asymmetric relation (which characterizes modern history) between entities but it's mainly attributed to the contemptuous treatment of one in relation to the other. Descartes' callous attitude, which he probably inherited from the ancients as well as the scholastics, towards the body is testament to the truth of this fact- while the body represents metaphysically (the material object), epistemologically (the finite and the knowable), ethically (the impure), and politically (the controllable), the mind/soul stands for the spiritual subject, the infinite and the knowing, the pure and the controlling- harbinger of the various forms of oppression that we are heir to- colonialism, slavery, bigotry, and chauvinism to mention but few.

#### **1.1.4. The Limits of Cartesian Dualism**

This last part of the section contains a two-fold attack on Cartesian philosophy in general and Cartesian dualism in particular. The level of these critiques can be encapsulated in the following manner: epistemological and existential.

As we can gather from the forgoing discussion, it was due mainly to Descartes' rigorous philosophical endeavor that the central concern of philosophy became the theory of knowledge. Even though his philosophy or to be more exact his methodological approach to questions of philosophical significance has received universal acclaim, critics have still managed to identify substantial limitations in his thought. I will not delve into the criticisms laid against his work rather I intend to indicate how some of the points made in the 'Mediations' and to some extent in the 'Discourse on Method' have unwittingly led to philosophies and practices which promote and further various systems of domination and oppression. These systems of domination are sustained by the epistemological and existential hiatus caused by the Cartesian account of dualism. I will now continue to discuss the logical consequences of Cartesian thought: epistemological determinacy and existential impasse.

### **Epistemological Determinacy**

The first problem in Descartes' work which I want to draw attention to involves his claim in his replies to the objections made by 'certain Men of Learning' that the overcoming of doubt marks the end of all inquiry or in his words 'there is nothing more to look for...'. Once the cogito is established, once the clearness and distinctness of the cogito is shown then the task is complete. 'The postulation of this closure, an epistemological finitude, has to raise the question of what is involved in the expression 'nothing more'. What is expressed?' (Benjamin, 1993, 47). What does the 'nothing more' really represent, if not the material i.e. the body and the external world? 'Any answer to this question must involve having to address the ontology of the object because it is the implicit and structuring presence of this ontology that sustains the 'nothing more'' (Ibid). The subject decides the objective status of the object- the subject decides whether the object is worth examining, when to examine it and how to examine it. It's not only that the terms and conditions of knowing are dictated by the subject that this approach is in danger of advocating but eventually the reduction of the object to nothingness, to non-existence. This danger is insurmountable mainly because Descartes had begun with the isolated subject. In other words, arriving at the clear and distinct ideas required what Taylor calls 'a disengaged perspective'.

We must never forget that Descartes' philosophical inquiry is aimed at attaining truth. In the words of Williams, '(the) project takes the form of undertaking exactly the same task as any other enquirer, namely that of trying to find the truth; but of undertaking that task, unlike other

enquirers, from the very beginning. To do this, Descartes regards the Method of Doubt as the right instrument; more than that, he regards it as quite obviously the right instrument' (2005,20). However, the Method of Doubt requires a disembodied mind which in turn means that the attainment, nay even the search for truth depends on the complete separation of the two substances though not in the Platonic sense since 'the Cartesian soul frees itself not by turning away (like Platonic dualism) but by objectifying embodied experience' (Taylor, 146).

For Descartes discerning 'the ontological cleft' between itself and the object is a crucial step in the realization of the subject's distinct status. 'The material world including one's body should be seen by disengaging oneself from the usual embodied perspective. We have to objectify the world, including our own bodies, and that means to come to see them mechanistically and functionally, in the same way that an uninvolved external observer would' (Ibid, 145). Such objectification of the body puts it in a position of inferiority vis-à-vis the mind ultimately paving the way for its control. The universalist and essentialist character of modernity (expressed in such claims as 'my method would reveal every truth for the knowledge of which human reason is adequate') can be traced back to Descartes' seemingly innocent search for absolute certainty. The result of this instrumental rationality drawn out of 'the cogito' is the complete obliteration of the possibility of mutual relation between the subject and the object.

It's absolutely essential, besides, that the subject is not transformed into an object of knowledge if the lopsided relation between the subject and the object is to be maintained and Descartes ensures that this is so when he says that the 'I itself cannot be imagined, in the way that we are able to have sensory images of, or to form "in the imagination" a concrete image of a body (Hatfield in Emmanuel, 15).

Descartes goes a long way in trying to convince his readers, especially in his replies to the objections mentioned above, that the cogito is not a result of deduction rather being self-evident it's merely grasped through intuition. 'The proposition I am, I exist is necessarily true whenever it is put forward by me or conceived in my mind.' In other words, the proposition that I exist is self-verifying. I cannot assert it or think it without its being true (Scrutton, 1995, 29). This simply means the proposition, "I think, therefore I am," is not to be considered a deduction from the major premise, "Whatever thinks exists". On the contrary, the latter is directly inferred from the former.

‘If my existence is revealed by my activity of thought, if my thought is my being, and the converse, if in me thought and existence are identical, then I am a being whose essence consists in thinking’ (Ibid). This is to mean that the extent of the knowability of the object is determined by the unknowable subject in whom existence and thinking are merged. To the extent that existence depends on thinking (or more broadly on rationality) the unrational that is to mean the non-rational as well as the irrational is non-existent (or existent only as an object of knowledge).

So long as we are by definition confined to one world, getting to the other is equally by definition impossible (Balz, 1918, 203). The epistemological determinacy, the finitude suffered by the object (the other) narrows down the horizons of possibilities that would otherwise have allowed for self-expression ultimately culminating in the complete denial of the experiences and practices of ‘the other’.

### **Existential Impasse**

Since it’s no longer essential to pay much attention to Descartes’ futile attempt to salvage his body and the external world by invoking an omnipotent and benevolent God, I will focus on his more fundamental and serious claim that there might not be a body much less anything resembling an external world.

The Second Meditation ‘could be described in part as enacting a systematic elimination of the body. It is as though the body has become waste’ (Benjamin, 2005, 31). Descartes actually exhibits a great deal of subtlety in setting out the elimination. The birth or rebirth of the body under conditions of epistemological necessity is what I call ‘the elimination of the body’. That will allow for the domain of knowledge to be determined by the solitary activity of the subject.

Descartes is able to discover some things about the “thing that thinks” such as experiences of doubting, affirming, understanding, willing, desiring, imagining (Hatfield in Emmanuel, 15), but most importantly he is quick to point out, in his reply to the objections made by one of the ‘Men of Learning’, somehow furiously, that the ‘I’ which is a ‘thinking thing’ cannot be material. The process of eliminating the body cannot be successfully achieved without first delineating the boundaries within which each entity was supposed to comport itself. According to Taylor, ‘the new model of rational mastery which Descartes offers presents it as a matter of instrumental control. To be free from the illusion which mingles mind with matter is to have an understanding

of the latter which facilitates its control' (1989, 149). So Cartesian rationality provided the metaphysical and epistemological basis for the domination and subjugation of what Santos calls 'the subaltern' by the hegemonic power of the West.

Heidegger accuses Descartes of failing to demonstrate the same vigor to the discussion of our 'being' which he apparently displayed in his exposition of the 'thinking thing': 'Descartes, to whom one attributes the discovery of the 'cogito sum' as the point of departure for all modern philosophical questioning, investigates the cogitare of the ego- within certain limits. But the 'sum' he leaves completely undiscussed, even though it's just as primordial as the cogito (2010, 45). He then vows to 'work out of the unexpressed ontological foundations of the 'cogito sum''. However this complaint should not lead us to believe, as is often the case, that he had a problem with the turn towards 'individual subjectivity' he was rather perturbed by Descartes' reluctance 'to ask the necessary questions that follow from it: what is the 'subject', this entity that I am? How does my being show up to me as I ask about it? What do I mean when I say 'I am'?' (Shockey, 2010, 288). Because Descartes does not follow through the problem he raised, he failed to raise the most basic question- the one that matters to us most viz. what is the being that we are and also 'what connection our being has with being in general' (Ibid).

Nonetheless we should not forget that Descartes' failure to raise this basic question is not due to a lack of interest or of ingenuity on his part, it's rather the necessary outcome of the epistemological edifice he had built. He makes frequent allusions to his interest to rescue science from the skeptics and the price he had to pay for the successful refutation of the skeptics seems to me to be the embodied subject. Let me try to explain this point further- Descartes saw that science or rather knowledge in general was in danger of being thrown out as nothing more than mere opinion because of the devastating attack coming from the skeptics. The only possible option he had, so he thought, was to launch what Williams calls 'preemptive skepticism' with a view to putting knowledge beyond the reach of the skeptics; he did manage to launch his skepticism to the fullest extent possible and really believed that he had found the foundation upon which certain knowledge might be constructed. His maxim was, as we can gather from the aforementioned discussion, 'I should not accept anything about which I can entertain the slightest doubt' and the only clear and distinct idea was found to be the mind even the body could not pass the test of the method (had it not been for God Descartes would have remained to

be a bodyless mind). So in the end he had to separate the mind and the body- so to put it bluntly, Descartes was forced into his dualism by the need to save knowledge from the skeptics.

Probably this also explains Shockey's claim that 'it never occurred to Descartes that I do not show up to myself in my being as a substance' (2010, 288). Although it's wise to understand his position it would amount to naiveté to go as far as condoning it.

Descartes' exclusion of the possibility that the object might contain powers which lie beyond the understanding of the subject echoes Santos' remark that 'the understanding of the world by far exceeds the western understanding of the world' (2014, VIII). This is illustrative of a point I made earlier in the chapter that the 'knowing subject' sets the rules of the game, so to say.

Heidegger points out the defects of the Cartesian inquiry which was presumably directed at vouchsafing an 'ontologically adequate account of knowing'. 'The initial interpretation of human knowledge as an isolated relation between two present-at-hand entities entirely omits the phenomenon of the world; to arrive at a viable concept of the world one must recognize that any account of the human way of being must make use of it from the outset (Mulhall, 1996, 45-46). Hence we cannot have a deeper understanding of man without taking into consideration the world within which he finds himself.

For Heidegger we are coping beings already involved in the world i.e. we do not come to be in the world in the way that 'a water is in the glass or the lecture hall is in the university or in the way 'the cogito' is in the world. Heidegger is unequivocal in distancing himself from the Cartesian model of human relation- 'subject and object are not the same as Dasein and world' (2010, 60).

Thus the Cartesian model of human relation to the world and to one another is completely at odds with the one developed by Heidegger. 'The former is unable to characterize coherently the very mode of human engagement with objects that it takes to be the logical and metaphysical foundation of all our interactions with the world' (Shockey, 2010, 288). It's up to the mind or reason to direct the body i.e. 'the self-mastery of reason must consist in the capacity of being the controlling element in our lives, and not the senses' (Taylor, 1989, 147).

But once the hegemony of reason is imposed, there's no reason whatever why we should try to free ourselves of passion (Ibid, 151). In a world where the body is eliminated, there's no sense in attempting to be free or discoursing about freedom. As we will see in the course of this work, the body is a prerequisite for the possibility of the idea of freedom. In the subsequent chapters I will try to show that the dominant conception of freedom is constructed within a system of domination and oppression and the system dictates, directly or indirectly, the conditions within which freedom is possible. Although phenomenological ontology goes a long way in remedying this defect, it's through the resuscitation of the body that the task will be complete. But in the following section I will discuss the logical outcome of Cartesian rationality together with the real features of the dominant conception of freedom that I made reference to.

## **1.2.The Transcendental Turn**

In this section the discussion on the problem of knowledge will continue. I will examine Kant's articulation of the epistemological problem and the responses he gave to it. In so doing I shall first shed light on the much celebrated 'Copernican revolution' to show the project he set for himself. In my discussion of Kant's notion of the transcendental, I will indicate the continuing existence of the subject-object distinction which Descartes had bequeathed to epistemology. Finally I will try to elaborate on Kant's conception of freedom and its connection to the dualistic approach to the problem of knowledge.

### **1.2.1. The Copernican Revolution and The Implications of Transcendental Idealism**

Kant was interested in the problem of knowledge posed by his predecessors but rather than taking the possibility of knowledge for granted and addressing the concern of the skeptics directly, Kant dealt with the problem by identifying the essential features of knowledge i.e. he examined the possibility of mathematics, natural science and especially metaphysics by delineating the conditions which make knowledge possible.

His audacious exclamation that he has revolutionized the philosophical world in the same way that Copernicus transformed the domain of astronomy is a consequence of this examination. Unlike Copernicus whose decentering of man's abode (the earth) resulted in the radical transformation of astronomy, Kant's achievement consisted in placing man at the center of the search for knowledge- in this respect the two revolutions were dissimilar. But what did Kant's revolution really involve? What was so impressive about it?

Before I undertake the task of explaining the details of his revolution, let me first look at his relatively modest analysis of the deficiencies of his predecessors (rationalists as well as empiricists). He says ‘that all our knowledge begins with experience there can be no doubt. For how is it possible that the faculty of cognition should be awakened into exercise otherwise than by means of objects which affect our senses, and partly of themselves produce representations, partly rouse our powers of understanding into activity.... But, though all our knowledge begins with experience, it by no means follows that all arises out of experience’ (Kant, 1781, 18).

Rationalists like Descartes had argued that knowledge does not begin with experience; Descartes had claimed that knowledge is a priori. The suspicion he exhibited towards the senses at the beginning of his meditations is an indication of his firm conviction that reason is the only reliable source of knowledge. Kant’s phrase that ‘all our knowledge begins with experience’ is a direct allusion to the rationalists including and especially to Descartes whose belief in ‘innate ideas’ stood in a diametrical opposition with the English empiricist John Locke for whom mind was nothing but a ‘tabula rasa’. So Kant is saying that the mind which, as we shall see in subsequent sections, is a condition of the possibility of knowledge cannot begin to act unless some raw material is given to it by the ‘external world’. Hence Kant endorsed, with qualification, of course, the empiricist claim that knowledge begins with experience.

However Kant’s agreement with the empiricists pales into insignificance in the face of the qualification he has made to their argument. He said ‘though all our knowledge begins with experience, it by no means follows that all arises out of experience’ by which he meant the sensible world is not the only source of knowledge. This constituted a direct attack on Locke’s remark ‘*nihil in intellectu quod prius non fuerit in sensu*’ (1999, 52). For Kant the mind was much more than a blank slate- it was active participant in the process of knowledge construction. The apparently simple statement I quoted earlier is illustrative of Kant’s earnestness to subject everyone (from materialism to idealism, from rationalism to empiricism, the list goes on) to the ‘critical blow’ he was so keen on striking. But Kant is not just the arbiter he’s usually made out to be. The project he set for himself was grand in stature and profound in its insight.

I shall now expound the details of the revolution with a statement that Kant himself made in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

He said 'Up to now it has been assumed that all our cognition must conform to the objects; but all attempts to find out something about them a priori through concepts that would extend our cognition have, on this presupposition, come to nothing. Hence let us once try whether we do not get further with the problems of metaphysics by assuming that the objects must conform to our cognition' (Buroker, 2006, 19-20).

In the aforementioned discussion, I have tried to elaborate on Descartes' response to the problem of knowledge. Because of 'the cogito argument' Descartes had found himself confined to the inner world of consciousness- he claimed that he could only know for certain the content of his consciousness or simply the mind. The external world (his own body included) was, in consequence, seen to be foreign to his 'self'. Hence the distinction between the subject and the object, which as we saw is of immense significance in the field of epistemology, and beyond, emerged. This significance is manifested, inter alia, in the separation of the knower and the known- that knowledge comprised of the knowing subject trying to understand and getting in contact with something which existed outside of itself- the known object. This in turn led to the widely held conviction that the knowing subject must conform to the objects of knowledge.

The belief that knowledge depends on the world is shared by both rationalists and empiricists alike. As a result our knowledge of things was conceived to be knowledge of objects 'as they exist independently of us'. In other words the objective existence of things does not depend on the subject. 'In Kant's terminology, this standpoint identifies the objects of knowledge with 'things in themselves', that is, the ultimate reality behind the appearances. Now although they disagreed about the roles of reason and perception, both rationalists and empiricists assumed that knowledge consists in discovering subject-independent truths' (Ibid, 20). So Kant attributed the failure to advance in the sciences to this belittling of the subject in the process of knowledge. By saying we must try to make the objects of our experience conform to us, he did not mean we can choose the objects of our 'intuition' but he was referring to the importance of recognizing the role of the mind in this experience.

Kant had good reason to reject the assumption because 'if all cognition conforms to objects (depends on subject-independent truth), then one could never establish the validity of a priori or necessary knowledge (Ibid, 19). To the extent that Kant wanted to show the possibility of

synthetic a priori knowledge, it was absolutely necessary for him to prove that we can have universal and necessary knowledge about the world.

On the one hand, rationalists were comforting themselves with their unfounded belief in the existence of innate ideas- ‘both Descartes and Leibniz appealed to the grace of God to justify the existence of innate knowledge, thereby implying that reason can arrive at knowledge about reality without invoking sense experience’. On the other hand, Hume’s unsympathetic attack on metaphysics and science cast an ominous gloom over the possibility of knowledge, necessary knowledge. Although Kant distanced himself from both positions, his response to Hume, who he extols for awakening him from dogmatic slumber, is an uncharacteristic sympathy. He assented to the first part of Hume’s two-fold position that it is impossible to obtain knowledge about the world without the senses since ‘our perceptions alone were present to us, and all our causal inferences (since they were based upon a conjunction of perceptions) must yield expectation of perception and nothing else’ (Laird, 1967, 152).

Hume further claimed that ‘knowledge through pure thought either is analytic (i.e., of relations of ideas), or concerns the general form of thought itself and does not inform us about actual existence’ (Buroker, 2006, 20). So in the end Hume condemned anything that is not analytic or synthetic (he was particularly contemptuous of metaphysics) ‘to the flames’. But skepticism proved to be the necessary outcome of such a strict empiricism as Hume’s.

Kant was not, however, the kind of person who would be silenced by Hume’s skepticism nor was he one who would embrace this uncertainty about the possibility of knowledge. So he began his critiques not so much to disprove Hume as to show the futility and as he called it the ‘random groping’ of traditional metaphysics. He argued that if synthetic a priori knowledge was to be saved ‘it should be possible to have knowledge of objects a priori, determining something in regard to them prior to their being given. If intuition must conform to the constitution of the objects, I do not see how we could know anything of the latter a priori; but if the object (as object of the senses) must conform to the constitution of our faculty of intuition, I have no difficulty in conceiving such a possibility (Dicker, 2994, 32). Needless to say that by turning the focus of philosophy from metaphysical speculation about the nature of reality to a critical examination of the nature of the thinking mind, Kant has really made an enormous shift in the

way we think of ourselves and our relation to the world. Whether the shift is for the better or for the worse is a question that this work has partly been dedicated to.

Following the dictates of his Copernican revolution that 'it's the object known that must conform to the knowing requirements of the knower' (Sherover, 1971, 25), Kant went on to investigate the ways in which the mind operates vis-à-vis the objects of knowledge.

The investigation brought some important matters to light. First it became clear to Kant that once the theological view of the world is demolished and man is shown to be the creator of experience, 'it was no longer justifiable to hold the view that the truth about the world is out there to be grasped, because what we know is known under certain unavoidable conditions' (Bowie, 2003, 15). It seems evident then that our experience is shaped by the objective conditions of the mind. But what are those unavoidable conditions which determine our knowledge of the world? Kant calls them 'pure forms of intuition'.

'Space and time are taken to be transcendently ideal and empirically real, since they are necessary conditions of objects of experience. By locating space and time in the subject, Kant can explain how it is possible to have knowledge that is both synthetic and a priori, at the cost of denying that we can know the nature of things in themselves' (Buroker, 2006, 72). This means that the structure of our mental faculties determines the things we can know- everything we know, we know it in time and space. Thus these 'pure forms of intuition' are the objective conditions through which we can grasp the sensible world.

Nevertheless we should not confuse Kant's use of the phrase 'sensible world' with that of rationalists and empiricists for whom it simply refers to the world as it exists independently of us. He explicitly states that we must understand the two different aspects of objects of knowledge objects 'as they appear to us, as 'phenomena', and as they exist independently of our thinking of them, as 'noumena'. The former allow one to form concepts of the object through the synthesis of intuitions. The latter, in contrast, might seem to demand their own form of knowledge, knowledge of things beyond what can be apprehended by the senses' (Bowie, 2003, 26). In contradistinction to his predecessors Kant limited our knowledge merely to the world of phenomena. When he said the subject was the objective condition of knowledge he also meant

what we know and what we can't know ultimately depends on the structure of our minds which ultimately precludes the experience of the world of noumena.

At this juncture one might wonder as to how it's possible for us to know the existence of the noumena if our mind has no access to it. This question brings us to the heart of the critique of Pure Reason- i.e. we can invoke the notion of transcendental idealism. Kant has clearly stated that knowledge does not arise merely from experience albeit it begins with it. This statement clearly shows that from the mere fact that we experience something (the world of appearances) it can be inferred that an independent world exists since without these objects the mind wouldn't have been prompted to work- signaling Husserl's assertion that consciousness is consciousness of something.

Transcendental idealism is defined as 'the doctrine that appearances are to be regarded as being, one and all, representations only, not things in themselves, and that time and space are therefore only sensible forms of our intuition, not determinations given as existing by themselves, nor conditions of objects viewed as things in themselves' (Kant, 1781, 36). As such time and space are regarded as sources of knowledge concerning our knowledge of the sensible world i.e. things as they appear to us. In Kantian analysis once we recognize the 'pure forms of intuition' as the means by which we can know things as they appear to us rather than to the things themselves, 'we can achieve certainty within the limits set by how objects can appear to us. We cannot know how objects are independently of the form in which we must perceive them. Knowledge of 'things in themselves' is therefore impossible' (Bowie, 2003, 22).

However, an accurate understanding of Kant's conception of transcendental idealism would require extricating it from traditional /orthodox/ idealism. For Descartes, for instance, 'there is no being external to what can be clearly and distinctly conceived (Anderson, 1994, 103). As a result Descartes would refuse to accept as meaningful the notion of a proposition or anything that is supposed to lie outside his mind.

Kant's notion of transcendental idealism which differs not only from Descartes but also from Platonic idealism, (concerned with timeless ideal objects) deals merely 'with the relation of consciousness to the natural world' (Philipse in Smith and Woodruff, 1995, 244).

In his rejection of idealism Kant accuses them of ‘distorting or misrepresenting our actual position in the world’ (Stroud, 1984, 130). His eagerness to establish the possibility of knowledge was in no way compatible with the idealists who confined human beings to the small world of their minds.

However, the distinction between Descartes and Kant requires more substantial analysis than the one given above.

Kant blames Descartes for ‘representing our inner life, our subjectivity, as if it were something independent and unsupported, as if our conscious states, our thoughts and experiences, could somehow be the whole of what is real - without requiring the reality of anything else, and in particular without requiring the reality of the objects of our thoughts and experiences’ (Schwyzer, 1997, 342). Kant’s frustration is understandable given the fact that for him only the forms of intuition which he discusses in the transcendental aesthetic are knowable independent of experience (a priori)- he even provides us with the example of ‘motion’ which combines both time and space and yet it still presupposes something empirical.

Schwyzer argues that Cartesian attempt to infer an objective outer world from an inner one is non-existent in Kant when he says, ‘there is for Kant no inner world of objects initially (or ‘directly’) apprehended by us, as there is for Descartes. There is no such inner world from which an objective outer world is to be inferred or out of which an allegedly objective world is to be constructed or constituted’ (Ibid, 343). However this should not be misconstrued to mean that Kant does not recognize subjectivity nor should it be alleged that Kant has rejected the Cartesian dualism. Although Kant does not begin by separating his body from his consciousness or try to know it along with the external world, he subscribes to the idea that we have a mind which does not get into the act of knowing except when it relates to the external world of phenomena. So the mind is not only the point of departure in the act of knowing but also a condition of the possibility of any knowing. How should we articulate Kant’s conception of subjectivity or his approach to the Cartesian subject-object dichotomy?

### **1.2.2. Kantian dualism- The Transcendental ego vs. the Empirical ego**

In the same way that Plato’s division of the world into two camps enabled him to distinguish between the intelligible world of reality and the sensible world of appearance, Kant’s distinction

between the phenomenal and noumenal worlds has made the empirical and transcendental selves possible. However the latter is much more sophisticated in its structure and far-reaching in its consequences.

Within phenomenological discourse, it is a widespread conviction that Husserl's phenomenology is the point of culmination of the Kantian tradition of transcendental philosophy. The phrase 'subjectivity is the foundation for objectivity', for good reasons, has turned out to be a correct and common description for the transcendental style of philosophy (Krijnen in Apostolescu, 2016, 280). Kant's critical inquiry into the faculty of reason and the operations of the mind has laid bare the 'pure forms of intuition' which are not only objective conditions of knowledge but transform the subject into the status of the 'transcendental'. But Husserl has a slightly different opinion of the beginning of transcendental philosophy.

In the history of modern philosophy, to speak only of that, Descartes must be seen as a precursor of transcendental philosophy. It was he who through his *Meditations* founded this modern period, imparted to it its characteristic developmental tendency toward a transcendental philosophy. The *ego cogito*, understood in its profound sense, can surely be regarded as the first form of the discovery of transcendental subjectivity (Husserl, 1974, 7). Although Husserl himself was kind enough to attribute the inception of transcendental philosophy to Descartes and his philosophy generally owes a great deal to Descartes, it's an undeniable fact, by his own admission, that his transcendental idealism is a critical appropriation of Kant's transcendental idealism.

As we will see in the next chapter, though Husserl borrowed Kant's term 'transcendental idealism' for his own purpose, he was keen to distance himself from Kant's conclusion that 'the thing-in-itself' is beyond the reach of our experience. The inaccessibility of the thing-in-itself is the necessary outcome of the fact that 'the pure forms of intuition' are the objective conditions of knowledge and operate only within the sensible world of experience.

The Kantian justification of knowledge implies two different but complementary analyses: 'the theme of objectivity in the sense of an 'analysis of the object' and the theme of subjectivity in the sense of an 'analysis of the act'. It also includes the theme of the subject as a knowing subject, of intentionality (Krijnen in Apostolescu, 2016, 286). Through his transcendental analysis which

renders the subject the objective condition of knowledge, Kant has completely altered the Cartesian position that our minds should conform, if knowledge is possible, to the objects of experience. Accordingly, 'we know ourselves not only as objects of experience, but also as knowers, (as opposed to mere passive recipients of sensory input)' (Kosch, 2006, 30). Yet we cannot help but raise the following question: in what sense did the notion of the 'transcendental subject' supplant the Cartesian 'cogito' as the champion of transcendental philosophy, which simply means a philosophy of domination and oppression? Even though one can safely attribute the subject-object distinction to Descartes, it was really Kant who elevated it to a higher level of sophistication. There's no denying that 'the cogito' has influenced Kant's transcendental subject but he did not complete the project. Kant, on the other hand, successfully completed the project—the modernity project of using instrumental reason for the subjugation and complete control of the other. The understanding of this oppressive structure depends on the understanding of the basic features of transcendental philosophy. Accordingly, let's first examine Kant's analysis of the transcendental and empirical subjects.

The distinction between these two subjects can be understood only 'in connection with the distinction between two forms of self-consciousness' (Carr, 1999, 37): it's within the context of what Kant calls 'transcendental apperception' and 'empirical apperception' that the transcendental ego and the empirical ego can be unpacked. While in the first scenario 'I am conscious of myself as thinking, and thus in terms of what it is I am thinking (the objects of the sensible world), in the second case I am conscious of myself as an object with certain mental properties (Ibid, 43).

Zahavi explains this relationship further when he contends that 'the distinction is the distinction between being conscious of oneself as an empirical object with mental properties, and being conscious of oneself as a subject of intentionality. It's the difference between being aware of oneself as a causally determined known object, as a part of the world, and being aware of oneself a knowing subject as the limit of the world' (2002, 104). Accordingly while the empirical self is part of nature and ipso facto an object of knowledge, the transcendental self is the subject whose 'apperception' contains not only the condition of knowledge for the empirical subject but most importantly it is the 'subject of the categories'.

In his analysis of the two apperceptions Carr aligns the empirical with 'direct awareness' and the transcendental with 'intentionality' (1999, 52). The aboutness or directness of my mental content when I perceive objects outside of me is what he means by transcendental self-consciousness but empirical self-consciousness is limited to my awareness of my relation to the external world at a particular point in time.

The other most important difference between the two apperceptions brings to light the real features of the transcendental subject which I am mainly interested in. Because of the categories, which Kant examines in the Transcendental Deduction and which he considers indispensable together with the pure forms of intuition, our relation with the objects of experience takes a sharp turn from what has been portrayed by Descartes. 'The laws that constitute nature are laws prescribed by the understanding that stands under the transcendental unity of apperception. Thus, in knowing the sensible world I am represented not only as distinct from it but also as prescribing laws to it. It would seem that I am therefore not subject to its laws but that they are subject to me (Carr, 1999, 45). This subtle description of the relationship between the subject and the external world brings us to the issue we raised above to wit the nature of the transcendental subject.

The first aspect of the transcendental subject is the fact that it can only perceive objects within a framework (Bowie, 2003, 21). This framework, as we have seen, involves both the 'pure forms of intuition' and the categories which are essential conditions of knowledge given in intuition i.e. our immediate relation to the objects of experience.

The rift between the two subjects occurs at the precise moment when it's acknowledged that one of them (the transcendental) is a condition of possible experience for the other (the empirical). The split indicates 'on the one hand, we have an empirical object existing in the world, namely its body. On the other hand, its body obeys laws that are themselves only possible because of the subject's further existence as something that is not in the world, namely as the spontaneous source of judgments' (Bowie, 2003, 24). Foucault's description indicates the paradox inherent in such an account by saying 'the subject cannot be simultaneously the transcendental condition of possibility of knowledge and an object of empirical inquiry' (Gordon, 1999, 5).

In the case of the transcendental, 'the self is but a bearer of its representations, sensations, and thoughts, it is an "object of the categories", the "soul". However the empirical self has personal identity, a history i.e. an individuality that distinguishes it from other persons (Carr, 1999, 44). It's arguable, though, that Kant meant these two subjects to be separate or two faces of the same coin, so to say. According to Bowie, 'it is this issue which leads to radically divergent construals of Kant' (2003, 24). Carr himself seems to lean to the company of men who prefer to view them as aspects of the same subject.

Regardless of Carr's (or any other philosopher falling to this category) final conclusion that the transcendental subject is not a different self (than the empirical) rather a different description of the same self, we have every reason to believe that Kant is providing us with two different selves. We can reject Carr's final position especially considering the fact that his reason for denying the transcendental subject the status of an independent self while considering the empirical self to be a subject involves Kant's assertion that while the latter 'knows itself' the former is merely 'conscious of itself'.

Instead of dissolving the distinction created by Descartes between the mind and the body, Kant has elevated it to a higher level of abstraction by introducing the notion of the 'transcendental'. I am not claiming that Kant has made a wholesale appropriation of Cartesian dualism, my contention rather is that though we might concede that the sort of dualism Kant propounded may be subject to multiple and perhaps contradictory interpretations, we cannot but assent to the often made claim that Kant has maintained the dualism. I further insist, contrary to the prevailing opinion, that Kant upholds both aspects of the dualism: the distinction between the self and the external world as well as the distinction between the mind and the body (it should, however, be stated from the outset that Kant introduces a considerable alteration to this second aspect of the dualism that it's almost unrecognizable).

It's not clear as to whether Kant meant this meticulous analysis of the possibility of knowledge in general and metaphysics in particular to serve as a guideline for the domination of one race by another. Nonetheless, despite Kant's disparaging remarks about 'other races' in his anthropology, it seems highly unlikely that he intended his work to be used as a weapon of oppression and subjugation especially given the fact that he was mainly, if not solely, concerned with the problem of knowledge. Yet my previous discussion goes a long way to indicate how his

examination of the problem of knowledge has resulted in the uncalled for consequence of providing the intellectual basis for the hegemony of the West.

We will examine the ethico-political implications of this dualism in the final section. But first we need to delve into one important concept which is crucial for understanding the ontology of freedom- finitude.

### **1.2.3. Finitude as the enabling condition of Freedom**

According to Heidegger, Kant sets a precedent with his analysis due to his ability to recast the issue of world within the encompassing problem of human finitude (Schalow, 1992, 250).

Although our finitude limits the range of possible knowledge by precluding us access to things as they are in themselves, it should never be understood, so Kant argues, as a limitation on the power of our knowledge much less as a limitation on our freedom.

Kant problematizes finitude in the following manner: '1- How can a creature which is subject to finite conditions (space and time) guarantee the universality of its claims to knowledge? 2- Does not our finitude- being subject to empirical laws of physics, causality, time etc.- serve to limit our capacity to generate truly universal claims such that knowledge itself is threatened?' (Nichols, 2014, 7) Kant tries to connect freedom and human finitude through the human capacity to produce meaningful knowledge i.e. in as much as the empirical limits of human beings tend to demarcate and draw a seemingly impassable line between what is humanly knowable (the world of phenomena) and what is not (the noumenal world), we need to cast a suspicious eye towards our claim to universal knowledge. Such problematization of finitude or the attempt to address the problem, to be more exact, constitutes the political implications of the Copernican turn.

Kant's unique response to this problematic consisted, as we can gather from earlier discussions, in 'transcendentalizing finitude'. According to Nichols the process of transcendentalizing finitude implied redefining the empirical limits of human understanding as transcendental conditions, knowable by the subject. This is to mean that 'if our limitations of knowing can be shown to be transcendental conditions for knowledge then the 'a priori study of our (limited) faculties becomes the starting point for construing the necessary form of our knowledge, thus outlining the conditions of possibility of truth itself.' (Ibid, 8) So in the end our limitations imply

our limitlessness or better yet we can conceive of the empirical limits we suffer as enabling conditions- conditions that determine the scope and mode of possible knowledge.

Accordingly the ‘Copernican turn’ consisted in Kant’s excessive zeal to overcome finitude by making it the ‘necessary, transcendental condition for knowledge’. Han-Pile believes that Kant’s assessment of human finitude as empirically unsurpassable has led him to conclude that human finitude should be redefined a priori and therefore understood *positively*, i.e., as what generates the scope of our possible knowledge and ultimately (because it outlines the possibility of rational determination itself) as the cornerstone of our freedom (Pile cited in Nichols, 2014, 8).

However the transcendentalization of finitude which aims at transforming the subject into the objective condition of knowledge seems to have an adverse effect on how we relate to ‘the other’. By Husserl’s own admission’ the possibility of a transcendental elucidation of subjectivity and world is lost if one follows the Kantian tradition in interpreting transcendental subjectivity as an isolated ego and thereby ignores the problem of transcendental inter-subjectivity’ (Zahavi, 2002, 106). The constitutive capacity of the Kantian transcendental subject does not require the presence of ‘the other’ for its fulfillment. The disregard of the other inherent in the transcendental subject has given rise to the formulation of alternative approaches which can supply a better model i.e. one which can accommodate ‘the other’.

This is manifest, for instance, in the twentieth century turn to inter-subjectivity in which the attempt to locate freedom in the transcendental properties of the subject was replaced by the search for emancipatory praxis in the ‘discursively mediated interaction between subjects’ (Nichols, 2009, 2). However despite Habermas’s insightful analysis, no theory of inter-subjective communicative rationality can ‘bypass the disclosing function of the pre-reflective activities by which a world of intelligible entities comes into view in the first place. (Ibid, 3) This is to mean that language does not exhaust the whole range of practical, non-cognitive activities.

But the lack of an inter-subjective possibility is not the only problem that the transcendental subject engenders- I have grave doubts as to whether it’s even the major problem. The relatively in-depth analysis I have given to the transcendental subject might have shed light on the main problem that emerges out of the Kantian meticulous, yet cryptic description of the transcendental subject.

Furthermore the difficulty of many commentators to understand the presence of two mutually exclusive characteristics (the transcendental subject with its disengaged and disembodied attributes and the historically and culturally situated empirical subject) in a single self, I believe, is entirely groundless. In my opinion this double-faced depiction of the subject is not only a consistent and coherent picture but it also goes a long way to solving the difficulty I have been struggling with for some time regarding the problem of internal and external relation between humans beings. This point stands in need of further explanation. I shall supply only part of the explanation though; since the whole work is directed at unraveling the epistemological, existential and ethico-political implications of the transcendental subject, the clarity will come along the way.

By internal relation I mean the relationship between various persons within the same race- say for instance one white person with another white person. The external relation, on the other hand, implies how one person of a specific race is related to a member of another race- the historically questionable relationship between a white person and a black person illustrates this second relation.

The question of how this relationship between ‘the same’ and ‘the other’ by which I mean the ethico-political implications of the transcendental subject is implicated by the theory of knowledge conceived by Descartes and brought forth by Kant is a question which may probably not be fully addressed until the end of the work. In addition my argument that the dominant conception of freedom is formulated within the dominating and subjugating system of thought and practice resonates throughout the work. However we have to try and address the questions step by step, so let’s first ask a simple question- what is the dominant conception of freedom?

#### **1.2.4. Autonomy and the Freedom of the Will**

‘The will is a kind of causality belonging to living beings in so far as they are rational’, writes Kant, ‘freedom would be the property of this causality that makes it effective independent of any determination by alien causes. Similarly, natural necessity is the property of the causality of all non-rational beings by which they are determined to activity through the influence of alien causes’ (1981, 49). One of the difficulties Kant had to grapple with in the *Critique of Practical Reason* as well as in the *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals* involved addressing the following problem: in a world where objects are governed by physical law, how can there be free

will? In other words he was trying to overcome the problem of understanding the existence of two mutually exclusive beings: the deterministic realm of the physical world and the free realm of the human world.

With a view to addressing this problem Kant argues as follows: ‘Laws and causes are inseparable (no law without a cause it governs; no cause without a law that governs it). This principle is absolutely central; were it given up, the claim that freedom and the moral law reciprocally imply one another would likewise have to be given up, and there would be no argument for the reality of freedom’ (Kosch, 2006, 35). The connection between laws and causes is crucial not just for understanding the deterministic physical world but also for coming into grips with the free human world to the extent that this freedom is aligned to the autonomous will of the self-legislating subject.

Bowie takes the central focus of Kant’s moral philosophy to be the attempt ‘to reinforce the separation between the determinism of the appearing natural world, and the intelligible world of human freedom’ (2003, 35). Kant believes that our consciousness of the moral law as supremely authoritative leads us ‘directly to the concept of freedom’ (Walsh, 2018, 36).

In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant states the relationship between freedom and morality: ‘Freedom among all the Ideas of speculative reason is the only one whose possibility we know a priori. We do not understand it, but we know it as the condition of the moral law which we do know. The Ideas of God and immortality are, on the contrary, not conditions of the moral law, but only conditions of the necessary object of a will which is determined by this law, this will being merely the practical use of our pure reason’ (1788, 3). He also distinguishes between a negative and positive conception of freedom- while the former implies ‘independence from being determined by sensible impulses, the latter is simply the ability of pure reason to be of itself practical’ (Walsh, 2018, 111). Negative freedom echoes Kant’s infamous identification of freedom with obligation which shows his belief that the ability to do whatever we want is not freedom but slavery to the passions- hence freedom understood as ‘independence from the impulses’.

This distinction is somehow different from the one advocated by Isaiah Berlin. For Berlin negative freedom involves ‘the degree to which no man or body of men interferes with my

activity' (1958, 169). But positive freedom is expressed simply as 'the wish on the part of the individual to be his own master' (Ibid, 178). They subscribe to different conceptions of freedom; their understanding especially of negative freedom seems to be at odds with one another.

In Kant's moral philosophy the self is distinguished by its autonomy, its prescribing laws to itself. A self that legislates both to itself and to nature is a sovereign self in an almost blasphemously extreme sense, seemingly subjected to no power, natural or moral, beyond itself (Carr, 1999, 34). However, as Berlin says 'conceptions of freedom directly derive from views of what constitutes a self, a person, a man' (1958, 181). We cannot talk about freedom in a vacuum in so far as freedom is a way of being. The relationship that I am trying to create between the epistemological/metaphysical and the ethico-political is an attempt at examining this essential relation between freedom and being.

Despite Kant's failure to make explicit reference to the notion of the 'transcendental subject' in the second critique or in the Grounding, I believe that it's in the autonomous, self-legislating moral agent that the 'transcendental subject' rises to the summit of its power.

The idea of the autonomous subject is an outcome of the Kantian thesis, set against the empiricists' tendency to posit the mind as 'tabula rasa', that 'the mind actively organizes and orders reality so as to make rational determination possible.' But it's only after we succeeded to connect this transcendental function of the mind to positive freedom that we will be able to appreciate the Kantian conception of freedom. Thus, in this model freedom is equated, not only with the transcendental subject (the free will which chooses), but also with the active removal of the external impediments that stand in the way of full self-determination- be they societal obstacles "outside" the empirical subject or non-rational features of the self like the passions(Nichols, 2014, 9). But such an understanding of freedom proves to be highly presumptuous of the possibility of a self-constituting and self-legislating subject.

Hence the overcoming of our finitude for which Kant is particularly credited does not consist in a Platonic denial of the senses nor in the religious anticipation of evolving into a more advanced and infinite being. First and foremost it requires embracing our finitude in such a way that it draws our attention to the objects of knowledge which are located within the bounds of human reason. But still its limited success in the theory of knowledge has not been replicated in the

ethico-political world of freedom i.e. though the transcendentalization of finitude has rendered it an opportunity for the subject in the attainment of knowledge, it has led to the epistemological determinacy of the object which transposed into the ethico-political realm results in nothing other than domination and subjugation.

Therefore Kant's attempt could be appreciated as one which aimed at transforming human finitude from being an unsurpassable horizon which implies the end of all possible human knowledge and understanding to a point which marks the a priori condition for the possibility of knowledge. Yet his attempt to use it as a condition for the possibility of freedom has produced the contrary effect.

To stand in a "free" relation to the world, to oneself and one's ethical commitments, is to know that one's standpoint does not exhaust the total range of meaningful, viable, and worthwhile possibilities. The acknowledgment of the finitude of one's own position and perspective is further complicated when we unpack what it would mean to "know" such a thing as finitude. Though the knowledge of our finitude continues to play a pivotal role in both Heidegger and Foucault's discussion of freedom, the kind of knowing they propose differs significantly from that of Kant's in that for them 'to know something is not merely to grasp it conceptually or give a theoretical articulation of it' (Ibid) rather in the words of Thomas Dumm freedom is "a style of being in the world that depends on an awareness of how one cares for the world' (Frieberg, 2010, 7). Because of their different approach to the problem of knowledge their employment of finitude turns out to be better equipped to beget a viable conception of freedom.

Kantian thought has been taken to provide a conclusive proof for the tendency to stipulate freedom as the necessary precondition of moral action. We can agree, together with Bielefeldt (1997, 528), that the belief that moral action must be something more than mere passive compliance with given standards of behavior and that ethical reflection in general grounds morality on the agent's inner free will is, a long standing one. Yet it was Kant who put forth an apparently strong case for it. However this belief in the capability of the moral agent to make free decisions presupposes the possibility of a self-constituting subject- a subject which can make self-initiated choices.

The importance of the human will for Kant's moral philosophy cannot be overstated. 'The will is a kind of causality of living beings in so far as they are rational, and freedom would be the property of this causality that it makes it effective independent of any determination by alien causes. What else, then, can freedom of the will be but autonomy, that is property of that will has of being a law to itself? Hence a free will and a will under moral laws are one and the same' (Kant, 1981, 48). The causal conception of freedom has its roots in Descartes' articulation of the problem of knowledge. Although the dualistic approach can be traced back to the philosophy of the ancients, as we can gather from what has been said before, it gained high currency in Cartesian philosophy since the time of which it continued to have significant impact upon subsequent thought. Besides its epistemological significance, or rather precisely because of this significance, the dualistic approach has been transported into the realms of the ethical as well as of the political in the form of the autonomous, self-legislating subject.

Kant's effort to establish natural teleology as a justification for historical incidents is an indication of his belief that a 'concrete, positive political and moral form can be deduced from the metaphysics of freedom' (Nichols, 2014, 12). Despite Kant's clear statement on the distinction and apparent incongruity between the empirical and the transcendental (especially in connection with moral philosophy), his works evince the existence of causal relation between them.

David Carr perfectly captures the sense in which the transcendental subject is the condition of possibility for the empirical subject to have any experience at all when he says 'experience requires "combination" and combination in turn requires an active subject that combines. The manifold of representations is given through the senses, but its combination or synthesis is not. Thus the supreme condition of the possibility of experience is that there be a subject that acts in this way. In this sense one could speak of a transcendental subject' (1999, 36). This subject which is the supreme condition of possibility in the arena of knowledge claims to do the same in the ethico-political realm of freedom. The autonomous, self-legislating subject is the ethico-political analogue of the transcendental subject. However the advancement of science and technology which ensued from the unrestrained use of instrumental reason must, without a doubt, be the highest stage in the gradual unfolding of the self-constituting subject with all

its pretense for rationality, autonomy and transcendentalism but most importantly with its claim for universality by which I mean anonymity.

Dreyfus acknowledges Heidegger's and Foucault's attempt to refute the Enlightenment idea of an autonomous subject as well as their attempt to come up with their own version of a notion of freedom and action (2002, 1). They seem to agree on rejecting Kant's identification of freedom with autonomy though they may, understandably enough, differ in their manner of rejection and in what exactly they reject. As we shall see in the subsequent chapters especially Foucault's critique of the self-constituting subject confronts him not just with the Kantian tradition but also with existentialists like Sartre for whom the subject is responsible for who or what he is.

Foucault's critique of Kant has been described as a Kantian critique of the Kantian critique in so far as he tried to sunder the critical spirit from the transcendental. As the 'episteme' of the time anyone who embarks upon a wholesale rejection of Kant does so on pain of unintelligibility. Foucault believes that his criticism of Kant can only be intelligible if it's carried out from within the Kantian tradition. As such his criticism of the transcendental subject should not be portrayed as a total break from the Kantian tradition rather as an immanent critique which aims at 'reducing the transcendental to the minimum extent possible' (Kobas, 2009, 16). Later thinkers have stretched this critique to the point where the very possibility of a Kantian notion of freedom can be questioned: they argued that Kant dealt with the palpable contradiction between 'the necessity one finds in experienced nature (human action being one such part) and the recognition that man as a moral being acts freely and responsibly' (Dickerson, 2004, 68) in a manner that renders the latter highly dubious.

It is becoming more and more obvious that the idea of freedom as free will has fallen into disrepute along with the notion of the transcendental subject upon which it ultimately rested. In direct contradiction with the Kantian conception of freedom which treats it as the property of the will, the ontology of freedom conceives of freedom as a mode of being.

Ponty (2005, 506) for instance, argues that we mistakenly tend to 'look for freedom in the voluntary deliberation which examines one motive after another'. It's not just the epistemological determinateness implied by the conception of freedom as freewill which I find problematic; its political implications have also led to its denigration and consequent repudiation

by such influential political philosophers as Hanna Arendt. In describing the adverse political repercussions that such a conception of freedom results in, she writes ‘politically the identification of freedom with sovereignty is perhaps the most pernicious and dangerous consequence of the philosophical equation of freedom and freewill’. The identification of Kantian freewill with sovereignty did not go well with some like Bielefeldt who argues that in as much as we are not only legislators of the moral law but also subjects to it our freewill does not amount to sovereignty. Yet Arendt’s claim is that sovereignty is the political outcome of a conception of freedom as freewill- an argument which seems rather more logical. She reiterates this when she claims that treating freedom as a non-sovereign worldly form amounts to treating it as a “mode of being” rather than as a capacity of the subject- a tendency which she attributes to ‘our habitual reduction of freedom to will’ (Villa, 1996, 118).

Arendt’s distrust of this tendency of aligning freedom with sovereignty seems to ensue from her strong conviction that our primary encounter with freedom consists in ‘our intercourse with others, not in the intercourse with ourselves’. The conception of freedom as willful mastery is oblivion of the essential connectedness of freedom and being-I shall develop this in the subsequent chapters but for now it suffices to say that the idea of the autonomous subject and the resulting notion of freedom is not only epistemically limited and ontologically unintelligible but it’s also politically suspect.

What misleads us on this is that we often look for freedom in the voluntary deliberation which examines one motive after another and seems to opt for the weightiest or most convincing. In reality the deliberation follows the decision, and it is my secret decision which brings the motives to light, for it would be difficult to conceive what the force of a motive might be in the absence of a decision which it confirms or to which it runs counter (Ibid).

A movement is observable in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, then, not only toward questions of freedom, but also away from an understanding of freedom as a property of the subject and more as a practice or a relationship (something one does rather than has) (Nichols, 2014, 2). This can be noted not just in the works of philosophers with a relatively lesser political interest like Martin Heidegger and Merleau Ponty but also in those whose works directly or indirectly evince a political tone like Michel Foucault and Hannah Arendt.

Theodor Adorno also explains his mistrust of freedom as the property of the will when he says:

*'the loss of a sense of freedom tends to flip over into immediate terror, as is all too evident in Auschwitz. The catastrophe there was not just a disaster predicted by Spengler, but an actual reality, one that makes all talk of progress towards freedom seem ludicrous. The concept of the autonomous human subject is refuted by reality. By the same token, if freedom and autonomy had any substance, Auschwitz could not have happened (2008, 7).*

Adorno was mainly concerned with the loss of a sense of freedom prevalent in the 50's and 60's of Europe. Yet he still shows us the fundamental flaw existing in such a conception of freedom- the lack of practical significance of the conception of freedom as the property of the will because it's devoid of neither historical nor cultural meaning- because of the anonymity built into its structure.

What Foucault once named 'the struggles against subjection' and 'for a new subjectivity' could also be described as a struggle against a certain type of conduction and for another form of conduct. The Kantian question of 'who we are at this precise moment of history' is inseparable from this question of our conduct. Foucault arrived at the conclusion that: 'probably the principal objective today is not to discover but to refuse what we are... We have to promote new forms of subjectivity while refusing the type of individuality that has been imposed on us for several centuries'(Foucault, 2007, XXX). This argument does not run contrary to Foucault's rejection of a self-constituting subject, as many have alleged, rather it solidifies it by accentuating how finitude can become the very 'principle of the subject's subjectivity'.

In his critique of transcendental philosophy Marcuse contends that, "If there is an ontology which, in spite of its stress on historicity, neglects history, throws out history, and returns to static transcendental concepts, I would say this philosophy cannot provide a conceptual basis for social and political theory. So the challenge posed here pertains to articulating historicity in relation to concrete history (Taylor, 1984, 20). We shall examine the inadequacy of transcendental philosophy for an ontological inquiry in the next chapter.

My interest in the aforementioned epistemological problems plays second fiddle only to the political issues by which I am troubled. It's because of my profound belief that the political

problems I alluded to may be addressed, or at least their problems identified, through the analysis of the epistemological problems long debated by modern philosophers rather than by direct analysis of these questions as it is customary to do, that I have embarked on the task of examining the Cartesian and Kantian response to the problem of knowledge in general and the problem of the external world in particular. The ontology of freedom cannot ignore the problems of knowledge and the responses given to them to the extent that the responses evince certain mode of being and to the extent that these responses imply the positioning of human beings in relation to the external world and to other minds.

However the critique of transcendental philosophy and the ensuing theory of freedom that I am trying to develop in this work cannot meet its goal merely through an analysis of Heidegger's fundamental ontology but it requires a great deal of discussion on Foucault's historical ontology. But first it would be necessary to inquire into the historical characterization of ontology and with it the possibility of phenomenological ontology.

The next chapter examines this possibility through the analysis of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. In this next chapter I will try to examine the shift in method brought about by phenomenology and the questions answered and left hanging. But most importantly the discussion on Husserl and to some extent on Heidegger aims at investigating the extent to which the transcendental subject lost its disengagedness.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL METHOD

The critique of transcendental philosophy which began in the first chapter will continue in this chapter as well. But more specifically this chapter will be devoted to analyzing the possibility and suitability of engaging in a phenomenological inquiry into the problem of ontology.

Earlier discussions and investigations on freedom have largely focused on its conceptual clarity. Ample literature has been produced throughout the history of ideas on philosophical as well as political dimensions of freedom. Yet it's nearly impossible to detect any vestige of ontological commitment to these analyses of freedom until the coming into the fore of Heidegger. Heidegger's works shed a different light on the discussion of freedom; his successful examination of being has opened up a new wave of conversation on the issue of freedom. If it's any consolation for previous works we can claim that Heidegger's fortune was significantly enhanced by the advent of the phenomenological method which he used for investigating being. After all what is innovative, *inter alia*, about Heidegger's work is his adoption of the phenomenological method in lieu of traditional methods of analyzing ontology. But before we go on inquiring the suitability of the phenomenological method for this kind of examination, we need to analyze the very notion of phenomenology. So in the first section I will examine the basic tenets of phenomenology in general and transcendental phenomenology in particular.

#### 2.1.OVERVIEW OF PHENOMENOLOGY

##### 2.1.1. General Introduction to Phenomenology

In whatever context the term phenomenology is used, it refers back to the distinction introduced by Kant between phenomenon or appearance of reality in consciousness, and the noumenon, or being of reality in itself. Kant himself did not develop a phenomenology as such, but since his Critique of Pure Reason recognizes scientific knowledge only of phenomena and not at all of noumena, his critique can be considered a sort of phenomenology (Lauer, 1958, 2).

Kant explicitly states that we must understand the two different aspects of objects of knowledge-objects 'as they appear to us, as 'phenomena', and as they exist independently of our thinking of them, as 'noumena'. The 'phenomena' allow one to form concepts of the object through the synthesis of intuitions. On the other hand the 'noumena', might seem to demand their own form

of knowledge, knowledge of things beyond what can be apprehended by the senses' (Bowie, 2003, 26). As opposed to the rationalists and empiricists Kant limited the knowable world to the world of phenomena. When he said the subject was the objective condition of knowledge he also meant what we know and what we can't know ultimately depends on the structure of our minds which ultimately precludes the experience of the world of noumena.

Despite the clear demarcation Kant put between phenomenon, which is said to appear to consciousness, hence known, and 'the thing in itself' which is unknowable precisely because it's not present to consciousness, he still believes that 'it is possible to think what is not known, and this we think of as a "thing-in-itself" or noumenon, of which the phenomenon is the known aspect. This sort of phenomenology, which will restrict scientific knowledge to appearances, is directed both against the rationalism of Descartes, which seeks a rational knowledge of all reality, and against the phenomenalism of Hume, which will accept no scientific knowledge at all except that of mathematics' (Lauer, 1958, 2).

The effective founder of the phenomenological movement was neither Brentano nor Meinong, as some have alleged, but Edmund Husserl. Phenomenology began as a discernible movement with Edmund Husserl's demand that 'philosophy take as its primary task the description of the structures of experience as they present themselves to consciousness. This description was meant to be carried out on the basis of what the "things themselves" demanded, without assuming or adopting the theoretical frameworks, assumptions, or vocabularies developed in the study of other domains' (Dreyfus and Wrathall, 2006; 2). So if this description is to be accurate we need a science which is devoid of any presuppositions.

While the Cartesian starting point i.e. 'the cogito as well as the existence of the world are full of presuppositions' (Smith and Woodruff, 1995, 67), phenomenology conceives of itself as a 'presuppositionless science' which simply implies the need for eliminating an unexamined foundations. The claim for a presuppositionless science is indicative of Husserl's radical attitude towards the sciences. It involved resisting the temptation to make allusions and inferences from existing sciences including philosophy. Thus as opposed to Descartes who abstracted the cogito from its concrete relationships Husserl urges us to make an intuitive grasp of the objects of experience in so far as these relationships fall within the ambit of the things that needed bracketing.

Husserl was struggling with the same problem that his predecessors have been grappling with-epistemological problem. As he put it, ‘Cognition in all of its manifestations is a psychic act; it is the cognition of a cognizing subject. The objects cognized stand over and against the cognition. But how can we be certain of the correspondence between cognition and the object cognized? How can knowledge transcend itself and reach its object reliably?’ (Smith, 2007; 203) As it turns out neither the rationalists nor the empiricists, nor even Kant have settled this age-old question of how to comprehend the relationship between the subject and the object of knowledge.

For Descartes the Cogito, which is supposed to be a clear and distinct idea, provided the foundation upon which apodictic knowledge can be based. However instead of taking this new discovery to its logical conclusion, Descartes, paralyzed by the fear of falling into error, ended up confining himself to the inner world of ‘the cogito’. Husserl laments Descartes failure to examine the universal structure of human consciousness- to do a science of the human consciousness.

Although Husserl has confessed that his transcendental idealism is modeled after the Kantian version, his belief in the possibility of abstracting the universal structure of the transcendental ego by returning back to Cartesian cogito is palpable in his works as well as in his express approval of Descartes’ method of inquiry. Yet Husserl knew that his method required, as of necessity, the bracketing of Descartes’ theoretical attitude. But we can still wonder to what extent, if at all, Husserl himself has put the theoretical attitude to the test of the ‘epoche’.

Descartes’ rejection of the external world, including his own body run the risk of solipsism, so Descartes had to confront this question: ‘How are we going to rule out solipsism? How can we avoid the possibility that it might be correct? How are we going to be sure of anything outside my own mind?’ (Bell, 1995, 154) As he himself sets it up, Descartes’ problem was insoluble since it’s impossible to get in touch with the external world The only way we could ever be sure that our phenomena are accurate representations of external realities would be to look at the phenomena, on the one hand, and look at the external realities, on the other, and see whether they match up. But, by hypothesis, we can never look at the external realities. The only thing we can be certain of is what is directly given (Ibid). He tried to invoke God to save the external world but the overall project did not fare well.

Husserl faced the same problem -How can we be certain of the relation between subject and object? How can the subject transcend itself and reach its object? But before analyzing Husserl's response to the question, we need to take a look at his criticism of psychologism and naturalism.

Although in his earlier writings Husserl betrayed a tendency towards psychologism, that is, to grounding logic on psychology, in his later writings he denounced this position by maintaining that logic cannot be reduced to the psychological explanations that people make. In fact his main criticisms were directed, *inter alia*, at Psychologism and the objectivity of Science. His attack on Psychologism consisted in the distinction between meaning and psychical acts. He argued 'we must distinguish between consciousness as a complex of psychical facts, events or experiences and the objects of consciousness which are meant or intended. The latter 'appear' to or for consciousness: in this sense they are phenomena. The former, however, do not appear: they are lived through or experienced' (Stevens in Kearney, 1994, 8). Hence psychical acts can never be reduced to phenomena without at the same time losing their status as psychical acts.

Similarly he was fascinated by the brilliant successes of the sciences in the beginning. In fact, one of his objectives was 'to save human reason by developing philosophy into a rigorous science. The criticism was, therefore, not directed at science as such but rather at the assumptions and methods of the natural sciences' (Husserl, 1960,4). The natural scientist rejects the possibility of formulating a self-contained science of the spirit. This rejection, Husserl argues, is quite naive and explains to a large degree the crisis of modern people. What makes this scientific rationalism naive is its blind reliance on naturalism (Stumpf, 2003, 457). Generally speaking the naturalist ignores the subject and is concerned merely with the object of account of knowledge. The sciences' lack of a firm foundation may to some extent be attributed to naturalism since it explains the human world solely in natural processes. This loss of human subjectivity underlies the failure of naturalism.

Phenomenology, on the other hand, focuses totally on what is given in intuition and is not meant to rely on logical inferences, or mediate knowledge of any kind. Husserl wants to explore experience in a pure manner, unsullied by assumption (Moran, 2000, 127). Among other things the absence of presuppositions and essential intuition characterize this new science.

But the term most closely associated with phenomenology is "intentionality." The core doctrine in phenomenology is the teaching that every act of consciousness we perform, every experience that we have, is intentional: it is essentially "consciousness of" or an "experience of" something or other. All our awareness is directed toward objects (Sokolowski, 2000, 8).

Before the advent of phenomenology, we get to things only by reasoning from our mental impressions, not by having them presented to us. Our consciousness, first and foremost, is not "of" anything at all. Rather, we are caught in what has been called an "egocentric predicament"; all we can really be sure of at the start is our own conscious existence and the states of that consciousness (Ibid, 9). It's because of intentionality that 'Phenomenology shows that the mind is a public thing, that it acts and manifests itself out in the open, not just inside its own confines. Everything is outside' (Ibid, 12). This does not mean that phenomenology is immune from the 'egocentric predicament'-if it were not for intentionality it would also have the subjective projection that previous philosophies implied. As such 'the denial of intentionality has as its correlate the denial of the mind's orientation toward truth' (Ibid, 10).

Only a "science of essences" can do that, and only a phenomenology can be this kind of science, since only a phenomenology can isolate "things" from all the elements of contingency which attach to them in ordinary, "naïve" experience (Lauer, 1958, 14). Husserl had been wondering why we don't have a more grounded knowledge of the essence of things. He found the answer in phenomenology (in the intentionality of consciousness). In some ways phenomenology is conceived of as the science of sciences- a science which endeavours to discover the basis of consciousness.

The principle of intentionality asserts that consciousness is always 'consciousness of something'. This directedness of consciousness points to something outside the mind which is conscious of the object. The intentionality principle underlines the directedness of our experiences towards objects. It points to the teleological nature of acts i.e. the conscious external reference which the mind has in knowing something. Although Husserl owes the concept of intentionality to Brentano he parts company with him concerning its real connotation i.e. Brentano believes that every mental state contains its object within indicating his objective of trying to separate the physical from the psychical. Husserl, on the other hand, makes his famous claim 'let things show themselves as they're in themselves'.

Husserl maintains that experience is perspectival i.e. objects appear to us from a certain perspective. However, 'objects also present their objects to us as transcending the perspective. For instance, when we see a tree, we do not see a mere image of the tree or a packet of sense data, but we see the tree itself. Of course the tree is seen from a definite perspective and only those parts of the tree that are visible from our perspective are seen by us. But Husserl asserts that, the whole tree is given to the consciousness as an intentional object. Hence 'phenomenology goes beyond mere empiricism; it goes beyond the image theory proposed by empiricism' (Stevens in Kearney, 1994, 14). Not only did Husserl distance himself from the medieval belief that 'we need intermediary between intentional acts and their objects' but he also asserted that our intentional acts are directed at objects outside the mind.

According to Husserl, intentional content can be understood in either one of the following ways: i- as the intentional object- this may refer to the object itself or to the object as it's intended. ii- as the feature or the act's matter or iii- as the intentional essence which is the combination of matter and quality (Stevens in Kearney, 2005, 13) But many commentators are wary of identifying the intentional content with the object because of Husserl's explicit claim that the content of an act i.e. the internal and phenomenological constituents that give the act its representational character, is not something that is itself intended or represented in the act. The phenomenological reduction is an essential part of the phenomenological method, so we will examine its features.

### 2.1.2. Phenomenological Reduction

A point insisted on by Husserl is the suspension of judgment (the so-called *epoche*) in regard to the ontological or existential status or reference of the objects of consciousness. By means of this suspension existence is said to be 'bracketed' as a result of which our attention will be turned to the essential structure of things as 'appearing' to consciousness.

It's not hard to see that Husserl wanted to implicate Descartes in trying to put philosophy on a firm basis. This, however, requires the elimination of any existential assumptions which the 'natural attitude' is wont to be making. We must therefore bracket this 'natural attitude'. Such an act does not imply a rejection of the natural attitude as wrong but it's just a method for rising above our prejudices so that we may be able to have an incontrovertible relation with objects.

In the Cartesian Meditations Husserl begins, as did Descartes in his own meditations, with the most superficial form of such bracketing: the putting out of play of preconceived opinions, whether they be those of everyday life, of the positive sciences, or of philosophy itself (Smith, 2003, 16). Husserl carefully analyzes the distinction between the ‘methodic doubt’ and the ‘bracketing’ in the following manner: ‘the epoché is, he says, a certain ‘refraining’ from belief ‘which is compatible with the unshaken conviction of truth, even with the unshakeable conviction of evident truth’ (Husserl, 1982 55). As he says in the Cartesian Meditations, ‘although we no longer ‘ratify’ or ‘accomplish’ the natural belief in the world, that believing too is still there and grasped by my noticing regard’ (Ibid, 59). He is even more emphatic in the Crisis, where he says that ‘there can be no stronger realism’ than the position we find ourselves in after the epoché, if by realism ‘nothing more is meant than: “I am certain of being a human being who lives in this world, etc., and I doubt it not in the least’.

It’s no wonder that Husserl sees Descartes as the distant progenitor of phenomenology seeing the close relation between the methodological doubt and the epoche. However Descartes failed to push his doubt far enough to include the cogito which only a phenomenologically-minded person would do—not the complete elimination of the cogito but just the ‘cogitare’ part of the cogito.

The methodological use of the epoche does not by itself commit Husserl to idealism. To say that the existence of consciousness is the only undeniable or indubitable existence is not necessarily to say that consciousness is the only existent. But in point of fact Husserl proceeds to make the transition to idealism by trying to deduce consciousness from the transcendental ego and by making the reality of the world relative to consciousness. Nothing can be conceived except as an object of consciousness. Hence the object must be constituted by consciousness.

In the Ideas Husserl deals with the consequences of the phenomenological reduction vis-à-vis ‘the noetic-noematic structure’- that is to say, the relationship between the acts of consciousness and their objective correlate. The reduction does not result in a changed world; the world remains the same but our attitude towards objects will be completely different. The object henceforth will be apprehended as ‘intended object’.

Furthermore, he speaks of the intuition of essences. In pure mathematics, for example, there is an intuition of essences which gives rise to propositions which are not empirical generalizations but

belong to a different type, that of a priori propositions. And phenomenology in general is the descriptive analysis of essences or ideal structures. There could thus be, a phenomenological analysis of the fundamental structures of consciousness, provided, of course, that these structures are 'reduced' to essences (Stevens in Kearney, 2005, 12) - what Husserl refers to as 'regional ontology'.

Husserl maintains that 'everything must be based on, and traced back to, what is given to me in my direct experience. It's not a part of this position that what is so given to me are mere phenomena. On the contrary, the overall phenomenological project would make little sense unless the phenomenological reductions led us closer to actual realities' (Smith and Woodruff, 1995, 83). If Husserl's claim that 'let things show themselves as they're in themselves' presupposed the existence of Kantian 'things in themselves' with the same belief that the only thing accessible to us is mere phenomena then the phenomenological method would have been absurd to say the least. We must admit the possibility that the phenomenological method can bring us not to the appearance of things but to the things themselves. This brings us to the second phenomenological reduction that Husserl uses- the eidetic reduction.

Husserl gives us a comparative analysis of scientific abstraction and the eidetic reduction by insisting on the distinction between the grasp of empirical universals and the fully-fledged intuition of essences. 'The awareness of empirical universals is said to occur when we make transition from merely associative judgments, which express perceived likenesses among things, to those judgments which explicitly identify particulars as instances of some category. On the other hand, the intuition of an essence occurs when we move from the perceptual to the imaginary mode of consciousness by submitting the universal to a process of 'free variation' designed to reveal an invariant structure which is the essence. The latter method is referred to as eidetic reduction' (Solomon, 2003; 125). Scientific rationalism fails precisely because of its immersion into the task of abstracting the universal from an inexhaustible number of particulars. So in the end the grasp of essences, which is the ultimate goal of phenomenology, requires what he calls 'imaginative variation'.

We make the transition from the grasp of an empirical universal to the intuition of an essence when we move from the perceptual to the imaginary mode of consciousness by submitting the universal to a process of 'free variation' designed to reveal an invariant structure (Stevens in

Kearney, 2005, 21). Nonetheless Husserl is the first to admit that even ‘imaginary variation’ may not guarantee an accurate description of essences.

### **2.1.3. Phenomenology and the Life-world**

The enigma of the life-world is further complicated by Husserl’s inconsistent yet lucid comments on what he means by life world. On the one hand he describes it ‘as a horizon of experience common to human beings in every historical epoch’, but sometimes he seems to conceive of ‘multiple life-worlds and hints that every life-world is conditioned by layered sedimentations of meaning produced by forgotten cultural achievements. He even goes so far as to say that we must look for truth ‘not as falsely absolutized, but rather, in each case, as within its horizons’ (Ibid, 25). But whatever his take on the plurality or otherwise of the life-world one thing is certain- he takes it to be the world as it appears to human experience as opposed to the abstract experience of the world given by modern science. After all science or naturalism to be more exact is one of the themes of modernity which Husserl blames for the forgetting of the life-world.

By naturalism he simply means ‘the philosophic position which resulted out of the mathematization of nature which reduces the entire realm of nature, including human nature, to be comprised only of entities and processes susceptible of quantitative analysis’. Historicism, on the other hand, is understood to be ‘the tendency to regard the conceptual systems of both the natural and the human sciences as world views whose presuppositions are determined by contingent historical transformations’ (Ibid, 22). Both themes tend to downgrade the human subject to mere object of empirical investigation.

Husserl detects science’s reductionist tendency in Galileo’s and Thomas Hobbes’ works. While the former failed to relate scientific truths adequately to their prescientific sources in the life world, Hobbes extolled power to the extent of turning a blind eye to pre-theoretical experiences (Ibid, 24). Husserl believed that philosophy would restore the confidence in the rationality of our ordinary intuitions about the life-world by showing that scientific accounts of nature are always dependent upon the evidences of ordinary experience.

He argued that scientific thinking and experiencing form an integral part of the life-world, and accordingly that a phenomenology of the life-world is ipso facto a phenomenology of objective

natural and cultural science as well. Husserl asserts further that what started out as a phenomenology of the life-world becomes in the end the universal science of sciences (Husserl, 1971, 34-35). Although the phenomenology of the life-world was clearly much wider in scope than the phenomenology of the sciences, it certainly looks into them especially in relation to the prior experiences and practices that made them possible.

It's possible to enumerate a plethora of events that have occurred since Husserl's departure which confirm his assertion that scientific objectivism results in a forgetting of the world:

With regard to historicism, Husserl affirms the historicity of the life-world which, he goes on to describe, as a 'horizon of experience common to human beings in every historical epoch'. 'Although Husserl believed in the trans-historical validity of universal truth, he took it merely as a regulative idea. He envisaged the possibility of progress in truth. Yet his adoption of the idea of regulation with reference to the ideal of truth indicates that he meant it more as a postulate of rationality than as a metaphysical principle' (Stevens in Kearney, 2005, 25). The historical situatedness of the life-world indicates Husserl's last gasp attempt to save 'the other' and consequently 'inter-subjectivity' from the transcendental rapier his earlier works had subjected them to. The articulation of the life-world as a collective cultural and historical context is an attempt to demonstrate the existence of other egos sharing common values and goals. This horizon informs and contextualizes the perceived meanings of the world while constantly being shaped by its inhabitants.

The life-world, for Husserl, is the condition of the possibility of experience insofar as all objects are meaningful only to the extent that they exist within the referential nexus established by the life-world. This notion of life-world does not specify what those referential nexuses are: that would make the life-world relative in the same way that a cultural world is relative. Instead, Husserl speaks about the *a priori* of the life-world, or of what must be true of any world whatsoever in order to be meaningful (Hahn, 2012,84). As I have mentioned earlier his description of the life-world raises a great deal of problems- to the extent that the field of horizons it makes possible are coextensive with the one sanctioned by cultural horizons, the life world risks parochialism.

Husserl tries to vindicate transcendental philosophy by holding that 'Kant's transcendental analysis is limited because the life-world remains an unmentioned presupposition' (Landgrebe et al., 1981, 113). However I still believe that the glaring deficiencies in his description of the life-world add impetus to the objection that the life-world is essentially inconsistent with the transcendental philosophy that Husserl is trying to push. The collision is not only with the life-world but also with 'the other'.

The problem of inter-subjectivity is complicated mainly because of 'the transcendental reduction'- so one would ask 'how, from within the phenomenological reduction, can the sense 'other ego' and the sense 'the life of consciousness of the other' be validated?' (Smith and Woodruff, 1995, 71) According to Husserl, although I remain in my phenomenological field of experience, this field extends, through empathy, to a sphere of plurality of closed streams of consciousness which are connected to mine through 'motivational structures', not through a real connection, but through a most peculiar sort of connection made possible by empathetic positing (Ibid). The empathetic positing that Husserl is invoking to save my relation with 'the other' brings more questions than answers. In the first place in empathetic reaching out to the other is precluded to the extent that my field of experience is closed to him. But most importantly the elimination of the body, which I have touched upon in the previous chapter, is an incontrovertible obstacle to any relation with the other.

The Other's lived body is not, qua lived body, 'bodily given', it's 'bodily given' as a thing, its being-a-lived-body is only analogically appresented (Ibid, 72). The historicity of the life-world is made possible by the inner historicity of every individual person living in it (Ibid, 74). Consequently each human subject is not only for himself (the risk of relativism) but in himself (solipsism). 'The isolation of the mind from the body entails an isolation of the mind from the world' (Sokolowski, 2000, 11). We cannot but ask how, from within phenomenological reduction, can the sense 'other ego' and the sense 'the life of consciousness of the other' be validated? How do we come to apprehend the other's body as a field of sensations, as a lived body? (Smith and Woodruff, 1995, 71)

It's important then to realize that Husserl's treatment of the life-world goes side by side with his much belated critique of Descartes, or rather it's because of the abatement of his earlier enthusiasm towards Descartes as providing 'the seed of transcendental philosophy' that Husserl

clearly saw that the Cartesian way ‘passed over the whole apparatus which constituted the life-world’. Whether this delayed response has achieved its purpose is a task I shall undertake to address in the subsequent sections.

#### **2.1.4. The Transition from Transcendental to Existential Phenomenology**

We have seen how Husserl credits Descartes with providing ‘the seed for transcendental philosophy’ yet his misguided conception of the subject had, according to Husserl, led him astray and had given rise to the erroneous notion of transcendence. He says ‘whenever philosophers ask about the possibility of cognition in a way that implies that cognition is a thing apart from its object, or that cognition is given but the object of cognition is not given, they introduce an inappropriate notion of transcendence, which in turn entails an inappropriate interpretation of immanence’ (Stevens in Kearney, 2005,15).

Descartes failed to grasp the essence of cognition because he defined himself, qua inquirer, as a ‘thinking thing’ having the same status as the transcendent things whose existence he had called into doubt. The purpose of the new method is to free us from this incoherent interpretation of transcendence, and consequently to enable us to redefine both transcendence and immanence (Ibid, 16). Husserl saw the need to free not just us but the notion of transcendence from the confinement that Descartes and later Kant had put to it. He also believed that the phenomenological method is capable of achieving this freedom.

Husserl thought that the very idea of trying to prove the existence of an ‘external’ world on the basis of the contents of ‘inner’ experience was, as he liked to put it nonsense. Descartes had discovered a transcendental perspective in his first two meditations, but then abandoned it in busying himself with such a nonsensical proof. In Husserl’s view, Descartes should have stayed with his initial discovery and explored it further for such an exploration of pure consciousness from the transcendental viewpoint is the sole concern of the true philosopher (Smith, 2007, 19). But instead of becoming ‘a transcendental self’ which it was destined to be ‘the cogito’ remained to be nothing more than ‘a piece of the world’, ‘a little tag-end of the world’.

Husserl believes that it’s mainly because of their tendency to take the subject as given and the object as somehow hidden or at least one which needed to be inferred from the subject that philosophers introduced inappropriate notions of transcendence and immanence. He says

‘modern descriptions tend to take immanence as an enclosure containing mental processes and impressions hence a region of indubitable givenness, transcendence is, on the other hand, understood as whatever remains outside of that enclosure- a region populated by unknowable things-in-themselves (Bell, 1995;185). But the correct way of understanding them would be to describe them in the light of the distinction between the ‘natural attitude’ and the ‘phenomenological attitude’. ‘We achieve the transcendental point of view by suspending our natural attitude of belief in the reality of things and the world’ (Ibid). Thus immanent and transcendent objects are distinguished in terms of their ‘different styles of appearing not by appeal to the difference between intra-mental appearance and extra-mental being’ (Stevens in Kearney, 2005, 16).

Unlike Descartes’ method, the new method aims at uncovering the essence of cognition by suspending our natural attitude of believing in the reality of things and the world. But most importantly it enables us to redefine both transcendence and immanence.

Most epistemological trends take consciousness to be confined within a psychic region as opposed to the region of things thereby reducing intentionality to representation within the enclosure of the mind. However, Husserl considers the transcendence of things as a mode of givenness within immanence, more broadly understood as the range of intentionality’s transcending power. In his words he claims ‘there can be no outside for a being whose mode of being is to be open to all things’.

Eventually, the claim of immanence leads Husserl to argue for the ontological priority of transcendental subjectivity, and indeed for a kind of transcendental idealism (Solomon, 2003, 122). This has led to severe critiques from his followers as well as from other philosophers. But it’s not the use of the epoche that resulted in the identification of Husserl with idealism. But rather it’s because of his attempt ‘to deduce consciousness from the transcendental ego by making the reality of the world relative to consciousness. Nothing can be conceived except as an object of consciousness. Hence the object must be constituted by consciousness’.

Husserl distinguishes between the ego which is considered part of the world and the transcendental ego for whom the world itself is a noematic. This capacity to be a transcendental

subject allows us to create a reflective distance from ourselves and be able to grasp our natural way of being in the world.

Husserl contends that 'his phenomenological philosophy is 'transcendental' in the sense that it rejects the absolute interpretation of the natural world endorsed by naturalism or scientific objectivism, and that it regards the existence of the world as the existence of a unity of meaning constituted by transcendental subjectivity (Philipse in Smith and Woodruff, 1995, 244). In order for the transcendental subjectivity to emerge the ego as well as the rest of the world ought to be bracketed via the transcendental reduction. The bracketing of the ego opens the door for the meaning constituting and independent 'transcendental ego' to emerge.

Husserl describes transcendental idealism as the reversal of our natural ontology. This reversal consists in the ontological relation between the natural position and the transcendental position- while the former is concerned with the mental and the physical, the latter implies a relation of ontological dependence between transcendental consciousness, which exists in absolute independence, and the whole natural world, including human minds, which exists as an ontologically dependent intentional correlate of transcendental consciousness (Ibid, 250). He explains it vis-à-vis the 'natural attitude' which itself in need of epoche. Accordingly, if the whole natural world is 'bracketed' by the epoche, what we're left with is transcendental consciousness, with the natural world as its intentional correlate.

Transcendental subjectivity forces us to raise the issue which I have already touched upon- the question of the other. The independent nature of the transcendental subject throws the other into the abyss of irrelevance

I really means I. I is absolutely singular and individual (Ms. B I 14 138a). Thus, when Husserl refers to the absolute singularity of the ego, and emphasizes its undeclinability, I think he is simply calling attention to the first personal givenness of consciousness. I am only self-aware of myself and can never ever be self-aware of anybody else. This singularity, however, is of a kind, which admits of others (Zahavi, 2002, 105).

Despite Zahavi's evaluation of Husserl's intension as one which, I have reservations as to how an absolutely singular and to use the right word, transcendental ego can admit of an 'ego'. In contradistinction to Zahavi's claim that transcendental philosophy has room for the notion of

inter-subjectivity- for the possibility of interacting with the other, that it takes due cognizance of the presence of the other, I contend that the essentially worldless and disengagedness character of the transcendental subject precludes any possibility of individuation and in consequence, interaction with the other. To appreciate this point one would have to discern the distinction between mere juxtaposition of subjects (what zahavi called 'plurality of transcendental egos) and subjects inextricably intertwined with one another (a relation presupposed by inter-subjectivity).

Another way to raise the issue of individuality is exactly in the context of a discussion of inter-subjectivity. If Husserl had really argued that it makes no sense to discuss individuality when it comes to transcendental subjectivity, I don't see how he could possibly have brought up the notion of a plurality of transcendental egos, or talked of the transcendental Other. But of course, this is what he is constantly doing in his discussion of transcendental inter-subjectivity (Ibid, 105). In my opinion invoking inter-subjectivity to prove individuality still begs the question. The argument also seems to me to miss the possibility of juxtaposition of egos- the mere existence of plurality of egos does not ipso facto imply a relation among them. Transcendental philosophy does not have the ontological structural which allows for the possibility of interaction.

Descartes and particularly Kant detached the subject, or consciousness, by showing that I could not possibly apprehend anything as existing unless I first of all experienced myself as existing in the act of apprehending it. They presented consciousness, the absolute certainty of my existence for myself, as the condition of there being anything at all; and the act of relating as the basis of relatedness. It is true that the act of relating is nothing if divorced from the spectacle of the world in which relations are found; the unity of consciousness in Kant is achieved simultaneously with that of the world. And in Descartes methodical doubt does not deprive us of anything, since the whole world, at least in so far as we experience it, is reinstated in the Cogito, enjoying equal certainty, and simply labeled 'thought of . . . But the relations between subject and world are not strictly bilateral: if they were, the certainty of the world would, in Descartes, be immediately given with that of the Cogito, and Kant would not have talked about his 'Copernican revolution' (Ponty,1945 ,X). This long quotation from Maurice Merleau-Ponty exposes the essentially dualistic nature of Cartesian and Kantian philosophies but ultimately what it indicates is generally the flaw of transcendental philosophy including, of course, that of phenomenology by which I mean Husserlian phenomenology.

Husserlian dualism is manifested through the distinction he makes between the essence of consciousness and the essence of nature which follows the same pattern as Descartes' distinction between the essence of mind (thought) and the essence of body (extension). However whereas Descartes held that no substance can have the attributes of both thought and extension, Husserl argued, to the contrary, that the same individual can be both spatial and thinking, that body and mind are not two kinds of individual but two aspects or moments in one individual, instances of the essences of nature and consciousness respectively (Smith and Woodruff, 1995, 337). At least we know that Husserl is aware of the problem associated with dualistic approach to knowledge for he seemed to take certain measures to minimize its adverse effects. But overall the success or otherwise of such endeavor must be appreciated in light of the whole project of a transcendental philosophy.

Hence the subsequent sections try to indicate the need for transition from transcendental to existential phenomenology. Because despite late attempts from Husserl it was by Heidegger and especially by Maurice Merleau-Ponty that the topics of inter-subjectivity, sociality, embodiment, historicity, to mention but few were incorporated into phenomenology and t I shall examine the significance of this incorporation in the next chapters.

## **2.2.The Possibility of Phenomenological Ontology**

This section is devoted to analyzing the possibility and suitability of using the phenomenological method for ontological analysis. It has been noted that Heidegger's fundamental project is not the phenomenological description of our experience rather his concern remains to be the analysis of being.

But how do we go about investigating being? How do we do ontology? Although Heidegger's ontological aspirations may be traditional, his method for achieving them is not: phenomenology. Ontology traditionally uses an array of methods, including but not limited to conceptual and linguistic analysis and also theoretical generalization. Heidegger eschews these techniques in favor of phenomenology.

Yet as many philosophers noted, cursory inspection might suggest that phenomenology is ill-suited to ontology. It seems that Heidegger himself has not proceeded without noticing the possible contradiction between phenomenology and ontology judging from the fact that he has

taken pains to show not just the possibility but the necessity of doing ontology through phenomenology. Simply put the objection reads- while phenomenology is the study of appearances, ontology is about reality or better yet while phenomenology is about what appears, ontology deals with what is real. Heidegger's defense of phenomenology as the proper method for doing ontology begins by examining the concept of phenomenon which he traces from a Greek verb literally translated as 'to show itself'. Thus the meaning of phenomenon appears to be 'what shows itself in itself, what is manifest' (Heidegger, 2010; 27). Thus the ordinary understanding of phenomenon – 'that which presents itself to our senses' fails to tell the whole story leaving a gap to be filled by its etymological origin. Hence phenomenon is not just what is perceived by the senses but it's that 'behind which nothing stands'.

On the other hand, appearance means that 'something which does not show itself announces itself through something which does show itself- appearing is a not showing itself' (Ibid, 28). Blattner attributes this conflation of phenomenology with appearance to a 'covert assumption of indirect representationalism' (2006; 28). According to indirect representationalism 'objects announce themselves through surrogates, ideas or representations.' (Ibid) (Richard Rorty's subtle criticism of representationalism in his 'Philosophy and the Mirror of nature' discloses serious flaws in the approach). Hence taking phenomena to be appearance requires believing in the possibility that phenomenon is a surrogate for a transcendent reality- such idealistic approach to phenomenology characterizes Husserl's conception of the notion. This precludes phenomenology from being a suitable mechanism for analyzing being. Heidegger however states the truth unequivocally when he says 'Ontology is possible only as phenomenology' (2010; 33) thereby indicating not just the suitability of the phenomenological method for ontological analysis but the indispensability of the new method for the old question.

The use of the phenomenological method in this work, therefore, takes note of the distinction between transcendental phenomenology and existential phenomenology. When Heidegger announces the questionability of what he calls 'historically transmitted ontologies', he's pointing to their failure to employ the phenomenological method (a defect for which the philosophers are not responsible). In the end it can be noted that Heidegger's suspicion of traditional ontology is partly necessitated by this failure. So if ontology is to part with this questionable past, it needs to take due cognizance of the new method. Yet we should not forget that the application of the

phenomenological method to an ontological inquiry must be preceded by an appraisal of the defects of transcendental phenomenology.

The real question is not whether Husserl's move from descriptive phenomenology to a transcendental one was the right thing to do, or at least this is a question which I am least interested in. I am rather much more interested in the question of whether the continuation of the Cartesian and especially the Kantian tradition (which I believe is what transcendental phenomenology boils down to despite Husserl's significant departure from the Kantian 'transcendental) allows for the ontological analysis of being.

For much of the philosophy of the early twentieth century, an object could only be given to thought if it had already been "constituted" by thought. Thus for Kant, for instance, an object could only be seen as an object if it was brought under certain categories of thought. This view of constitution commits one to a denial of the existence of existential phenomena (Wrathall in Dreyfus and Wrathall, 2006, 33). To the extent that Husserl's subject is a knowing subject, his philosophy may be considered to be continuing the tradition of transcendental subjectivity in the Kantian sense. The reduction of the object to the categories of thought or the content of consciousness is a characteristic feature of transcendental philosophy.

Although Heidegger does not object to the idea of constitution, he has distanced himself from what he calls 'letting the entity be seen in its objectivity' through subjective categories. He attributes the constitution to their having 'a place in a whole context of relations to other worldly entities and human activities' (Ibid). Consequently objects will be able to show 'themselves as they are in themselves' only in the everyday, meaningful world of significance.

One of the complaints sometimes made concerning phenomenology is that it seems to substantialize the self, that it makes the ego into a kind of fixed point that escapes its own history, an "ego pole" that is self-contained, unambiguous, and unaffected by what it suffers and does (Sokolowski, 2000, 127). Although the application of this criticism cannot go beyond transcendental phenomenology, some have tried to extend its sphere to Heidegger's conception of 'Being' which they have accused of being static and devoid of any historical meaning. However Heidegger's meticulous analysis of the facticity and historicity of Dasein leaves no room for such an attack.

According to Levinas part of Heidegger's project in *Being and Time* is to replace Husserl's bracketing of the experiential life-world by foregrounding it and making it central not only thematically (as an object of study) but also methodologically (as a means of study). Thematically, Heidegger wants to demonstrate that knowledge is grounded in the experiential life-world and that abstract, detached, theoretical knowledge is merely derivative of the more basic and seamless kind of knowing that enables everyday life, which Heidegger calls understanding. In addition to refuting what Levinas called 'an epistemological-cognitivist picture of human subjectivity and agency', Heidegger also wanted to abolish the comforting familiarity with which Husserlian phenomenology was embraced and recast it along the lines of the everyday experiential life-world. This insight is the basis of Heidegger's reformulation of phenomenology. It is safe to conclude that Heidegger's phenomenological analysis of being begins from the experiential world.

It's to be noted that transcendental phenomenology aims ultimately at unraveling the 'essential structures of subjectivity'. To the extent that these structures lie beneath the surface they're not accessible by direct perception. On the contrary only through the use of the transcendental method will we be able to grasp these structures. Because of his concern on essences Husserl does not take being and non-being to be proper objects of analysis. In other words, there remains nothing to understand about the meaning of 'being' once one sees that it's simply the intentional correlative of consciousness, or more strictly speaking, of the transcendental ego' (Schacht, 1972, 297).

Heidegger and Husserl agree on the primacy of 'subjective experience' inherent to the phenomenological method. However it's worth mentioning that Heidegger has made a radical departure from Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. Heidegger's departure from transcendental phenomenology is a manifestation of his rejection of Husserl's move from descriptive to transcendental phenomenology. This insurmountable difference between the two has given rise to two different ways of doing phenomenology: the transcendental of Husserl and the existential of Heidegger.

Although Heidegger appropriates Husserl's idea of "horizontal intentionality," he insists that Husserl's first-person singular Cartesian account of what is experienced through our intentional directedness at objects leads to a fundamental misunderstanding of intentionality (Keller, 1999,

114). Heidegger's doubts regarding the account of consciousness in terms of mental states is intensified by the fact that some of the mental states, which we shall discuss in the next chapter, are bereft of a referential object.

As we have discussed in the previous section, intentionality is a fundamental concept in phenomenology. Both Heidegger and Husserl contend that 'the key to understanding how we experience entities is to be sought in the notion of intentionality' (Keller, 1999, 113). However, Heidegger rejects Husserl's 'internalist interpretation of intentionality' (Ibid, 116) arguing that it's impossible to abstract the aboutness of the objects from the objects themselves. For Heidegger the structures of intentionality can never be grasped independently of the world within which human beings exist.

Transcendental phenomenology, by Husserl's own admission, is a science of essence not of existence. Hence, 'whatever facts present themselves, serve only as examples'. Heidegger, on the other hand, lays stress on the 'investigation of human existence and its character of Being' (Heffernan, 2016, 8). He rejects Husserl's reduction of phenomenology to mere 'conceptual analysis'.

Another thing which should be admitted is transcendental phenomenology seem to lead to solipsism. 'The suspension of the natural attitude and the ensuing reduction to the field of pure consciousness, the descriptive science of transcendental phenomenology invokes a first person point of view that might easily be seen as inviting the objection of solipsism' (Warren, 2009, 209). Moreover Husserl describes of the other as an 'alter-ego who cannot be made present within the sphere of my own experience as he is present, or given, to himself within his own. To experience the other is to experience his absence' (Ibid, 210). Husserl's account of transcendental phenomenology resists not only the interpretation of the self vis-à-vis the other but also it conceals the inter-subjective potential of the subject.

It should be clear from the outset, though that the risk of solipsism in Husserl does not follow the same pattern as Descartes. Like Descartes, Husserl is concerned with the way the subject interacts with the external world. However, 'whereas the method of Descartes is a reflexive analysis of the very acts in which the thinking subject coincides with its own being, enclosed within itself, the method of Husserl is a reflective analysis directed towards the transcendental

field of pure experience' (Edie, 1964, 55). In contradistinction to Husserl's transcendental subject which 'intends a world, in Descartes and Kant the subject is enclosed within itself i.e. the subject does not coincide with being as in the cogito-sum of Descartes; the subject is intentionally directed towards a world which 'it is not' but of which it's the lived experience (Ibid). Although the transcendental subject is not confined to the inner world of consciousness in exactly the same way as 'the cogito', still the constitutive character of consciousness has the tendency to reduce the object to the noetic-noematic structure.

In his lectures Heidegger has made it clear that a philosophy committed to 'the general dominance of the theoretical' or even 'the primacy of the theoretical', which Husserl's transcendental phenomenology is, may reach 'the things themselves' as 'objects,' but it cannot capture the human experience of historical life in a surrounding world (Ibid, 14). Husserl neglects the existential in favor of the theoretical because he sees individual existence as nothing more than an example 'similar to the way empirical examples serve the mathematician'. Thus the transition from a transcendental to an existential phenomenology is an essential step in the ascertainment of the suitability of phenomenology for an ontological inquiry.

Existential phenomenologists all share the view that philosophy should not be conducted from a detached, objective, disinterested, disengaged standpoint. This is because, they contend, certain phenomena only show themselves to one who is engaged with the world in the right kind of way (Wrathall in Dreyfus and Wrathall, 2006, 32). As we shall see in the subsequent chapters both Heidegger and Maurice Merleau Ponty focus on the analysis of the individual from the perspective of its world albeit their phenomenological aspirations differ from one another.

In his critique of Descartes, Ponty emphasizes the solipsism inherent in Descartes' Cogito 'Cogito depreciated the perception of others, teaching me as it did that the I is accessible only to itself, since it defined me as the thought which I have of myself, and which clearly I am alone in having, at least in this ultimate sense. For the 'other' to be more than an empty word, it is necessary that my existence should never be reduced to my bare awareness of existing, but that it should take in also the awareness that one may have of it, and thus include my incarnation in some nature and the possibility, at least, of a historical situation. The Cogito must reveal me in a situation' (Ponty, XIV).

Existential phenomenology lays bare the interrelatedness and interdependence between the subject and the object through words such as ‘encounter’ and ‘dialogue’. An ‘encounter is wholly unthinkable unless both terms of the encounter are conceived in relation to each other in such a way that both terms imply each other’ (Luijpen, 1960, 36-37). Dialogue is also an important term which renders existential phenomenology intelligible. It involves a situation in which ‘both participants contribute their share. If either of them is thought away, the dialogue itself vanishes. The unity of subject and the world is a dialectical unity, the unity of a dialogue (Ibid, 36-37). The existential questions which concern us most are evidently beyond the scope of transcendental phenomenology; the anonymity of the transcendental subject, the elimination of the body and the epistemological determinacy which attend transcendental philosophy necessitate the adoption of existential phenomenology as a method of analyzing being.

One of the requirements for the elimination of the transcendental dimension of the subject is the concurrence of mind and body. The other is the overcoming of the ‘disembodied subject’ Whether existential phenomenology in general and the Heideggerian version in particular supply the necessary material for the proper examination of the body in light of the ontological analysis of freedom is a question which I shall postpone for the subsequent chapters. In the next section I shall make a brief exposition of Heidegger’s project of fundamental ontology.

### **2.3.The Ontology of Freedom- a brief account**

#### **2.3.1. Heidegger’s Fundamental Ontology**

This section analyzes Heidegger’s portrayal of the relation between freedom and being. In its attempt to lay the foundation for the existential analytic to be discussed in the subsequent parts, the section aims at providing a brief account of the ontology of freedom.

In *Being and Time* Heidegger unequivocally states his aim to be the analysis of the meaning of being. One might argue, with no apparent exaggeration, that all the intellectual efforts of this giant philosophical figure have been exerted to addressing this fundamental question. However, Heidegger states ‘fundamental ontology... must be sought in the existential analysis of Dasein’ (2010, 12). Hence, the existential aspect of Heidegger must be viewed as a means to that end. We can safely contend then that Heidegger’s interest in the ‘burdens of human existence’ is necessitated by the fact that only Dasein is capable of understanding being.

The non-objectifying and pre-conceptual understanding of being is what the “science” of ontology must make conceptually thematic. Thus, the understanding in question is not itself already a piece of ontology, is not properly ontological, but rather is a pre-ontological understanding of being (Overgaard, 2004, 91). Although the possibility of fundamental ontology lies in the unique capacity of Dasein to understand being, this understanding is far from being the ultimate ontological aim Heidegger is after.

Yet ‘since existence defines Dasein, the ontological analysis of this being always requires in advance a consideration of existentiality. However, we understand existentiality as the constitution of being of the being that exists. But the idea of being in general already lies in the idea of such a constitution of being. And thus the possibility of carrying out the analysis of Dasein depends upon the prior elaboration of the question of the meaning of being in general’- hence the claim ‘the understanding of Being is necessarily prior to the experience of any particular being’ (Heidegger, 2010, 12). In addition ‘Being is given to us only in beings. Thus the look of the phenomenological investigator must be directed at beings in such a way as to disclose them in their Being i.e., to ‘thematize Being’ (Caputo, 1977, 90). The mutual dependence between the existential analysis of Dasein and the question of being in general is indicative of the role of existential phenomenology as the *modus operandi* of ontological analysis. Heidegger’s claim that ‘phenomenology does not characterize the ‘what’ of the objects of philosophical research but the ‘how’ of such research’ (Ibid, 26) cements his assertion that ontological analysis must be carried out only through phenomenology. But evidently this assertion does much more than just stipulate phenomenology in relation to philosophical research- it also explains Heidegger’s rejection of transcendental phenomenology as a possible method of ontology in lieu of existential phenomenology.

It’s no longer a mystery that Heidegger is not alone in rejecting Husserl’s transition from descriptive to transcendental phenomenology: ‘this transition to idealism did not favour the acceptance by other phenomenologists of Husserl’s original insistence on the *epoche*. Martin Heidegger, for example, decisively rejected the demand for the *epoche* and attempted to use the phenomenological method in the development of a non-idealistic philosophy of Being’ (Landgrebe et al., 1981, 120). Heidegger’s rejection of transcendental phenomenology was mainly triggered by Husserl’s insistence on phenomenological reduction which he argued was

'the science of essences' aimed at laying bare the universal structure of consciousness. On the contrary, the primitive fact of existential phenomenology is aimed at disclosing the unity of 'reciprocal implication of subject and the world'.

For Husserl the reduction means a "leading back" from a naïve consciousness, which takes the being as something there', as an autonomous thing in itself, to a critical consciousness which understands the hitherto anonymous life of consciousness which "constitutes" the object. It is the passage from the naive givenness of the being to the giving life of consciousness, from a world which is ready made to the creativity of transcendental consciousness (Caputo, 1977, 90). The bracketing of the world or simply the replacement of the natural attitude by the phenomenological attitude lies at the heart of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. However, Husserl's unconcealment of the anonymous thing-in-itself is not a complete success since one can still discern the anonymous in the transcendental subject- this relocation of anonymity from the object to the subject is in part the reason for Heidegger's rejection of transcendental phenomenology.

For Heidegger the reduction means the movement by which we no longer take the being naively, as something simply there', but discover the being in its Being. It is the revelation that the being, which naive common sense takes to be "given," depends upon a more original "giving." For Heidegger, the reduction discloses the hitherto anonymous operation of Being by which the being emerges as a being. The being becomes a phenomenon for Heidegger only when we grasp it in its Being. The simple and determinate grasp of a particular being is nothing phenomenological, but a mere naïveté" of natural common sense (Ibid). It seems to me that in Heidegger's view the phenomenological reduction is not necessarily phenomenological unless it succeeds in revealing the hidden meaning of being. The question of whether transcendental phenomenology is essentially phenomenological is a question which I have no intention of addressing. However, it's important to note that the contingency and particularity of human life (a crucial step in the analysis of the meaning of being) eludes transcendental phenomenology in so far as its primary objective is to discern the universal structures of consciousness.

In short, 'Heideggerian phenomenology is not transcendental, but rather existential. Husserl's 'transcendental ego' and 'transcendental experience' and 'pure essences' are for Heidegger pure abstractions; and he considers it to be an illusion to regard them either as more real or more

fundamental than the self, the experience, and the things of concrete everyday existence. If the phenomenologist is to grasp the true natures of things, for Heidegger, he must not perform Husserl's phenomenological reduction, and he must not concern himself with anything like Husserl's 'transcendental theory of knowledge' and 'pure egology'. Rather, he must undertake a careful analysis of the concretely existing human being' (Schacht, 1972, 307). In *Being and Time* Heidegger warns against treating ontology and phenomenology as two different disciplines which belong to philosophy- saying philosophy is universal phenomenological ontology. However this statement would not be intelligible without understanding Heidegger's attempt to distance himself from transcendental phenomenology or his destruction of 'historically transmitted ontologies'.

Traditional ontology, beginning with Aristotle and reaching an apex in the Middle Ages, sought to develop a theory of the basic categories of things that are (entities), an inventory of the furniture of the universe. Whereas traditional ontology and Neo-Scholasticism thought of ontological questions as "hard" metaphysical questions about the nature of the world as it is in itself- what else could "being" be? -- Heidegger applied Kant's transcendental turn to ontology and converted it into a study of the structure and rules of our understanding of being (Blattner, 2006, 3).

Heidegger believed that 'there is a meaningful concept of the being of all beings, a conception that underlies all our understanding of reality. As he saw it, this conception has been the aim of all metaphysical thinking, even if it was not always properly understood' (Guignon, 1993, 43). He is in a way trying to resuscitate an abandoned question- despite its preoccupation with the question of being, western philosophy, so argues Heidegger, is characterized by a rupture from the encouraging start by the Greeks.

Ontology is an exploration of our understanding of being. We have a pre-ontological understanding of being, and our job as philosophers is to make that pre-ontology explicit in an ontological theory. Thus, ontology is interpretive or "hermeneutic." Because our pre-ontological understanding is embedded in our conduct and pre-reflective ways of going about our lives, ontology is an attempt to put our practical understanding of being into words (Nichols, 2014, 22). It's perhaps noteworthy that for Heidegger to be ontological does not necessarily mean to be able

to develop an ontology. Ontology is reserved for ‘the explicit, theoretical question of the being of beings’ (2010, 11).

The "destruction of the history of ontology" is a disassembly of the conceptual history of ontology, in which one analyzes the experiences that gave rise to the earliest philosophical attempts to say what being means. The ancient Greek ontology arose (according to Heidegger) out of the experience of production. Seeing this should loosen up our attachment to the received ontology by showing how it arose from a distinctive and limited range of experience (Nichols, 2014, 22). This destruction should not be understood as denying the relevance of traditional ontology rather its objective is ‘to loosen the sclerotic tradition and to dissolve the concealments produced by it’. Curiously enough Heidegger urges us to conceive of his destruction favorably.

The fact that ontology can be given a diverse range of meanings complicates the task of assigning meaning to it. For Johanna Oksala ontology connotes ‘both the fundamental building blocks of reality and to the systematic study of them’ (2005, 13). While Aristotle defines it as the ‘science of beings’, Heidegger takes it to be ‘the science of the being of beings’.

An ontological analysis attempts to demonstrate that a claim to know something (an epistemological claim) already contains a back-grounded understanding about what kinds of entities there are to know, and an ethical stance—an existential commitment—toward these entities. When we engage in an “ontological form of critical analysis,” we are attempting either: to be reminded of this mutual interrelatedness and the fundamental conditions that make it possible (fundamental ontology); or to foreground the work being done by specific pre-reflective activities to animate and legitimate a particular horizon of intelligibility (historical ontology) (Nichols, 2014, 14). While Heidegger remains to be concerned with the former, the subsequent chapters shall indicate the inadequacy of fundamental ontology for the understanding of the human condition.

Heidegger maintains that ontology is an a priori discipline; Ontological reflection lays the foundations for empirical science. For this reason, Heidegger writes further, ‘Ontological inquiry is indeed more primordial, as over against the ontical inquiry of the positive sciences’. Because ontology explores the standards in terms of which we distinguish what is from what is not, as well as among the various fundamental sorts of entities that are, Heidegger concludes that

science presupposes ontology (Blattner, 2006, 20). This claim amounts to saying that all knowledge presupposes ontology to the extent that the fundamental structures of knowledge which are essential for the sciences can only be unraveled through an ontological inquiry.

### **2.3.2. The Ontology of Freedom**

Despite the claim of some that Heidegger's thought leaves no room at all for human will or freedom of choice, a strong case can be made for defending Heidegger's insightful preoccupation with freedom. The chief advocate of the former position Habermas alleges that Heidegger tends to grant complete primacy to Being and its various disclosures at the expense of freedom thereby relegating human beings to mere 'shepherd and guardian of Being' and human existence to 'a fated or fateful event' (Habermas in Dallmayr, 1984, 209).

It's important to see that Heidegger's exclusion from the political spectrum is not entirely groundless. Some of his critiques point to his inauspicious association with the National Socialist regime. This however does not indicate a lack of political program although it may potentially show what Max Muller called 'the limit of his concrete political judgment'. Yet this seemingly convenient manner of dealing with Heidegger's works depletes our shelves depriving it of 'all difficult authors from Plato to Nietzsche and to making righteous indignation even more satisfying than it normally is' (Krell, 1993, 28). For others the issue is more philosophical than political- they allege that Heidegger's failure to dwell on matters of political significance in general and freedom in particular is testament to the absence of any enthusiasm towards political preoccupations. These latter critiques can be credited for not using Heidegger's 'political biography' to dismiss his works thereby avoiding what Bernard Williams called 'the attempt to circumvent the confrontation with the thought and philosophy of Martin Heidegger'. These issues are worth exploring by themselves but they do not fall within the scope of this work. Hence it suffices to say that Heidegger's works in general are 'encumbered by heavy political mortgage'.

Of all the various reasons that led to Heidegger's dismissal from political discussions one deserves our attention i.e. the absence of direct allusion to the political in any of his works, at least not in the manner it's traditionally been done. This is particularly evident in his treatment of freedom.

It's due mainly to the fact that freedom is discussed indirectly in *Being and Time* that Heidegger has been largely excluded from scholarly debate on freedom until recently. Echoing Dallmayr, Mark Tanzer argues that Heidegger's work represents a rethinking of the traditional notions of freedom, a rethinking that cannot be reduced to mere decisionism or arbitrary voluntarism (Robinson, 2009, 7). It's mainly due to this rethinking of freedom and the resulting failure to fall within the traditional categories of freedom that Heidegger was subject to severe criticism- these criticisms range from lack of interest in the question of freedom to the more damning criticism that his work lacks any political significance. Before analyzing Heidegger's reformulation of the notion of freedom in light of his ontological aspirations, I will give an account of the theory of freedom which he distances himself from.

We can see from previous remarks that the traditional and dominant conception of freedom emerges from Kant's transcendental subject. The transcendental subject which is the supreme condition of possibility in the realm of knowledge claims to do the same in the ethico-political realm of freedom. The autonomous, self-legislating subject is the ethico-political analogue of the transcendental subject. Isaiah Berlin's examination of positive and negative liberties is testament to the transcendentalist propensity of the dominant (Kantian) conception of freedom.

'I am normally said to be free to the degree to which no man or body of men interferes with my activity. Political liberty in this sense is simply the area within which a man can act unobstructed by others. If I am prevented by others from doing what I could otherwise do, I am to that degree unfree (Berlin, 1969, 169). The description indicates that negative freedom is understood in terms of the person's ability to take control of the surrounding situations in such a way that she is not restrained by them.

The 'positive' sense of the word 'liberty' derives from the wish on the part of the individual to be his own master. I wish my life and decisions to depend on myself, not on external forces of whatever kind. I wish to be the instrument of my own, not of other men's, acts of will. I wish to be a subject, not an object; to be moved by reasons, by conscious purposes, which are my own, not by causes which affect me, as it were, from outside (Ibid, 179). The 'freedom to' of positive liberty involves control over oneself in such a way that one is able to fashion one's life in accordance with one's own ends.

While positive libertarians advocate mastery of a transcendent self through collectively mediated, self-given law, negative libertarians advocate mastery of an empirical self over a private domain (Thiele, 1994, 281). Despite the glaring difference between positive and negative liberties, both are characterized by ‘mastery of the self’- ‘while positive libertarians advocate mastery of a transcendent self through collectively mediated, self- given law, negative libertarians advocate mastery of an empirical self over a private domain’ (Ibid). Careful examination brings to light the aforementioned idea that mastery remains central to the dominant conception of freedom. We can locate the conceptual root of this theory in the transcendental philosophy of Kant which takes the self-legislating subject to be the highest expression of freedom. Heidegger’s conception of freedom should be, so long as it can be worked out from his overall thought, viewed against the background of this constituting subject.

Heidegger’s rejection of valuation- of being or of God or freedom for that matter- is premised on his firm conviction that valuation is a disguised form of subjectivation. So instead of characterizing freedom as ‘license to do’ he equates it with ‘participation in the revealment of what-is-as-such’. Hence, ‘viewed as Dasein’s ontological core, being free is neither imposed on Dasein as an external fate or destiny, nor can it be arbitrarily chosen or discarded’ (Dallmayr, 1984, 214). Freedom is generally described as a ‘disclosive letting-be’.

Heidegger’s analysis of freedom can be articulated from an existential as well as ontological perspective. His existential analysis has identified three forms of freedom: potentiality- for – being, epistemological indeterminacy, and authenticity. On the ontological level freedom is conceptualized in light of Dasein’s capacity to ‘let beings be’. This prelude to Heidegger’s conception of freedom must suffice for the moment since a detailed account of them shall be undertaken in the subsequent chapters.

## **PART TWO- PHENOMENOLOGICAL INQUIRY**

### **CHAPTER THREE-Phenomenological Inquiry into the Practices of Freedom**

The existence of any political motive in Heidegger's works is a question which probably calls for a separate treatment and which this paper cannot afford to deal with. However the skepticism surrounding the existence of an overt political motive in his works does not preclude the less popular view that although his works, especially BT is not primarily concerned with the political question, it certainly has wider political implications.

In this chapter I intend to make a phenomenological analysis of the practices of freedom which the dominant conception of freedom has nurtured. It also discusses the counterproductive nature of these practices.

In the previous chapters I have tried to examine the dominant conception of freedom vis-a-vis transcendental philosophy. The discussion in this chapter revolves around the practical implications of the dominant conception of freedom I have discussed in the foregoing parts. With this objective in view the chapter analyzes nationalist movements (with a focus on the anticolonial movements) to indicate the failure of modernity's claim that mastery (of oneself and others) guarantees freedom

The analysis of the practices of freedom aims to show how the human condition is a condition of possibility for human agency. The analysis of the practices of freedom will highlight the various ways in which human agency is a constitutive condition of human freedom. It also indicates the logical as well as practical inconsistency that operating within the dominant conception of freedom entails.

My argument is that our conception of freedom is shaped by our experience of the world in general and the conditioning influences of historical, social, and linguistic circumstances in particular. I will also argue that the concept of freedom is not an independently existing entity but is instead an abstraction that is derived from our experience of the world. I will end this chapter by demonstrating the significance of an ontological attitude towards the notion of freedom.

With the above objective in view the first section shall expound on an alternative view of freedom. I shall examine the major tenets of postmodernism and the practices of freedom it sanctions so as to indicate the far-reaching influence of the dominant conception of freedom.

### **3.1. Postmodernism**

#### **3.1.1. A General Survey**

Modern philosophy in general and enlightenment philosophy in particular is characterized by a belief in the perfectibility of human nature- that human beings are capable of improving their conditions through an understanding of their nature. So reactions against this ideal are bound to fall in either of two categories: there're those that deny the possibility of perfecting human nature and there're those that admit that human nature is perfectible but deny that this perfectibility follows a similar pattern for all humans.

The first of these two categories can itself be divided into two groups: the first group attributes the impossibility of perfection to the absence of human nature (in the absence of human nature the issue of perfectibility would become superfluous). This position is represented by existentialists. There're also others whose skepticism is grounded on certain character of human nature- they attach the essential fallibility of human nature to the original state of man (natural defect) or to events that follow after (like the original sin). The various religious views of human nature fall in the latter group.

The second response is characterized by a categorical rejection of objective ideals. It denies the truth of the belief that to perfect human nature one must adhere to certain rules or that one must follow the pattern drawn by some 'enlightened' cultures and individuals although they're not opposed to the idea of the perfectibility of human nature which its proponents allege is within our grasp. They subscribe to the idea that every culture, if not individual sets the goal of perfection in its own unique way and devises the means by which to attain it. This relativistic thinking traces its origin to the Greeks, or more specifically to the sophists. The closer representatives to the modern version of this thinking, however, are the postmodernists. Their whole idea is centred on the denial of universal principles and eternal patterns.

The postmodern period refers to a 'style of thought which is suspicious of classical notions of truth, reason, identity and objectivity, of the idea of universal progress or emancipation, of single

frameworks, grand narratives or ultimate grounds of explanation' (Eagleton, 1996, 1). The postmodern period, therefore, casts a suspicious eye towards the traditional ideas of truth, reason, personality and objectivity, of the possibility of widespread advancement or liberation, of single systems, excellent stories or extreme grounds of clarification.

'Against the Enlightenment norms, it (Postmodernism) sees the world as contingent, ungrounded, diverse, unstable, indeterminate, a set of *disunified cultures or interpretations* which breed a degree of skepticism about the objectivity of truth, history and norms, the givenness of natures and the coherence of identities'(emphasis added) (Ibid). By running counter to the ideals of Enlightenment, Postmodernism underscores the world's contingency, ungroundedness and variety. The cluster of societies set against each other generate a level of distrust about the objectivity of truth, history and standards, and the givenness of qualities and the essential congruity of identities.

Yet postmodernism is not a whole-sale rejection of modernity as it is sometimes made out to be. Foucault (as one of the foremost advocates of postmodernism) is normally presented as a critique of modernity but some have detected a slight tendency, especially in his later works, of approving some tenets of modernity. This is to mean that in addition to his potent critique of modernity as 'paving the way for the sciences of discipline and normalization', his works have also betrayed a 'qualified endorsement of the enlightenment ethos of critique'. (D'entreves, 1996; 1) His characterization of modernity as 'a permanent reactivation of an attitude, a permanent critique of our historical era' is further testament to postmodernist's reserved but sometimes glaring approval of the critical bent characteristic of enlightenment. Yet this enigmatic continuity between modernity and postmodernity is nowhere more apparent than in their conception of freedom.

Postmodernism is generally inimical to any kind of unifying structure- no less in the political than in the metaphysical. Nonetheless postmodern politics is less determinable than its metaphysical and epistemological counterparts. It's easier for instance to treat socialism as a postmodern response to the oppressive structure of liberalism. Yet socialism is no less grand than liberalism- in its rhetoric of the emancipation of the proletariat, it does not only promise to come up with truth as a finished product but it also (against what postmodernists stand for) believes to possess emancipatory knowledge. The emergence of identity politics into the world sphere

indicated postmodernism's growing influence of the political ideal hitherto largely influenced by the grand narratives of socialism and liberalism.

Hicks explains postmodernism in the context of their attempt to effect a compromise between Heidegger and Nietzsche. He argues that although postmodernists endorse Heidegger's rejection of reason, they are dismissive of his 'metaphysical quest for Being'. They would rather put Nietzsche's determination of life in terms of power struggle at the centre of their analysis. Despite the suspicious eye with which they view such ethico-political notions as freedom and justice, postmodernists still defend a particular notion of freedom or the lack thereof. The following section examines their attitude towards freedom with a view to ascertaining the continuing influence of the dominant conception of freedom.

### **3.1.2. Postmodern Freedom**

The rejection of the grand narratives and the ideals they stand for characterizes the postmodern mind. Postmodernism challenges mainstream values, beliefs and ideologies. This is implied, *inter alia*, in their conception of freedom. Jean François Lyotard claimed that 'freedom is the ability to use existing rules, conventions, and institutions to create new forms of expression and knowledge' (Lyotard, 1984, . This is to mean that freedom is understood in terms of the freedom to break from traditional norms and explore new ways of thinking. The concept of postmodern freedom has become increasingly important in today's globalized society as people are encouraged to view things from different angles and challenge convention. people are no longer tied to singular traditions or norms; instead they have the freedom to choose which values they wish to adhere to. This type of freedom requires open-mindedness towards ideas that some may consider strange.

Furthermore, they view meanings as fluid and context-dependent which allow for alternative ways of being or participating in the life-world. It also recognizes that morality has many different sides depending on where one stands with respect to particular issues or cultural practices. Therefore individuals have more room for autonomy when it comes to making choices about their own life decisions without feeling restricted by societal expectations/demands.

However Oksala underscores the fact that Foucault is not passionate about the idea of individual autonomy: 'the ideal of freedom as emancipation from the effects of power is an important part

of the Enlightenment thinking and the subsequent understanding of emancipatory politics. Foucault warned us that the Enlightenment ideal of individual autonomy was one effect of normalizing power, power that is totalizing and individualizing at the same time' (2005, 182).

To the extent that postmodern freedom enables us to explore possible avenues for coming to the knowledge of the self it's believed to have provided humans with a greater degree of freedom than its predecessors. Postmodernists also believe that the kind of freedom they advocate is capable of rising above the limited knowledge of the self and create an understanding of 'the other'.

The postmodern freedom advocated by Lyotard and Foucault seems to present itself as a realistic alternative to the questionable and highly suspect conception of freedom that the Kantian notion of freedom implies. The refutation of this claim depends to a large extent on the analysis of the relation between Foucault and Heidegger. Among other things this analysis enables us to grasp Kant's influence on Foucault in general and on Foucault's understanding of freedom in particular- an influence which the history of philosophy overlooked for the most part, due partly to the postmodern and relativist label attached to the latter.

There's no doubt that Foucault shares Heidegger's conception of Freedom as practice as opposed to the property of the will. 'Foucault's late thinking identifies ethics as the deliberate dimension of freedom. Ethics is a practice of freedom' (Oksala, 2005, 190). However, Foucault's conception presupposes a sovereign subject (much like Kant's) capable of self-creation and self-invention- Heidegger, however, is unequivocal in his rejection of the possibility of such a subject.

While Heidegger, in *Being and Time*, investigated the ahistorical structures of human existence, Foucault was a militant historicist (Karademir, 2013, 376). In this section I shall pledge to examine Heidegger's connection to postmodernism with a special emphasis on the ambivalent relation between Heidegger and Foucault.

The analysis of Foucault's relation to Heidegger does not only enable us to point out the precise place the ontology of freedom has played in the history of philosophy but most importantly it helps to unravel the largely obscure account of freedom implicit in Foucault's work.

Foucault's own confession goes a long way to pacifying an otherwise tumultuous task of examining the relation between the two philosophers: 'for me Heidegger has always been the essential philosopher.... My entire philosophical development has been determined by my reading of Heidegger' (Karademir, 2013, 376).

Michel Foucault calls for resistance to the productive forces of power that manipulate and produce our identities. Freedom today, he maintains, is to be discovered in the ongoing struggle against the techniques of subjectification. Foucault insists that freedom is less a thing to be secured, than an activity to be engaged (Thiele, 1994, 280). By analyzing freedom in terms of practice rather than the property of the will Foucault underscores the dialectical relation that such a conception of freedom presupposes. 'Where there's power, there's resistance... this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power' (Oksala, 2005, 190). However we should not overlook the contentious view that despite his refusal to fully endorse the self-legislating autonomous subject Foucauldian freedom traces its lineage and remains to be highly dependent on the Kantian notion of freedom as it's manifested in his analysis of the role of the subject in the quest for freedom 'the quest for freedom in Foucault's ethics is a question of developing forms of the subject that are capable of functioning as resistance to the normalizing power (Oksala, 2005, 190). Despite Foucault's denial of the possibility of the autonomous individual implied in his claim that the individual subject is a result of normalizing power, the freedom of the individual is explained in terms of its capacity to stand opposed to the processes of normalization.

With the self no longer given (as the gift of God, nature, or history), freedom is manifest only through its "invention." Foucault, however, insists that freedom of the creative self arises only in the social and political arenas wherein our identities become the spoils of battle' (Ibid). Postmodern freedom is characterized by the forging of identity through the deliberate but not necessarily informed (recourse to knowledge is not an essential ingredient of the process of invention) act of self-creation. Nevertheless the 'creative activity' implied by Foucault's conception of the practice of freedom presupposes a self-autonomous subject capable of engaging in the critical interrogation of the present'.

Foucauldian freedom entails the struggle to remain free from definitions of the self that prescribe its telos. Rather, freedom is found in the construction of a protean self as it evolves by way of the

dynamic clash of productive power and resistance (Ibid). The locus of freedom is sought in the dialectical relation between power and resistance in which the resistance is understood as internal and integral to the power structure which gave rise to it.

Unlike the individual rights and opportunities of Berlin's negative liberty, liberty, for Foucault is a practice, it is what must be exercised' (Thiele, 1994, 280) Hence, we are admonished 'to create ourselves as a work of art'.

Foucault believes that it's the warlike confrontation between forces that opens up, 'a social clearing' within which subjects are produced, subjective positions are defined, objects and domains of knowledge become possible (Karademir, 2013, 387). In the end as Thiele succinctly puts it 'despite the differences between positive liberty, negative liberty, and postmodern liberty, the identification of freedom with mastery remains central to all' (1994, 281). The failure of postmodern freedom to provide a viable alternative to its modern counterpart should be appreciated against the backdrop of the undisputed triumph of the Kantian conception of freedom the influence of which extends to its critiques i.e. it supplies a framework, a foundation which even its critiques can only ignore on pain of unintelligibility.

In addition to the implicit endorsement of the self-determining subject that Foucault's version of the postmodern notion of freedom evinces, it also tends to subscribe to the dichotomizing structure of transcendental philosophy. This partially political attitude is represented by nationalism which Foucault as a far leftist passionately approves.

So in the end it can be contended that postmodern freedom, much like positive and negative liberties, subscribes to the identification of freedom with mastery. If we ignore the identities of the master and the mastered, we can see that all three conceptions of freedom ultimately boil down to the mastery of one by the other. Thiele argues as much:

'whether the mastery in question is of the higher self over the lower self and its desires and needs (as with positive liberty); or the mastery of the empirically demonstrable self over its private domain (as with negative liberty); or the mastery of the aesthetic-agonistic self over its contested, protean constitution (as with postmodern liberty)-each form of liberty tends to lose its quest for mastery upon the world' (Ibid, 281).

It's not just the philosophers (such as Kant and Foucault) that have fallen victim to the idea of freedom as will or causality, but the practical men- 'those who should be committed to freedom given the nature of their activity' also find themselves tied to it. However according to Arendt there's a marked distinction between these two groups of men in their relation to the conception of freedom as the property of the will. The yearning for an 'absolute beginning' has always been the Achilles heel of the philosopher and that has made the acceptance of the idea of freedom as man's property relatively painless. However the practical man finds what Arendt calls 'the revolutionary pathos of the absolutely new' more appealing than any speculative endeavor. Consequently his falling prey to such a conception can be attributed, at least partly, to the misguided 'understanding of the new as an improved restatement of the old' (Villa, 1996, 118). Yet the vague relation between the old and the new/ the traditional and the modern/ cannot be reduced to such simplistic relation.

If it were true that sovereignty and freedom are the same, then indeed no man could be free, because sovereignty, the ideal of uncompromising self-sufficiency and mastership, is contradictory to the very condition of plurality (Arendt, 1958, 234). The idea of plurality, indeed of intersubjectivity is contingent on the impossibility of the autonomous subject. Arendt's rejection of the identification of freedom with sovereignty supplies not just a critique of the autonomous subject in its Kantian as well as Foucauldian version but it also indicates the continuity existing between the two apparently incompatible positions: 'in view of human reality and its phenomenal evidence, it is indeed as spurious to deny human freedom to act because the actor never remains the master of his acts as it is to maintain that human sovereignty is possible because of the incontestable fact of human freedom' (Ibid, 235).

By stipulating an imaginary autonomous subject, transcendental philosophy does not only deny the fact of finitude but it also allows the same (in the person of the west) to establish itself as the objective criteria for the possibility of the subjective experience of the other (non-west).

*To the extent that they had a positive notion of freedom which would transcend the idea of a successful liberation from tyrants and from necessity, this notion was identified with the act of foundation, that is, the framing of a constitution ~ Jefferson, therefore, when he had learned his lesson from the catastrophes of the French Revolution, where the violence of liberation had frustrated all attempts at*

*founding a secure space for freedom, shifted from his earlier identification of action with rebellion and tearing down to an identification with founding anew and building up (Ibid, 234).*

In the subsequent part of the paper, following the line of argument pursued in the foregoing sections, attempt shall be made to show whether and the degree to which ‘the practical man’ finds himself emboldened or constrained by the idea of freedom as the property of the will. With that objective in view I shall examine nationalism as a product of the colonial master who, I believe, epitomizes ‘the practical man’.

However we will not be doing justice to these movements if we fail to pay attention to the social structure within which the practices of freedom are intelligible. It’s crucial to depict the movements as attempts at challenging an existing mode of life and projecting a new mode of life or more exactly a new form of social relation – a new perspective which implies a particular way for human beings to relate to one another and to the world. Hence my analysis of the practices of freedom is ultimately a criticism of the conception of man’s mode of being in one way rather than another. Accordingly the analysis of these practices takes due cognizance of the postmodern shift in our philosophical and political thinking.

## **3.2. Nationalism as a Postmodern Politics**

### **3.2.1. Nation and Nationalism**

As it was manifested in the colonization of Algeria and other African countries colonialism meant, inter alia, the loss of national identity. ‘While offering to negotiate with the French government if it recognised the right to self-determination of every people, including the Algerians whose national identity had for so long been denied, they were primarily concerned to ‘internationalise the Algerian question’, and declared: ‘The struggle will be long but the outcome is certain’ (Ageron, 1991, 108). In discussing nationalism I have two things in mind. First I intend to portray nationalism (the nationalist movements in particular) as a reaction to Western universalism by situating it in the broader context of postmodernism. Furthermore, my analysis of nationalism aims to characterize it as the uncalled for and unruly child of the dominant conception of freedom.

While no controversy seems to have been noted concerning postmodernism's epistemological sphere of influence, the political repercussions have been found to be far more complicated and much convoluted to fathom. It's much easier to defend liberal democracy's status as a typical model of modernity's political program than to instantiate, for instance, socialism as a postmodern politics, albeit some have undertaken this Sisyphean task. I will follow Stephen Hicks and others in denouncing Socialism as a postmodern politics, at least as a model of postmodern politics. I would instead establish the various nationalist and liberation movements as the perfect model of political postmodernism which is consistent with the latter's deep-rooted misgivings towards reason and the ensuing dedication to subjectivism but most importantly its rejection of the procrustean tendency of Western universalism.

The fact that western universalism has penetrated into almost all aspects of human life is easily discernible. The epistemological, ethical and religious forms this universalism manifested itself in have, however, been far more influential in the sense that they have had more success in creating a 'one dimensional man' than for instance any social levelers could ever dream of achieving. The degree of unanimity achieved by these universalists extended beyond the narrow circle of the western intellectual stream. Its incursion into the cultural as well as the political lives of the non-west is particularly noteworthy. The nebulous affinity I am trying to lay bare between postmodernism and nationalism can be better appreciated if we treat these two strands of thought as reactions against western universalism.

Universalism, by reducing everything to the common denominator which applies to all men at all times, drained both lives and ideals of that specific content which alone gave them point (Berlin, 1990, 245). Universalism generally universalizes. Its relative success in the political as well as social realm means that the incorporated has been bereft of its specificity of thought as well as of action. As a result it has been impelled to formulate its problems through the theoretical paradigms and conceptual schemes of the universalizing power. The practices premised upon these borrowed or rather imposed schemes have the tendency to betray various forms of resentment yet they still remain committed to the ideals which begot the practices.

It's basically inevitable that western universalism engenders a reaction from within as well as from without. These reactions have taken various forms ranging from Romanticism to Postmodernism, from anticolonial struggles to various kinds of liberation movements.

Nationalism, which embodies postmodern politics, can also be viewed as one such reaction against universalism.

It's evident that the notion of nationalism is no longer an outlandish concept it once was - a notion which has become a recurrent topic in discussions of political import; and as a consequence it appears to be a familiar concept, but its very familiarity should make us wary of a misapprehension since it's the familiar which usually tends to elude us. Hence despite the boldness with which we confront the subject, it's essential to provide a general framework against which our understanding of nationalism can be assessed.

Many scholars agree on the elastic nature of the notion of 'nationalism' - while some identify it with other -isms (like capitalism and socialism), others are very assertive of the absence of a central idea that characterizes nationalism- an assertion attributed at least partly to the contextual nature of nationalism. It's worth casting a suspicious eye towards the former position in as much as it risks excluding some movements from the sphere of nationalism whereas the latter might be accused of leaving the meaning of nationalism so open that it would fail to signify anything particular. Moore suggests a midway between the two- one which, despite recognizing the elasticity of the concept manages to emphasize on its moral significance. Accordingly she defines nationalism as 'a normative argument that confers moral value on national membership, and on the past and future existence of the nation, and identifies the nation with a particular homeland or part of the globe' (Moore, 2001, 5).

By contrasting it with a state Hugh Seton-Watson defines nation as 'a community of people, whose members are bound together by a sense of solidarity, a common culture, a national consciousness' (1977, 1). Besides the material element that need to be fulfilled, a nation as opposed to a state is characterized by the existence of voluntary emotional attachment which unites the members in a common cause. It can be argued then that nationalist movements are prompted by this spiritual condition. Consequently he describes nationalism as 'an organised political movement, designed to further the alleged aims and interests of nations' (Ibid, 3).

Kymlicka also explains nationalism by reference to nation and national identity; he defines the former as a 'historical community, more or less institutionally complete, occupying a given territory or homeland sharing a distinct language and culture' (1995, 11). This sociological sense

of nation (as he calls it) stresses the cultural distinctiveness of a people. As such nationalism is justified through the only too well known claim that national groups battle to preserve their cultural specificity which they allege will be better served with self-government.

Another important concept Kymlicka employs to understand nationalism is national identity. National identity has remained strong in the modern era in part because its emphasis on the importance of 'the people' provides a source of dignity to all individuals, whatever their class (Kymlicka, 2001, P. 258). In addition to providing a source of dignity, national identity also satisfies the natural desire for a sense of belongingness i.e. people naturally want to belong to certain class; while most categories of human beings are exclusive in the sense that some of them are difficult, if not impossible to join because of the fact that they're merit-based (this includes the class of intellectuals, politicians, rich people), national identity provides guaranteed membership without stipulating such merit-based criteria. This should not be interpreted as though nationalism or national identity is essentially inclusive rather it just reiterates an oft-repeated claim made in connection with the identity of human beings viz. every human being has a national identity. After all nationalist movements organize and mobilize people with a view to creating and maintaining this identity.

On the other hand, Norman seems to be content with identifying features of a 'nation' upon which most political philosophers agree- nations are first and foremost seen as a kind of human community (convergence with Kymlicka and Hugh Seton-Watson is visible). He also claims that 'they are not by definition coextensive neither with states nor with ethnic groups, although there are some nation states and also ethnic nations and many national identities with ethnic elements' (2006, 4). Despite the difficulty of identifying them by any particular set of properties, they tend to be named communities, with a homeland, common myths, shared memories, and a shared language (Ibid). In addition to the noteworthy distinction he makes between nations and states and/or ethnic groups (a point stressed by Hugh Seton-Watson) Norman also seems to believe that the spiritual element which defines nations prefigures nationalism.

But since my primary interest on nationalism gyrates on its political significance I appeal to Breuilly to provide us with an explicitly political description of nationalism. Breuilly alleges that nationalism rests on three major theses: 'i. There exists a nation with an explicit and peculiar character, ii. The interests and values of this nation take priority over all other interests and

values, iii. The nation must be as independent as possible. This usually requires at least the attainment of political sovereignty' (1993, 2). Scholars have demonstrated a varying degree of emphasis in their analysis of the notion of nationalism- some, like Moore above, have accentuated its moral character, others have exhibited a higher degree of interest on its emotional aspect. Although I share Breuilly's sympathy towards the political in nationalism, I distance myself from his unwarranted rejection of these focus areas as misleading. My reasons for preferring to magnify the political character of nationalism are less compelling to the extent that they're dictated by the objective of this paper.

Berlin also employs a related criterion in his attempt to lay bare the essence of nationalism. 'The kind of homogeneity implied by common ancestry, common language, traditions, memories, continuous occupancy of the same territory generates a sense of difference from, often accompanied by active dislike or contempt for, groups with different customs and different real or mythical origins' (1997, 586). The solidarity and unanimity implied by national identity is accompanied by an equally vigorous discordance with and animosity towards the alien culture. Even though it's possible to devise various mechanisms that would reduce the degree of animosity between cultures, the one remains essentially un-like 'the Other'.

Nationalism elevates 'the interests of the unity and self-determination of the nation to the status of the supreme value before which all other considerations must, if need be, yield at all times' (Ibid, 587). Nationalist movements are characterized by this attempt to bring the interests of the members of the nations that they allege to represent into a status of preeminence.

### **3.2.2. The Aims of Nationalism**

#### **3.2.2.1. The Context of Choice**

Identifying the aims of nationalism is as forbiddingly unintelligible as grasping its connotation. Hugh Seton-Watson identifies two objectives which are generally associated with nationalist movements: 'independence (the creation of a sovereign state in which the nation is dominant), and national unity (the incorporation within the frontiers of this state of all groups which are considered, by themselves, or by those who claim to speak for them , to belong to the nation)' (1977, 3). These political goals which feature in most, if not all, programs of nationalist movements imply the common aspirations of the members which share allegiance to the group. Nonetheless these aims may be suspect for failing to reflect the desires of all the members.

On the other hand, Kymlicka aligns the significance of nationalism to its mandate as a custodian of cultures. He further alleges that a culture's distinctive good consists in the fact that it 'provides meaningful options for us and aids our ability to judge for ourselves the value of our life plans' (Callan, 2016, 39).

Consequently the success of nationalism primarily depends on its potential to satisfy the needs of the respective people for a secure cultural context within which they can make meaningful choices. Some scholars have questioned the claim that our ability to make meaningful choices depends on the availability of this cultural context. Yet needless to say that every individual will benefit from securing what Kymlicka calls 'context of choice'. The availability of such a context of choice should be viewed from the perspective of the desire to lead a 'good life'. This is to mean that the ability of an individual to stipulate and pursue what is good depends, to a great degree, on the accessibility of this cultural framework.

Kymlicka argues that the respect and recognition accorded to cultures emanates mainly from the fact that they are essentially linked with 'people's ability to make meaningful choices about their ways of life' (LaFollette, 2003, p.444). In as much as cultures broaden the horizon of possibilities for an individual, to lose a culture to which one is connected is to lose the prerequisites of choosing, and by implication it's to lose the self. 'To know who I am is a species of knowing where I stand. My identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose (Taylor, 1989, 27). Hence in its attempt to create the anonymous individual universalism closes off the possibilities of making 'meaningful choices'. Besides the existential predicament which it generates, universalism renders the understanding of the self and the attempt to transcend it an onerous task.

Joseph Raz also argues in the same vein when he points out that only through being socialized in a culture can one tap the options which give life meaning. 'By and large one's cultural membership determines the horizon of one's opportunities, of what one may become or what one might have been' (Ibid). Subsequently nationalist movements tend to provide the people they claim to represent, with a general framework within which the possible is to be really possible. But the significance of a cultural framework is not limited to the ability of making meaningful choices (argued by both Kymlicka and Raz); it's also a condition of the possibility of the

autonomous individual to the extent that the setting up of specific goals which characterizes the self-legislating subject itself craves for a similar context; after all ‘freedom as mastery’, which we have identified as the dominant conception of freedom, dictates that the autonomous individual is not just one who pursues her goal freely but also and most importantly one who has the paradigmatic license to choose between various goals and decides to pursue a particular goal. Berlin also makes a similar point when he says: ‘A man's powers of creation can only be exercised fully on his own native heath, living among men who are akin to him, physically and spiritually, those who speak his language, amongst whom he feels at home, with whom he feels that he belongs’ (1990, 223). All in all the context of choice provided by identification to a culture supplies the means by which personal as well as social progress is made possible. The sense of belongingness (at- homeness) which allows one to ‘exercise the powers of creation fully’ takes centre stage in nationalism.

### **3.2.2.2. Nationalism and the Politics of Recognition**

The importance of recognition for the individual as well as group identity cannot be overstated. One of the forefront advocates of the politics of recognition Charles Taylor takes it to be a strong driving force behind nationalist movements. He explains the demand for recognition in a very lucid manner when he states that,

*‘our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves’* (Taylor on Gutman, 1994, p.25).

Inquiring into the connection between recognition and identity, (identity conceived of as a person’s understanding of who she is and of her fundamental defining characteristics as a human being) sheds a proper light on the inevitable need for recognition.

Taylor underscores the harm that non-recognition or misrecognition can inflict upon people when he says non-recognition can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being (Ibid). Scholars have often made allusion to gender (women) and race (blacks) to explicate the uncalled for consequences of internalizing a picture of one’s own inferiority. By internalizing a picture of their inferiority they will be incapable of

taking advantage of new opportunities even when the conditions that created this image are no longer present. As a result ‘their own self-depreciation, on this view, becomes one of the most potent instruments of their own oppression’ (Ibid).

Misrecognition shows not just a lack of due respect but it can also inflict a grievous wound, saddling its victims with a crippling self-hatred. Due recognition is not just a courtesy we owe people. It is a vital human need (Ibid, 42-43). Though identifying recognition with basic human needs appears to be a bit far-fetched it has the merit of bringing our attention to the growing demand for recognition.

The absence of recognition or mis-recognition can cause serious injury: ‘A person or a group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirrors back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. The struggle for recognition can only be satisfactorily resolved through what Taylor calls ‘a regime of reciprocal recognition among equals’ (Stanford , 2016, 4). Because of the indispensable role of cultures in the development of human agency and identity, Taylor argues, we should adopt the presumption of the equal worth of all cultures.

Thus to change this demeaning image one may be impelled to engage in a denial of the imposed self and construct a new self which is rooted in a correct historical understanding of the self thereby challenging what Foucault calls ‘governmentality’- disciplinary power and its claim to truth. Thus the development of a counter-narrative informed by historical and cultural processes of meaning-making is essential for the change of the derogatory picture of oneself. Since this meaning-making process is dialogical, we can transform the challenge of recognition into an opportunity. Nationalism goes a long way not just in the deconstruction and eventual replacement of the demeaning narratives but it also vouchsafes nationalist movements the historical and cultural tools needed for self-creation.

### **3.2.2.3. Dialogical Self-Definition**

Being dialogical is a fundamental feature of human life. This statement can be understood in various related but not necessarily compatible ways. First when we say our life is dialogical it refers to the fact that our identity is not the work of our own, at least not exclusively our own rather our interaction with ‘the other’ signifies a complex process of defining what and who we

are. In this regard the debate between Levinas and Derrida concerning the role of history in the relation between the same and the other is somehow illuminating- Levinas, for instance, insists that not even history can claim to accomplish a totalization of 'the same' and 'the other' when he contends that 'the absolutely other maintains his transcendence in the midst of history (Stahler, 2010, 181). Derrida, on the other hand, states that 'One wonders whether history itself does not begin with this relationship to the other which Levinas places beyond history' (Ibid). Thus for Derrida there cannot be history prior to and outside of the relation to 'the other'. Here we can see that the dialogical aspect of our nature is expressed in our interaction with the other and hence in our ability to situate ourselves within the course of history through this encounter with the other. 'Interaction with the other' is crucial to the ontological analysis of freedom to the extent that Dasein is defined vis-à-vis the other or more exactly in so far as Dasein is a being-with.

However this phenomenological experience of history seems to be captured best if we conceive of history as the history of a particular culture or a cultural world (Ibid, 182). A cultural world is formed through its history, and a different culture is alien to us because we do not share its history. Yet by interacting with this alien culture, I do not only create a common history but I also define myself in terms of this 'other'.

Taylor points to another way of viewing our dialogical nature, he states:

*"We become full human agents, capable of understanding ourselves, and hence of defining our identity, through our acquisition of rich human languages of expression. For my purposes here, I want to take language in a broad sense, covering not only the words we speak, but also other modes of expression whereby we define ourselves, including the "languages" of art, of gesture, of love, and the like. But we learn these modes of expression through exchanges with others. People do not acquire the languages needed for self-definition on their own. Rather, we are introduced to them through interaction with others who matter to us' (Taylor on Gutman, 1994, 32).*

The role of language is immense in the dialogical self-definition in as much as communication between various cultures paves the way for a better understanding of the self.

Second, 'we define our identity always in dialogue with, sometimes in struggle against, the things our significant others want to see in us' (Ibid, 33). It's in as much as our identities are formed dialogically that we are dependent on the recognition of others. However this does not mean that there're no aspects of our identity that we can form without any interference from others- there're various aspects of our identity especially our group identity. Authentic identity largely depends on that openness which is characteristic of a dialogical self-definition.

Although nationalist movements are essentially dialectical, it doesn't necessarily mean that they are antagonistic i.e. the fact that nationalists stand opposed to an 'other' should not deceive us into thinking that this 'other' is diametrically opposed to 'the same'. Nationalisms are not irremediably exclusive as they're usually made out to be but they make allowances for communicative and dialogical self-definition. However we risk being naïve if we fail to give due attention to the destructive force nationalist movements could muster. Berlin points out that 'cultural and spiritual autonomy may turn into embittered and aggressive nationalist self-assertion' (1990, 245). Due to the resentment it cultivates, it's capable of as much horrible and gruesome violence as the one which nurtured it. The naiveté reaches its peak when we assume that nationalism and the vigor with which it pursues the ideals of freedom subsides once the goal of liberation is achieved: 'Soon this dominant trend (nationalism) would liberate the oppressed peoples of the multinational empires too. After this, so it was believed, nationalism, which was a pathological inflammation of wounded national consciousness, would abate: it was caused by oppression and would vanish with it (Berlin, 1997, 587). In the next part I shall make a phenomenological inquiry into the notion of violence with a view to determining its connection to freedom.

Despite the existence of a variety of aims that nationalist movements set their eyes on, freedom remains to be the one fundamental objective towards which the practices of these movements are directed. But what is the nature of the freedom they crave for? The possibility of thinking about freedom in general and political freedom in particular depends on the understanding of the context within which it develops. In a world largely dominated by a conception of freedom as the property of the will, the emergence of political freedom is a recent phenomenon. It should, as a result be viewed as a specific European phenomenon.

The championing of political freedom in the modern sense cannot be found as such in any pre-Enlightenment tradition, but is rather a product of a specific historical tradition of thought – the Enlightenment – which we are part of in any case. The ideal of freedom is a commitment to a tradition according to which we think about human life and politics (Oksala, 2005, 187). Oksala seems to be making a point with a far reaching consequence than she had probably intended. The difficulty or near impossibility of thinking about freedom except in accordance with its articulation by the enlightenment tradition is discernible in the subaltern's incorporation of the notion of freedom as mastery. The nationalist movements I have alluded to in the foregoing pages operate within the same conception of freedom as the one they allege to stand against. It should also be noted that the dominant conception of freedom (freedom as mastery) is the ethico-political embodiment of transcendental philosophy's universalism. Its continuing existence depends on its utter disregard of the 'defining situation'.

Even though it disguises itself in a phony universal, the local is untranslatable. Since it claims to be universal it has the tendency to posit itself as a standard- one need only to point to the universalism of science (which ruled out the possibility of any knowledge that fails the scientific test) to find an historical illustration of this attitude. Accordingly, it regards difference as a deviation to be rectified, as a malady in need of treatment. However, since it's actually regional, despite its pretense to universalism, it cannot offer the objective standards needed for experiencing the world in 'the only way it can be experienced'.

The ideal of freedom is a commitment to a specific historical tradition within which we think about human life and politics. Freedom is the contingent historical ethos and precondition of critical reflection on our present (Ibid, 190). Foucault analyses the enlightenment tradition as the historical condition of the possibility of thinking about freedom. This implies that the intelligibility and as a result the success if the practices of freedom ultimately depends on this tradition. However since the tradition conceives of human freedom only in terms of one dominating another, subscribing to and acting within this structure would mean endless struggle for mastery of 'the Other'. Yet the contingency of this conclusion can be demonstrated by alluding to nationalist movements whose only objective may plausibly be the removal of the conditions of servitude without entertaining any intention of mastering 'the Other'.

In a world that narrowly conceives freedom as sovereignty, relations of mastery will continue to delimit human identity and define human dignity. As long as our understanding of freedom is restricted to the exclusion of others from our personal space (or, as with positive liberty, to the mastery of ourselves and our world), then our politics will remain one in which the individual meets the world and the other in a singular struggle for self-assertion (Thiele, 1994, 288).

Nationalist movements are the pinnacles of such struggle for assertion in so far as they view the mastery of 'the other' as the essential condition for the freedom of their members (for the flourishing of negative liberty).

What is common to all the varied notions of situated freedom is that they see free activity as grounded in the acceptance of our defining situation. The struggle to be free is powered by an affirmation of this defining situation as ours, not a set of limits to be overcome, which is all that a situation can be within the conception of freedom as self-dependence (Taylor, 1979, 160). On the contrary Berlin would have us believe that freedom consists in being allowed to think, act and speak differently, in having the conditions for objecting to what Taylor called 'our defining situation'.

A man's powers of creation can only be exercised fully on his own native heath, living among men who are akin to him, physically and spiritually, those who speak his language, amongst whom he feels at home, with whom he feels that he belongs. Only so can true cultures be generated, each unique, each making its own peculiar contribution to human civilisation, each pursuing its own values in its own way, not to be submerged in some general cosmopolitan ocean which robs all native cultures of their particular substance and colour, of their national spirit and genius, which can only flourish on its own soil, from its own roots, stretching far back into a common past. Civilisation is a garden made rich and beautiful by the variety of its flowers, delicate plants which great conquering empires - Rome, Vienna, London - trample and crush out of existence. This is the beginning of nationalism (Berlin, 1990, 223-224).

Nationalism does not only understand the significance of coming to terms with our specific context but it also recognizes the logical as well as practical incoherence of striving for the perfect society, it takes note of the mythical nature of the universal man. It also recognizes that the world is a shared-world- it's the "other's" as well as 'mine'. In effect it succeeds in exposing

the pretense of transcendental philosophy. Our discussion in the previous sections has brought to light how transcendental philosophy denies the originality of 'the Other'. The dominating and oppressive structure of transcendental philosophy has found its way to the ethico-political realm through the causal conception of freedom which the colonizer has adopted vehemently.

However as we shall see in the subsequent section political freedom (the dominant conception of freedom included) depends on a deeper and more profound conception of freedom viz. the ontology of freedom- a conception of freedom which is cognizant of the ethical, epistemological and existential demands of the other.

The enigmatic relation between violence and freedom can, at least to a limited extent, be better appreciated if it's examined in light of this problem of alterity. A phenomenological analysis of violence can shed light on the ambiguity surrounding this relation.

### **3.3. Phenomenology of Violence**

Given the amount of violence perpetrated in the name of freedom, the intelligibility of the practices of freedom necessitates the intelligibility of violence. Accordingly I pledge to make an analysis of violence with a view to determining the extent to which the ethical positioning implied by acts of violence is compatible with the background assumptions (to be discussed under the subsequent chapter) that structure freedom.

By taking a cursory overview of violence, I pledge to analyze the relation between violence and freedom. This analysis accentuates the practices of freedom begotten by the causal conception of freedom which has been discussed in the previous sections. The phenomenological analysis of violence aims at depicting freedom in light of its relation to the contingent human condition. It's also intended to demonstrate that the imperative of the realization of freedom takes precedence over other problems of the human condition.

Levinas insists that the history of European philosophy is characterized by 'a history of violence towards the other'- in arguing thus he's pointing to the attempt to reduce the other to the same. To put it differently, he contends that the attempt to incorporate the other into the sphere of absolute knowledge represents this history. Condorcet's naïve optimism in the possibility of eliminating 'crime and folly and misery in human affairs, due to indolence and ignorance and irrationality through the development of a comprehensive and systematic natural science of man

and the creation of a harmonious society of nations, unbroken progress in the arts and sciences, and perpetual peace, through the application of scientific method' (Berlin, 1997, 582-583) is not just a camouflaged call for epistemic violence but it's also a stipulation of universalism as the only means of salvation. .

Whenever violence is perceived as a breach of moral and ethical codes it is deemed illegitimate, unacceptable, irrational, and bestial. This view accords well with the Latin etymological root of violence—namely *viol*—that relates to terms such as 'defilement', 'infringement', 'outrage', 'injury', and 'violation' (Sen, 2013, 77). The unfavorable connotation the term is usually associated with has played a significant role in the categorical denunciation of acts of violence.

Violence often comes dressed in the garb of authority, power, right or legitimacy, even when it in effect announces their absence. If we attempt to approach a general definition of violence as a disruption of human relations or human situations, the difficulty that must be faced is the fact that violence is often that peculiar kind of disruption which also seeks to enforce some continuation of a given order of things (Dodd, 2009, 46). Although it's difficult to find uninterrupted uniformity in the way violence has been historically viewed (due primarily to the variety of motives which prompt its existence), one can safely claim that it consists of the attempt to change the circumstances which have precipitated it. This rebellion against the order may aim at the restoration of a previous order or the creation of a new one. This section is limited, however, to the scrutiny of its relation to freedom.

The relationship between violence and freedom is better understood if we focus on the instrumental capacity of the former vis-à-vis the latter. However, this should not be construed as a denial of the constitutive capacity of violence, which as we shall see in due course, is as much important to give a full account of violence as its role as a means. It should also not create the impression that I subscribe to the position that violence always aims at freedom or that violence is the only way to freedom. I'm simply saying that if there's any relation between the two, if liberation movements seem to engage in both activities then that relation is one of means to an end.

Despite the fact that the treatment of violence in this context centers on the instrumental aspect of violence, good arguments have been brought in favor of the claim that violence has played a

significant role in the constitution of the subject. Hence the appositeness of violence as a means of achieving the goal of liberation should not overshadow its constitutive capacity. Violence is not a simple physical act, it's not just a rejection of the values of the other but it's an act of negating 'the other'. 'For the subject this (colonialism) means the extinction of their national character, culture, customs, sometimes even language' (Sartre, 1968, 63). The perpetration of violence, in its original as opposed to its derivative form (counter-violence), is aimed at reducing the 'other' to the 'same' if possible or at a minimum it's bent on the complete annihilation of the ontological as well as political specificity of the other. Fanon's description of the colonial world goes a long way in capturing this situation:

*The colonial world is a Manichaeian world. It's not enough for the settler to delimit physically, that is to say with the help of the army and the police forces, the place of the native. As if to show the totalitarian character of colonial exploitation the settler paints the native as a sort of quintessence of evil (1963, 31-32).*

But we ask, what is evil? According to St. Augustine evil is simply the privation of good. It signals absence, the absence of good. To the extent that good identified with being the colonized is reduced to nothingness, is effectively negated. This act of reduction testifies to the constituting capacity of violence. Colonialism probably offers the best example of how violence constitutes the subject as the negative other. The asymmetrical relation which characterizes the colonial experience manifests itself in the subject-object relation created between the colonizer and the colonized.

The colonial experience manifested through the paradoxical dependence of the colonizer on the colonized must be appreciated in light of 'the prosperity and privileges of the former and the pauperization and deprivation of the latter'. The paradox is all the more intensified when one realizes that the liberation movements (the anticolonial struggles of Africa and South America in particular) which set themselves against the colonial structure and its rational justification- the enlightenment project, failed to draw the conceptual schemes and the practices of freedom from within their respective lived experiences. One may even be so bold as to attribute the failure of these movements to the fact that they relied heavily on the European concepts and categories- the very concepts which supplied the theoretical tools for the perpetration of historical domination.

In the words of Audrey Lorde ‘the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house’ (1984, 112).

Since colonialism was a violent process of subjugation, the anticolonial struggle had to be violent- so in a way colonialism proves itself to be a condition of possibility of anticolonial violence at the same time cementing the status of counter-violence as ‘the privilege of subjugation and exploitation’. Hence we may muster the audacity to claim that this constitutive character of violence has led Fanon to appeal to violence as the only means by which ‘the colonized masses can achieve their liberation’. However this condition of the possibility of liberation (violence) stands in the way of the attainment of freedom to the extent that it’s undergirded by the subjugating and dominating approach of transcendental philosophy. Original violence (best illustrated by colonial violence), in its obsessive pursuit of universalism, has fashioned the colonized in its own image.

Berlin accentuates Herder’s hatred of the great levelers who eliminated native cultures and replaced them with their own, historically, and therefore spiritually foreign oppressive to their victims (1990, 245). The lamentable success of universalism is not attributed to the charm of its ideals or to the deficiency or some kind of inadequacy of the incorporated culture. It’s rather, by and large, a result of the open and widespread, albeit sometimes subtle and complex, use of violence.

Universalism ultimately comes down to what Hountondji called ‘unanimism’- in this particular context, however, the term is used to refer to the tendency of the west to eliminate differences and to contend that the whole of humanity subscribes to the same system of political and cultural ideals.

This explains, at least partly, postcolonial theory’s commitment to ‘engaging the universals taking the form of the abstract figure of the human or that of reason’ (Chakrabarty, 2000, 5). The instrumental role of the ‘universals’ in the objectifying process of domination has been significant; as such it’s been the object of critique by critiques of the enlightenment like postcolonial theory.

Postcolonial theory invites us to reconsider the Enlightenment both as an eighteenth-century phenomenon and as a concept that bears on modern political formations (Carey and Festa, 2009,

5). This insistence to reexamine the enlightenment project should be viewed vis-à-vis the irrationality of its rational ideals.

Postcolonial theory claims to react against enlightenment's exclusion of Africa or to be more exact 'its inclusion as the negative other of reason and the west' (Eze, 1997, 7). Eze situates postcolonial philosophy within the scholarly debate regarding the status and nature of African Philosophy. In explaining the reason why African philosophy should be examined in light of the colonial period he writes: 'the single most important factor that drives the field and the contemporary practice of African Philosophy has to do with the brutal encounter of the African with European modernity- an encounter epitomized in the colonial phenomena' (Ibid, 4). Accordingly the emergence and eventual acceptance of postcolonial philosophy as an emancipatory discourse must be appreciated against the backdrop of enlightenment's rational sublation of African realities.

Furthermore, postcolonial philosophy laments this lop-sided relation between the colonizers and the colonized which instead of coming to an end with colonialism went on to become the foundation of the human sciences. It's through these sciences that the constitutive role of violence has been unmistakably effective. A new subject has been constituted; a new identity has been formed. Yet it's a fragile identity the formation of which can be traced ultimately to the indirect act of the oppressor, the dominator. Fragile identity is a term I used to refer to identities that tend to lose their grounds, deny not only the perpetual flux of identity by clinging to the obscure past but also the specificity of the human condition. But most importantly these are identities for which the present condition does not include the possibility of transcendence. The possibility of transcending the constituted self is precluded because of the estrangement they suffered in the hands of the subjugator. The act of constitution is in effect an act of dislodging – the self is dislodged from its cultural and historical embeddedness. Nonetheless the loss of the self should be understood in light not just of this dislocation but also in light of its failure or rather refusal to immerse itself in the phony universal.

The ambivalent relation which characterizes the relation between freedom and violence reaches its peak when we analyze the effects of the loss of the self- resentment. Resentment refers to the feeling of hatred and hostility towards the perpetrator of the loss of the self, towards the subjugator and the dominator. The process of liberation which this resentful self embarks on will

have to take the form of an act of riddance understood in terms of the emancipation of the subjugated from the dominator/subjugator without which the ethico-political ideal of freedom cannot be realized. The emphasis in the former case is on asserting independence from the forces of domination which may or may not ultimately imply a gain in freedom. However the undeniable outcome of this independence would be the frustration of the oppressor's attempt to be free through the loss of freedom on the part of the oppressed which derives its motivation from the dominant conception of freedom discussed under the previous sections.

Although Arendt assertively alleges that 'the old and terrible truth that only violence and rule over others could make some men free has been refuted by technology rather than modern political ideas' (1965, 114), one will have to wonder whether western universalism has embarked upon a more 'humane' way of mastering others rather than abandon the whole project of 'rule over others' i.e. the dominant conception of freedom which takes the loss of freedom by one as an essential condition for its attainment by another is still operational despite the apparent loosening of its techniques.

A sober assessment of the situation surrounding the relation between the subjugator and the subjugated exposes the fact that such 'transformation of power relations', to use Foucault's own statement, implicated by 'the violent overthrow of the subjugator...' leads at best to a resentful social relation which subjects both parties to an ever-ending antagonistic relation since the liberation of the subjugated (viewed in this manner) is supposed to be achieved only through the overthrow of the subjugator.

To reiterate an important point I mentioned in the previous pages- I am not arguing that we should not entertain violence as a possible and sometimes necessary instrument for countering originary violence: Arendt herself has something to say about that 'under certain circumstances- acting without argument or speech and without counting the consequences-- violence is the only way to set the scales of justice right again'. Actually the magnitude of colonial violence seems to rule out the possibility of recourse to any other mechanism than violence. Sartre brings to our attention that disturbing event which happened at Setif- the French had massacred 45,000 Algerians just to set an example' (1968, 64). How can one comprehend, much less overcome such brutality except by turning the table, by grabbing the bull by the horns and crushing it?

I am claiming that the colonizer's attempt to achieve freedom through violence is doomed to fail from the start. He wants to take control, to dominate and subjugate in order to be free. As we can gather from the foregoing discussion, the control of the self and also of the other is a condition of possibility of freedom. Yet the violence ends up generating another violence which is more perilous and of enormous magnitude rather than securing the freedom of the oppressor. Hence whatever the colonizer achieves via the acts of violence, if at all, it's entirely different from the act of freedom in so far as the violence aims at the complete annihilation of the other. The last section discusses how 'entering into a relationship with the other without allowing one's very self to be crushed by the other' involves the demands of freedom.

Violence cannot make us free because it destroys the existential space within which free beings can relate. The colonizer, the dominator is not free (though obviously he's not deprived of his liberty) because by subjugating and oppressing others through violence he denies himself of the company of others – 'the other' who, as we shall see in the subsequent chapter, is essential for the freedom of the same. Since 'the life of a free man needs the presence of others' and violence is nothing other than (or at least mainly) the elimination of 'the other', the colonizer's attempt to use violence as the path to freedom is self-defeating to say the least.

It's not only because of its tendency to destroy the existential space that violence makes freedom impossible but also because of the fact that it fashions identities in a way which ultimately renders them inimical to the demands of freedom. In describing this constitutive capacity of violence Fanon says 'it's the white man who creates the Negro' (Zahar, 1974, 89). Violence as the privilege of subjugation can be understood as a necessary means of identity formation but the identities it constitutes are fragile identities- identities which are born out of resentment and which are incapable of relating to 'the other' in any other way than through the so called self-creating act of violence.

Nonetheless we sometimes encounter scenarios where violence feels like a right. Violence has oftentimes been articulated as 'the right of free people over the unfree' and 'the privilege of the subjugated over the subjugator'. So long as there are victims (we can suppose the almost certain existence of victims in the dichotomizing structure endorsed by transcendental philosophy) there'll always be someone whose use of violence can be justified by recourse to this condition

of victimhood. These scenarios tend to justify the attempt to view freedom as an act of liberation or at least as an attempt at resistance (by the oppressed) to power (possessed by the oppressor).

As we can gather from our discussion of transcendental philosophy in the previous parts the treatment of the other as a reflection or more precisely as the figment of my consciousness is testament to the status of the other as an object of knowledge. The other is absolutely knowable to the extent that it's derived from my 'intentionality'. As such transcendental philosophy and the various colonial endeavors which have been influenced by the dominant conception of freedom basically close off the possibility of inter-subjective relation between 'the same' and 'the other'.

In the next section I shall examine the ontological condition for the possibility of freedom with a view to indicating the theoretical paucity as well as the practical impossibility of operating within the causal conception of freedom. This ontological analysis accentuates the three dimensions of freedom which structure and make possible the conception of freedom as the ontological condition of man so as to demonstrate the possibility of working out a philosophy of solidarity.

## **PART THREE- THE ONTOLOGY OF FREEDOM**

### **CHAPTER FOUR- THE ONTOLOGY OF FREEDOM AND ITS IMPLICATIONS**

The discussion in this chapter centers on the ontological analysis of freedom. The previous parts have shown the development of an ontological conception of freedom through the history of philosophy.

By drawing from the foregoing parts I will try to show the background assumptions that structure the context of freedom. Away from the parochial and largely disconcerting understanding of freedom as possession, an ontological mode of analysis brings to light the epistemological, ethical and existential dimensions. The examination aims at indicating the paucity of any account of freedom which fails to take note of the significance of the moral, epistemological and existential realms. Central to the argument presented in this chapter is that there's an inherent connection between the claim to possess truth (epistemological claim), the conception of the good (ethical claim) and a certain mode of existence (existential claim). The possibility of genuine freedom, by and large, depends on the successful articulation of these conditions. Furthermore, the examination of the structures of freedom shall be used to justify the inadequacy of previously discussed conceptions of freedom. In so doing I will try to show the primordality and indispensability of an ontological understanding of freedom for the possibility of a practice of freedom which is capable of responding to the demands of intersubjectivity.

#### **4.1. The Epistemological Dimension**

The epistemological claim is the first basic assumption that the ontology of freedom implies. The analysis of finitude lies at the heart of the epistemological dimension of the ontology of freedom.

The relationship between knowledge and freedom has been central to western thought and by implication to other non-western lines of thought. 'The truth shall set you free' is a camouflaged appeal to the primacy of reason and to the stipulation of rationality as the only possible route to emancipation.

Greek philosophy is markedly distinct in its endorsement of this relationship between reason and freedom. However, rationality only allows the individual to free himself by presenting itself as an enabling condition of the mastering of oneself. As Taylor says, 'what we gain through thought

or reason is self-mastery. The good man is master of himself' (1989, 115). Needless to say the notion of mastery of the self presupposes a divided self. The notion makes sense only in light of the relationship between a part to be mastered and another part doing the mastering- Plato's division of the soul into rational and irrational parts is a classic example of how the idea of mastery is actually the mastery of one by another. 'To be rational is truly to be master of oneself' (Ibid, 116).

In Socrates and Plato we find the idea of the mastery of the self through the instrument of reason. A harmonious relation between the various aspects of the soul is taken to be a necessary condition for the order and health of the individual. This harmonious relation is implied by the ascertainment of the rule of reason over the passions/senses. Hence reason is the ruler, it's the master; accordingly the mastery of the self which is a sine qua non for the just individual can be attained only through man's conscious choice of the rational life.

Aristotle also proclaimed reason to be the highest faculty in human beings- assigning to it the same task of ruling over man's bodily processes of sensation, feeling, and impulse which he believed we shared with animals. The role of reason extended from the speculative (the attainment of truth) to the more practical one (as a guide to the good life). In both cases reason is involved in the process of mastery in the sense that reason's capacity to dictate the surrounding circumstances happens to be the condition of possibility of the attainment of truth and the good life. The elitist ethics of Greek philosophy was primarily interested in the condition of the individual; both Plato and Aristotle have made an attempt to improve this condition by indicating the way of reason i.e. by showing how reason can help in the direction of the self.

Plato's insistence on the mastery of the self is unmistakable to the extent that he advocated the rule of reason over the passions and that rationality implies being master of oneself- yet the clamor for a rational mode of existence is as much a part of his theory albeit less explicit. The conception of freedom latent in Plato's theory denies a place for its ontological structure by giving precedence to knowing. Charles Taylor claims that Plato's call for mastery of the self consists in reason ruling over desires, a self-control which contrasts to being dominated by one's appetites and passions (1989, 124). As a distant progenitor of the Kantian conception of mastery of the self, Plato's philosophy did not only try to establish the rule of reason over the passions but it also advocated the contingency of the attainment of the Good (which itself is a condition of

freedom) on the knowing subject. 'Where the Platonic soul realizes its eternal nature by becoming absorbed in the supersensible, the Cartesian discovers and affirms its immaterial nature by objectifying the bodily' (Taylor, 1989, 146). The shift from Plato to Descartes implies a shift from the need to turn away from the inferior (Plato's passions, for instance) to the tendency to objectify it (Cartesian body). This shift has a significant bearing upon our understanding of my relation to my own self and to others.

Despite the role played by Greek philosophy since Socrates to account for the significance of reason in morality, it was the inception of modern philosophy, personified by Descartes and subsequent philosophers, which guaranteed the primacy of epistemology and the ensuing influence upon our understanding of morality and by implication upon the knowledge of such ethico-political notions as freedom. The gradual development of science and technology has turned man and the world into objects of knowledge, or to be more exact into objects of scientific knowledge. The conception of a free will is not only the consequence of a knowing subject but also its justification- hence the reduction of other forms of knowledge into nonexistence. Thus the epistemological dimension of the ontology of freedom analyses finitude by indicating the theoretical as well as practical flaws of the knowing subject.

The Western epistemological spectrum is characterized by its haughty assertion that it's the only conceivable approach to getting a handle on the endless encounters of the world. It does not only undermine the capacity of other forms of knowledge to understand and express themselves and the world around but most tragically by positing itself as the only means of coming to grips with the essential complexity of the world, it commits itself to the erroneous belief Santos brilliantly expressed- that 'the understanding of the world is limited to the western understanding of the world'(2014, viii).

Ordinary everyday experience of the world, everyday familiarity and contact with the world has to be replaced by the scientific expression of experience, and this scientific knowledge is the only kind which may be called trustworthy (Luijpen and Dondeyne, 1954, 83). The western understanding of the world reduces the various experiences from within and especially from without the western mode of existence into the universalism of science. Scientific knowledge draws the line between knowledge and ignorance- 'Such an acknowledgment works as a safety net against the abysses into which one falls when one loses the certainty that scientific

knowledge is the only valid kind of knowledge and that beyond it there is only ignorance' (Santos, 2014, 35).

Descartes, Kant and Husserl played a significant role in the decentering of metaphysics and eventual preeminence of epistemology by elevating the subject to the status of 'the determining subject'. The object's status is determined by the transcendental; in the words of Levinas, an existent is comprehended in the measure that thought transcends it, measuring it against the horizon whereupon it's profiled (1979, 44). It's obvious then that the subject decides whether it merits looking at, when to inspect it and how to analyze it. It's not just that the terms of knowing are directed by the subject that this approach is at risk of upholding but also the complete annihilation of the object to nothingness. This risk is irrevocable due mainly to the fact that transcendental philosophy starts with the detached subject.

Descartes' methodic doubt proves, among other things, that in me thought and existence are indistinguishable that I am a being whose quintessence comprises in thinking. The level of articulacy with which existence is pronounced depends to a significant extent by the degree of rationality. To the extent that existence depends on thinking (or more broadly on rationality) the unrational that is to mean the non-rational as well as the irrational is non-existent (or existent only as an object of knowledge).

In Kant also the subject is not 'an experiencer' but a 'pure thinker' (Edie, 1964, 54). Kant's distinction between the phenomenal and noumenal worlds has underscored the finiteness of man. The 'pure thinker' does not understand the world as it's in itself which for Kant is beyond the limited capacity of the human mind but it has access only to the appearances- 'the things as they appear to us'. Yet this 'thinker' needs to impose his own categories of understanding to make sense of the experience i.e. the object is defined by the terms of the categories of the subject.

'The transcendental represents the condition of the possibility to perceive and explain objects as units of meanings arising from the indistinct flow of being in lived experience. As Kant writes, "experience itself, and therefore the object of experience would be impossible without a connection of this kind" (Ferrarello, 2020, 41). The unilateral act of the rational subject makes experience possible; the absence of conditions of mutual intelligibility from the structure of transcendental philosophy can, at least partly, be viewed as a consequence of the dichotomy

between the rational and the unrational- reason experiences and the unrational is experienced; the rational dominates and perfects the unrational. The exclusion of the other through the criteria of reason which began in Descartes reached its peak in the transcendental philosophy of Kant and Husserl.

Epistemological determinacy refers to the lopsided relation between the essentially hegemonic Western epistemological structure and its non-western counterparts relating specifically to the production and transmission of knowledge. Because of the grammars and categories built into this exclusionary structure alternative ways of relating to the other are totally precluded. This defective relation is manifested at two levels: in the relation between different forms of knowledge and the relation between human subjects.

With regard to the first form of exclusion the Western epistemological structure posits itself as 'the criterion of validity' to determine the status of other forms of knowledge. The acceptability, nay even the very existence of these forms of knowledge depends on their ability to fall within the horizon of western knowledge structure through whose monologue the progress of humanity hangs. The boldness with which the western epistemological structure has pushed all other forms of knowledge to the periphery has led to their containment, to say the least.

Though Heidegger's conception of freedom as 'letting be' expressed in the form of epistemological indeterminacy lays bare the undesirable effects of a knowing subject, the full extent of this consequence cannot be grasped without allowing Santos' critique of scientific reason.

From an epistemological standpoint, modern capitalist societies are characterized as favoring practices in which the forms of scientific knowledge prevail. This means that only ignorance of such forms is considered disqualifying. As a result of this privileged status granted to scientific practices, the latter's interventions in human and natural reality are favored (Santos, 2014, 297). Santos accuses science of stipulating itself as a solitary criteria by which the inclusion and exclusion of social practices is to be measured. He demonstrates how the reduction of all other forms of knowledge into nonexistence has deprived science of any meaningful consciousness of its limitations and has closed it off to the possibilities that lie beyond its feeble understanding.

*'Since scientific knowledge is not distributed in a socially equitable way, its interventions in the real world tend to serve the social groups having more access to such knowledge. Ultimately, social injustice is based on cognitive injustice. However, the struggle for cognitive justice will never succeed if it is based only on the idea of a more equitable distribution of scientific knowledge- one reason for this is that scientific knowledge has intrinsic limits concerning the kind of interventions it furthers in the real world' (Santos, 2014, 297).*

One of the specific features of hegemonic knowledges is that they only recognize internal limits. They never acknowledge alternative interventions only rendered possible by other kinds of knowledge (Ibid). By 'letting beings be' freedom takes due cognizance of what Santos called 'the principle of incompleteness of all knowledges' which is a 'precondition for epistemological dialogues and debates among different knowledges'- the foundation stone of inter-subjectivity. Unlike the dominant conception of freedom which I have discussed in the previous parts, the ontological understanding of freedom takes due cognizance of the epistemological dimension of freedom.

With the development of the modern scientific world-view a specifically modern variant has developed- the ideal of the disengaged self, capable of objectifying not only the surrounding world but also his own emotions and inclinations, achieving thereby a kind of distance and self-possession which allows him to act rationally (Taylor, 1989, 21). Rationality involves dissociating from the realm of the senses, having dominion over it. The objectification of the external world which characterizes modern philosophy is an extension of the objectification of the sensible by the rational.

Regardless of the fact that western philosophy as a whole or at least since Plato epitomizes the superiority of the rational life, the advancement of science and technology which ensued from the unrestrained use of instrumental reason must be viewed as the highest stage in the gradual unfolding of the self-constituting subject with all its pretense for rationality, autonomy and transcendentalty but most importantly with its claim for universality by which I mean anonymity.

Needless to say the glorification and primacy of the rational to the detriment of the practical or pre-theoretical fails to capture the whole spectrum of human experience in much the same way as a monologic relation can never properly portray the human condition in its originary.

‘The treatment of human beings as self-contained objects of scientific study’ rendered possible by transcendental philosophy denies not only the development of ethical subjectivity through a process Foucault called ‘techniques of the self’ but also inter-subjectivity by attaching the possibility of freedom to a dialectical relation between two apparently incompatible entities.

As we can gather from the foregoing sections the dominant notion of freedom is guilty of a dialectical conception of freedom- one relying on contradictions, bent on giving precedence to one only at the expense of another.

For Descartes ‘self-mastery consists in our lives being shaped by the orders that our reasoning capacity constructs according to the appropriate standards’ (Taylor, 1989, 147). What it actually endorses is what Taylor called ‘the hegemony of reason’. Much like Marx advocated the ousting of the hegemony of the bourgeoisie in favor of the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’, transcendental philosophy aims to establish the supremacy of reason- the epistemology of Liberation is simultaneously an epistemology of Control. In a conception of freedom which articulates human relation diametrically, it’s impossible to conceive of the possibility of a ‘democratic dialogue’.

Foucault’s analysis of sexuality discloses the inherently oppressive and dominating nature of the modern conception of liberation. ‘We are no longer controlled on the old model, through certain prohibitions being laid on us. We may think we are gaining some freedom when we throw off sexual prohibitions, but in fact we are dominated by certain images of what it is to be a full, healthy, fulfilled sexual being. And these images are in fact very powerful instruments of control’ (Taylor, 1996, 11). The images that control us reduce us to a determinate object of knowledge; Foucault’s conception of indeterminacy involves ontological contingency.

The incorporation of this connection between rationality and mastery into the dichotomizing structure of modern philosophy (to be more specific into the heart of transcendental philosophy) has been vital for the successful subjugation of the other.

The epistemological determinacy, the finitude suffered by the object (the other) narrows down the horizons of possibilities that would otherwise have allowed for self-expression ultimately culminating in the complete denial of the experiences and practices of 'the other'. The analytic of finitude supposedly stems not from the fallennes of man (in the religious sense), understood as man's displacement from the grace of God due to the original sin but from the empirical limit of his understanding.

Kant's analysis of the typically sensible subject (the empirical subject) and the inherently rational one (the transcendental subject) illumines the otherwise obscure role of reason in the mastery of 'the self' and of 'the other'. It also readily attests to the exclusion of the possibility of inter-subjectivity and the ensuing subjugation of the other. The intelligibility of the essentially exclusionary character of transcendental philosophy depends to a large measure on grasping the presence of two mutually exclusive characteristics (the transcendental subject with its disengaged and disembodied attributes and the historically and culturally situated empirical subject) in a single self.

The asymmetric relation between the two subjects is revealed in the way in which the white man historically viewed its status vis-à-vis other races. The universal-local distinction between these two sets of human beings engendered the problematic of alterity. To the extent that the universal subject (which would be the West) determines the object's (the non-west) level of knowability the relationship is not mutual. As the condition of possibility of knowledge the transcendental subject obliterates the infiniteness of the finite thereby imposing its image of the object upon the object. The 'other' can only view itself from the perspective of 'the subject' which it never is and can never be; it exists in so far as it falls within the range of the subject's ability to know. By relying on the isolated nature of the transcendental subject transcendental philosophy aims to reduce 'the other' to the object of knowledge- not just any knowledge but one which can be known and grasped in its entirety. This reduction of the other to the perfectly knowable object is a central feature of transcendental philosophy and it has been entrenched in the western epistemological spectrum through the obduracy of instrumental reason.

The way 'rational beings' relate to one another and to an 'irrational' or still worse to a 'non-rational being' cannot be the same to the extent that rationality is the criteria by which the relation is formulated. But reason is not merely the standard of validating 'normal' relationships

but its' also the means by which the subject-object relation is maintained. The white man cannot condescend to relate to the black man in much the same way as the transcendental subject cannot lose its disengaged status except as the empirical subject where it'll meet another empirical subject in the person of another white man.

#### **4.2. The Ethical Dimension**

The second dimension of the ontology of freedom is the ethical dimension. So this section explores the kinds of conception of the good prefigured by transcendental philosophy and its ethico-political byproduct –freedom as mastery.

Our attitude towards the relation between freedom and ethics (or more exactly being ethical) is largely influenced by two dominant philosophical positions- while the popular one takes freedom and being ethical to be diametrically opposed the less popular but probably more influential inside the academia takes freedom to be a precondition of ethics.

The former approach is entrenched on a more traditional conception of freedom and ethics. The supposed opposition between freedom and being ethical is the result of this traditional conception of freedom to the extent that it's viewed as the 'absence of bonds' (Luijpen and Dondeyne, 1954, 281) i.e. being free is understood in terms of not being bound by external constraints (later classed as negative freedom). Such a conception of freedom has come to be viewed as an aberration in a world dominated by the legalistic conception of morality championed by Kant.

Kant's version of the second position has been duly explained in the first chapter; here I want to draw attention to Foucault's descriptive analysis of the same position to highlight what is known as 'the ethics of self-mastery'- this second position discerns continuity rather than rupture between ethics and freedom. However a few remarks on the relationship or rather the continuity between the transcendental subject and the autonomous subject must be in order before inspecting Foucault's analysis.

In delineating the relationship between autonomy of the will and morality, Kant ponders 'what else can freedom of the will be but autonomy? The proposition that the will is in every action a law to itself expresses nothing but the principle of acting according to no other maxim than that

which can at the same time have itself as a universal law for its object. Thus a free will and a will subject to moral laws are one and the same' (1981, 49). The constitutive capacity of the will, as some type of causality, is manifested through its ability to propel rational beings into action.

'Only after completing the Critique of Pure Reason did he decisively conceive of the moral law as a synthetic a priori proposition that both could and must be explicated and established with the resources of transcendental philosophy without depending upon any empirically established assumptions about human nature' ( Guyer, 2007, 444). The continuity, in Kant's thought, between the autonomous moral subject and the transcendental epistemic subject can be apprehended, in part, by the recognition that the former is an outgrowth of the latter; the degree to which Kant's ethics disregarded the empirical nature of man does not only illustrate the essentially transcendental feature of his ethics but it also heralds the defective human relation that is to epitomize the relationship between the same and the other.

The Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals is Kant's attempt to provide a transcendental argument for the moral law that does not merely exploit the resource of transcendental idealism provided by the first Critique, but attempts to construct a transcendental deduction of the moral law on the model of the transcendental deduction of the pure concepts of the understanding in the previous work ( Guyer, 2007, 445). The parallel between Kant's moral philosophy and his theory of knowledge is not accidental. The autonomous subject is the logical consequence of the transcendental subject or to be more exact the transcendental subject unfolds itself in the self-legislating and self-determining subject of the ethical realm.

In other words, the kingdom of ends wouldn't have been able to withstand the malleability of human nature had it not been for the equally indispensable corresponding kingdom- 'the kingdom of means'. The feeling of self-worth which the autonomous subject delights in derives its existence from the feeling of self-abnegation that 'the other' must endure.

As we look into the connection Foucault draws between freedom and ethics we realize that his conclusion coincides with that of Kant even though he follows a visibly separate route.

In his analysis of ancient ethics Foucault claims that 'important preconditions for the morality of antiquity were that the subjects of that morality were free and active masters of themselves:

slaves and women had no morality. In other words, moral subjects were always free men' (Oksala, 2005, 192).

Freedom in this sense is an ontological condition of ethics and ethics as a practice is the deliberate form it assumes. Foucault's thinking on ethics thus develops a fuller understanding of freedom, elaborates it by introducing a deliberate dimension to it. The subject exercises freedom in critically reflecting on itself and its behaviour, on beliefs and the social field of which it is part (Ibid, 190). Hence unlike the previous approach where freedom means the categorical rejection of morality the possibility of ethics in this context was made to depend on freedom or on having the capacity for self-determination.

I'm not interested in analyzing Foucault's conception of freedom or rather I'm concerned with it to the extent that it discloses the ethical dimension in freedom. By providing a sketch of Foucault's conception of freedom vis-à-vis power, I aspire not only to strengthen the argument proposed in support of freedom as a practice, but I shall also hope to indicate the ethical implications of the notion of freedom as 'mastery' and its nemesis 'the ontology of freedom' with more lucidity. With that objective in view I shall first outline Foucault's unorthodox account of power and then examine both Foucault's relation to Heidegger and the ethical positioning that their conceptions of freedom entail.

Two conditions of possibility are necessary, Foucault says, for a power relationship to exist: 'That the `other' (the one over whom power is exercised) be thoroughly recognized and maintained to the very end as a person who acts; and that, faced with a relationship of power, a whole field of responses, reactions, results, and possible inventions may be opened.' Power is described as an activity which changes the activities of others, and is practiced exclusively over free subjects, and just to the extent that they are free. For, assuming it is actually the case that at the core of power relations and as a super durable state of their reality there is disobedience and a specific fundamental resolution with respect to the standards of opportunity, then there is no chance of power without the method for conceivable flight. Thus, it appears that freedom is the condition of possibility of power. Power does not act on objects, but only on human beings, and only insofar as their condition of possibility is freedom.

Foucault claims that power is ‘a complex strategical situation in a particular society’ (Dreyfus, 1991, 82) which is neither an institution nor a structure and one far from being a static entity, is central in social relations. Foucault envisages the possible misunderstanding to which his conception of power might expose him and thus takes pains to accentuate the distinction between conventional understanding of the concept of power and that of his own:

*By power, I do not mean "Power" as a group of institutions and mechanisms that ensure the subservience of the citizens of a given state. By power, I do not mean, either, a mode of subjugation which, in contrast to violence, has the form of the rule. Finally, I do not have in mind a general system of domination exerted by one group over another, a system whose effects, through successive derivations, pervade the entire social body. The analysis, made in terms of power, must not assume that the sovereignty of the state, the form of the law, or the over-all unity of a domination are given at the outset; rather, these are only the terminal forms power takes (Foucault, 1978, 92) (emphasis added).*

This is a clear indication of Foucault’s rather unceremonious break from the traditional conception of power. I regard this new conception of power essential for a critique of the dualistic propensity of transcendental philosophy and the resulting emancipatory discourses which blithely endorse the objectification and ethical disqualification of ‘the other’. Power, for Foucault, implies ‘the multiplicity of force relations’ which is by no means limited to the relations between government and its citizens- echoing his famous dictum ‘power is everywhere’. This however did not impel Foucault to abandon hope of the possibility of freedom (as many have alleged) on the contrary it led him to the development of an alternative conception of freedom- one which persists regardless of the ubiquitousness of power.

‘To govern an individual or a group is ‘to act on the possibilities of action of other individuals,’ government is a ‘mode of action on the actions of others’ (Foucault, 2007, Xxii). Statements such as this do not indicate that Foucault overlooks the all too obvious connection between power and government rather they merely testify to the fact that he uses the notion of government in a wider context than we normally use. Thus, according to Foucault, ‘to govern is to restructure the possible field of actions of others’ (Ibid).

Foucault's conception of power or rather the way power operates can also be illustrated in his use of the term 'discipline'. Discipline is a 'series of techniques by which the body's operations can be controlled; discipline works by coercing and arranging the individual's movements and his experience of space and time' (Foucault, 1995, 1). The 'creation of the individual out of the mass', which is the ultimate objective of disciplining, characterizes not just the relation between government and its subjects but it is also symbolic of the majority of emancipatory discourses that developed during the postmodern period.

Foucault's thesis on the 'carceral' society and his affirmation of the 'death' of man (without whom freedom cannot be conceived) seem to render a Foucauldian philosophy of freedom a logical contradiction. The fact that in his *History of Sexuality* Foucault convincingly 'derides the emancipatory discourses associated with sexual liberation as complicit in the strategies of power they denounce (Prozorov, 2007, 25) has been held against him. However this partly condonable but dangerously misleading treatment of Foucault should not inhibit us from embarking on an examination of a Foucauldian conception of freedom especially if we follow Patton (cited in Prozorov) in attributing such criticisms to the failure to see beyond the 'diametrical opposition' traditionally stipulated between freedom and power- that which views freedom as a liberation from power.

However liberal critiques, *inter alia*, happen to be skeptical of the existence or the possibility of a concept of freedom in Foucault's philosophical approach. Some of these critiques find it highly difficult to come to terms with the notion of a Foucauldian freedom given his argument for a pervasiveness of power. Jurgen Habermas and Charles Taylor, to mention but few, understand Foucault as a 'theorist of confinement' (Prozorov, 2007, 26). As Prozorov asserts Foucault's conception of a productive rather than repressive power and his understanding of subjectivity as a construct of that power appear to make meaningless both the notions of 'repression' and 'liberation' (Ibid). In short Foucault's affirmation of the ubiquity of power coupled with his denial of the possibility of a self-constituting subject has led, probably unfairly, to his exclusion from any serious debate on freedom. Even the minor recognition that liberal critiques afford to Foucault's discussion of freedom reduces it to a 'narrowly critical project' (Ibid, 25) i.e. one capable of exposing the falsity of existing freedoms but falls short of developing an alternative account of freedom. Nonetheless the previous chapter has gone a long way to show the naiveté

of denying a Foucauldian conception of freedom. For all his implicit endorsement of the dominant conception of freedom, Foucault has certainly contributed to the debate about the nature of freedom.

In addition to the lack of a viable conception of freedom which liberal critiques accuse Foucault of, Habermas and Taylor complain about what they felt to be a conscious disregard of the 'gain in freedom and expression' which modern subjectivity implied (Rorty, 1991, 238). Nonetheless Foucault's discussion of the production of the subject through the operation of what he referred to as 'disciplinary power' should leave us wondering whether the so called gain is actually a loss and not a gain.

Be that as it may the strong degree of suspicion with which a Foucauldian conception of freedom is treated should not be allowed to detract anything from his significant contribution to political philosophy in general and to a discourse on freedom in particular in so far as Foucault's conception of power as ubiquitous is part of the reason why we have managed to think of freedom in a completely new light. Allowing his 'ontological presuppositions' (Foucault follows Heidegger in taking practical involvement, as opposed to conscious thought, to be the 'ontological ground of selfhood') will not only enable us to appreciate Foucault's analysis of power but it will also allow us to come to grips with the ethical implications of his conception of freedom.

Despite the argument of some that Foucault's constructive conception of power disqualifies him from any discussion of freedom, I believe that the very reason for disqualifying him wins him a place in the camp of the critiques of the Kantian conception of freedom. Given that Foucault's earlier works have been largely dominated by the discussion of the intricacies of power it's understandable, albeit not entirely forgivable, to assume that Foucault has rendered the possibility of human freedom a chimera. However anyone who has even the slightest familiarity with Foucault's later works especially with the three volumes of the 'History of Sexuality' will be keenly aware that Foucault did not only provide us with a potent critique of the Kantian conception of freedom but also and most importantly, in his attempt to find balance (in the words of Neve) between 'agency and structure', he has developed an ontology of freedom. Hence it's worth pointing out that part of Foucault's indebtedness to Heidegger and his significance in the

exploration of the ethical import of the ontology of freedom revolves around his ontological analysis of freedom.

In perfect harmony with Heidegger, Foucault's understanding of freedom is taken up increasingly as a mode or style of existence, rather than as a property of the subject or a strategic form of action outside of or in resistance to power (Taylor, 1984, 17). As such it can be used as a potent weapon in the critique of the dominant conception of freedom as well as such emancipatory discourses as Marxism and Postcolonial Philosophy which, as I shall argue in the subsequent chapter, paradoxical as it may seem, heavily rely on the conceptual scheme as much as on the concrete exigencies of the oppressive structure which they supposedly reacted against.

Foucault's indebtedness to Heidegger's work is not limited to the successful critique of Kant's transcendental subject (albeit it makes up a significant portion of it) but his conception of freedom as an ontological condition of power is also, by and large, drawn from Heidegger's ontological conception of freedom. On the basis of Foucault's discussion of the ethics of the self and the conception of freedom as an ontological condition of possibility rather than as human will (drawn mainly from Heidegger), it can be argued that Foucault takes freedom to be a condition of possibility of power- an unconventional attitude towards freedom, one opposed to the claim of many that it's itself molded by power relations (Neve, 1999, 1).

In addition to the close affinity Foucault's works on freedom exhibit to Heidegger's the Foucauldian subject, much like Heidegger's, is a being-in-the-world, and not an autonomous rational being set against the world.

What Foucault calls 'technology of power' views power as a strategy, or a game not consciously played by individuals but one that operates within the machinery of society. Power affects everyone, from the prisoner to the prison guard, but no one individual can control it (Ibid, 1). In contradistinction to the traditional conception of power, Foucault does not regard it to be the possession of certain group of people but he assumes everyone to be subject to it; this is to mean that the so called dominator is as much the product of power as the dominated or in more precise terminology both are victims of what Foucault refers to as 'disciplinary power'. Foucault's analysis of disciplinary power should not be interpreted as a denial of the existence of 'state power' (the traditional conception of power) much less as an attempt to vindicate a violent

oppressor from responsibility. It's rather an attempt to illuminate the less recognized aspect of power. Even though the analysis of power in terms of discipline seems to betray the questionable motive of exonerating the dominator by absolving him of all responsibility, we should credit Foucault for analyzing the notions of power and freedom in a way that we were not previously accustomed to. This is to mean that he has eschewed the project of analyzing power merely as a product of the lopsided relation between the subject and the object. Yet he did not pursue this project into the realm of freedom. As we can gather from the previous part Foucault advocates a conception of freedom at the center of which lies the idea of 'mastery'.

The social and political effect of such a conception of power is clearly reflected in Foucault's late works where he argues that 'processes of socialization cannot be reduced to an either/or struggle between governors and governed, between sovereign and subject'. Rather various processes of subjectification are employed to reproduce social institutions in individuals. Foucault's focus then is rightly directed at 'the modes of being and the practices that cultivate these modes'. This would in turn foster the study of humans in their concrete history which could be used as a means through which 'we disclose ourselves to ourselves as essentially historical, and thus not determined by ahistorical, metaphysical reifications of our own design' (Nichols, 2014, 20-21). As Taylor once said Heidegger and Foucault form the poles between which are stretched a great arc traversing twentieth-century European philosophy, beginning with fundamental ontology and ending in genealogical critique and an ethics of the care of the self' (1984, 155). In general Foucault's historical ontology is the means by which Heidegger's fundamental ontology can be put to much effect. This is to mean that the supposed lack of situatedness some detect in Heidegger's existential analytic is believed to some extent to be remedied by Foucault's historical ontology 'while Heidegger, in *Being and Time*, investigated the ahistorical structures of human existence, Foucault was a militant historicist' (Karademir, 2013, 376). However as we can gather from the previous chapter the accusation that Heidegger's analysis is entirely devoid of embeddedness itself does not seem to withstand any serious scrutiny.

Unlike the claim of some of his critics, Foucault's ethics is not a solitary pursuit, nor does he prioritize isolated individuality. Ethical subjectivity is given a form in the practices of the self, but these practices always take place and derive their meaning from an interpersonal situation.

Care for the self, according to Foucault, implies complex relationships with others (Oksala, 2005, 193). Foucault targets uncovering what he views as the outright ground of current subjectivity, the Other. Besides, he has tried to uncover this ground to analyze and address appropriately the moral situations and issues which plague contemporary subjectivity. However the attempt to understand the other does not necessarily imply ‘concern for the other’.

The ethos of freedom and self-mastery can only take concrete shape and become a style of life in a particular interpersonal situation in which the ethical acts become ways of dealing with the surrounding community. The self that is cared for is never isolated, but always linked to larger societal structures (Oksala, 2005, 193).

Thus, Foucault does not advocate blatant egoism, nor does he neglect the care for others. He does, however, relocate the ethical from interpersonal relationships to the relationship one has with one’s self, and this way rethinks the realm of ethics. In Foucault’s thought, care for the self is a precondition of care for others (Oksala, 2005, 194). Although Foucault prefers to follow a different route to that of Kant he ends up drawing an equally distressing conclusion. The apparent disregard of ‘the other’ as an ‘other’ or more precisely the ‘objectification of the other’ implicit in transcendental philosophy is also evident in Foucault’s ethics in so far as he formulates the problem of ethics, which is the problem of the other, in terms of one’s relation to the self.

The complementary relation between freedom and being-ethical is unmistakably conspicuous in our relation with the other. The mere existence of the other is a fundamental constitutive condition of ethical subjectivity. As Levinas says my becoming ‘hostage for the other’ implies my ability to constitute myself as an ethical subject (a responsible subject). Yet the paradox of the presence of the other is a seemingly insurmountable task in the face of the constitution of the ethical subject i.e. ‘to encounter something truly other is, by definition, impossible because it would be incomprehensible and unexperienceable for something to be able to preserve its alterity means that it must exceed my categories of experience and understanding and therefore be a non-experience, unexperienceable’ (Oksala, 2005, 202). Yet it’s in the context of the epistemological indeterminacy of the other that being free implies being ethical. The projection of the other as the infinite possibility of ways for interpreting and understanding the world presupposes the radical

limit stipulated in my experience of the world. It seems particularly important to note that freedom consists in this openness to the not-self, the beyond.

An ethical relation is not like a relation of knowledge; it cannot be reduced to knowledge about the other. The other cannot be posited by any constituting, intentional act of the subject, because he or she cannot be an intentional object, but always overflows the limits of perception and comprehension (Oksala, 2005, 202). It's easier to lose sight of 'the other' in the epistemological dimension of freedom than in the ethical. As we shall see presently the ethical dimension lays bare the exclusionary structure built into the causal conception of freedom much more evidently than the other two dimensions.

One could argue that the untold atrocities committed by man against man are to a large extent well-intentioned. Their occurrence can be attributed to the sacred objective of the pursuit of the good. Colonialism and slavery are not events which have always been explained in terms of malice towards the other (at least not an overt malevolence). Their perpetrators had the audacity to articulate them as altruistic, almost self-sacrificial acts. We cannot expect to justify an action by the motive- overt or otherwise- which instigated it rather the motive serves as much to blame the perpetrator as the consequence.

Foucault relocates the ethical from interpersonal relationships to the relationship one has with one's self, and this way rethinks the realm of ethics. In Foucault's thought, care for the self is a precondition of care for others. The care for self takes moral precedence in the measure that the relationship to self takes ontological precedence (Oksala, 2005, 194). For Foucault the ontological priority of the relationship to the self over the relationship to 'the other' has its parallel in the ethical realm- care for the self having primacy over care for others. Accordingly ethics is primarily understood in terms of a relationship of one with the self.

The mastery over oneself was not the goal of this ethics but the moral condition of possibility of one's mastery over others. Self-mastery, both as a theme and as a social practice, was inseparable from the mastery of others (Oksala, 2005, 195). As we can gather from the previous discussion, unlike the Platonic approach to the other which is characterized by a distancing of oneself, the Cartesian-Kantian approach aims at objectifying the other, taking control and dominating it.

Foucault's relocation of ethical relation from the other to the self is not an acknowledgment of the merits of the former approach but a systematic endorsement of the latter.

We can wonder together with Oksala that 'Can a relationship be ethical if the personal other involved is contingent and not fundamentally constitutive of it? What kind of ethical relationship is not constituted by the singular, personal other who makes the relationship what it is?' (2005,1960). Foucauldian ethics which is in large measure an extension of the ethics of mastery characterizes the ethical dimension of transcendental philosophy. As with the epistemological dimension, the ethical dimension of the notion of freedom as mastery proves to be extremely inimical to the projection of an intersubjective relation. The ontology of freedom, on the other hand, tells a completely different ethical story.

Despite Heidegger's laborious effort to sever the notion of 'care' from its ethical moorings, it's precisely because of the ethical dimension built into its structure that care becomes central to Heidegger's conception of freedom as 'letting be'.

The adverse effects of the dualistic approach to reality (sanctioned by transcendental philosophy) to the problematic of intersubjectivity is nowhere better apparent than in the ethical dimension of freedom unapologetically advocated by Kant and skillfully adopted by Foucault.

It's my contention that the ethical positioning entailed by the causal conception of Freedom fails to respond to the ethical demand of the 'radical other'. 'The ethical problems posed by the existence of others were related to questions of how to rightfully govern them' (Oksala, 2005, 195). An ethical framework built on the mastery of the self and of others can easily dispense with the other or better yet looks on the other as indispensable only to the extent that it can be objectified.

It's highly questionable whether the elimination of the constitutive capacity of the other leaves any room for any ethical discourse. Inter-subjectivity is rendered inconsequential once the mastery of the self takes away the essentiality of the other in the formation of ethical subjectivity and care for oneself takes center stage.

On the other hand, freedom as 'letting beings be' is not merely an accidental ingredient, but the essential grounding of human solidarity (or socialism)-just as solidarity properly construed

denotes a reciprocal effort of liberation or a mutual "letting-be" (Dallmayr, 1984, 228). The solitary and selfish ethical framework built in the various modes of domination sanctioned by transcendental philosophy resigns itself to the other-regarding ethics of the ontology of freedom.

### **4.3. The Existential Dimension**

The third dimension of the ontology of freedom is the existential dimension. It aims at analyzing the existential implications of 'freedom as mastery' and the ontology of freedom. In view of this objective I shall analyze the elimination and systematic resuscitation of the body. The discussion will also indicate the significance of the disembodied subject for the successful preservation of the oppressive structure. The examination of Heidegger's notion of authenticity, which is fundamental to the understanding of the existential dimension of the ontology of freedom, aims at bringing to light the mode of existing entailed by freedom as 'letting beings be'.

The denigration of the body, which characterizes western philosophy since its inception in Greece, was taken to a higher level of abstraction and ipso facto to its final culmination by transcendental philosophy. Although Greek philosophy denounced the role of the body in the acquisition of truth it did acknowledge its importance in the relation with the other.

Modern philosophy, on the other hand, did not only allow exclusive access to the mind by underscoring the body's status as an object of knowledge but through transcendental philosophy it also reduced the body to obscurity. In a way we owe the veneration of the mind at the expense of the body to the dualistic philosophy of Descartes and his predecessors.

The Cartesian Method of Doubt requires a disembodied mind i.e. the complete separation of the two substances is essential for the attainment, nay even for the search for truth though not in the Platonic sense since 'the Cartesian soul frees itself not by turning away (like Platonic dualism) but by objectifying embodied experience' (Taylor, 1989, 146).

For Descartes discerning 'the ontological cleft' between itself and the object is a crucial step in the realization of the subject's distinct status. 'The material world including one's body should be seen by disengaging oneself from the usual embodied perspective. We have to objectify the world, including our own bodies, and that means to come to see them mechanistically and functionally in the same way that an uninvolved external observer would' (Ibid, 145). Such

objectification of the body puts it in a position of inferiority vis-à-vis the mind and prepares it for the ultimate goal of control. The universalist and essentialist character of modernity (expressed in such claims as ‘my method would reveal every truth for the knowledge of which human reason is adequate’) can be traced back to Descartes’ seemingly innocent search for absolute certainty. The ultimate effect of this instrumental rationality drawn out of ‘the cogito’ is the complete obliteration of the possibility of mutual relation between the subject and the object. The new model of rational mastery which Descartes offers presents it as a matter of instrumental control. To be free from the illusion which mingles mind with matter is to have an understanding of the latter which facilitates its control (Taylor, 1989, 149).

Ever since Descartes locked consciousness into the inner world of the self, the isolated body was viewed as superfluous. But the elimination of the body was not completed until the introduction of transcendental philosophy. ‘There can never be question of the body "alone" if this term is supposed to indicate an isolated body, a body which would stand apart from the conscious self but nevertheless be my body. Reversely, I have to admit that my body is the embodiment of the conscious self, and that this self is an embodied self (Luijpen and Dondeyne, 1954, 188). So the other is transformed into non-existence with the elimination of the body. The objectification and eventual elimination of the body is crucial for the objectification of the other to the extent that the other appears mainly through her body.

It’s absolutely essential, besides, that the subject is not transformed into an object of knowledge if the lopsided relation between the subject and the object is to be maintained and Descartes ensures that this is so when he says that the ‘I itself cannot be imagined, in the way that we are able to have sensory images of, or to form “in the imagination” a concrete image of a body’ (Hatfield in Emmanuel, 1993, 15). This is a clear indication that the relationship between the subject and the object is not even one of mutual objectification. As we can gather from Kant’s transcendental philosophy our experience is shaped solely by the objective conditions of the mind. Similarly the subject (represented by the mind) is the only condition for the possibility of knowing the object (the body). When Kant said the subject is the objective condition of knowledge he meant what we know and what we can’t know ultimately depends on the structure of our minds. It is essential to this dualistic philosophy that the positions are inflexible.

‘The laws that constitute nature are laws prescribed by the understanding that stands under the transcendental unity of apperception. Thus, in knowing the sensible world I am represented not only as distinct from it but also as prescribing laws to it’ (Carr, 1999, 45). The contrast Kant draws between the transcendental and empirical subjects perfectly captures the relationship between the mind and the body. The mind is not only the point of departure in the act of knowing but, much like the transcendental subject, it’s also a condition of the possibility of any knowing. The ineptness of the body is crucial to its elimination i.e. its elimination involves this situation of being subject to the laws of another’s making (in its objectification). Actually the elimination of the body from philosophical discourse is built in the very structure of transcendental philosophy.

The physical thing is said to be, in itself, unqualifiedly transcendent. Precisely in that the essentially necessary diversity among modes of being, the most cardinal of them all, becomes manifest: the diversity between consciousness and reality (Husserl, *Ideas*, 1982, 90). Even Husserl’s conception of intentionality is grounded on the fundamental distinction between consciousness and reality. On the contrary, for Maurice Merleau-Ponty, getting free from the haze of transcendental dualism requires perceiving the body as ‘the place where consciousness and reality in fact come to occupy the very same conceptual space’ (Carman, 1999, 210).

With Husserl’s division of the transcendent into concrete and abstract the body inevitably appears as a kind of phenomenological anomaly; by describing it as "a thing 'inserted' between the rest of the material world and the 'subjective' sphere, Husserl contends that my body is neither internal to my consciousness nor external to me in the environment (Carman, 1999, 206). Transcendental phenomenology continues the tradition of transcendental philosophy to maintain the division between mind and body. It further strengthened the mind’s control over the body by accentuating the latter’s irrelevance in the activity of knowing. Nevertheless this is a claim which tends to belittle the role of the body in the individuation of the internal as well as the external.

Husserl argues that I do indeed have an abiding sense of self, logically prior to and independent of anything outside my consciousness, including my body, namely, my awareness of myself as the "pure" or "transcendental I" standing at the center of all my intentional acts (Ibid, 213). It should by no means come as a surprise that Husserl’s description of the body ties it to the

transcendental self as a source of its existence given that transcendental philosophy treats the subject as essentially disembodied.

Unlike pure transcendental consciousness, as Husserl conceives it, the body is not a transparent object; rather, it is an expressive unity that we can learn to know only by actively taking it up (Ibid, 222). The very experience of transcendent things is possible only provided that their project is borne, and discovered, within myself. When I say that things are transcendent, this means that I do not possess them, that I do not circumambulate them; they are transcendent to the extent that I am ignorant of what they are, and blindly assert their bare existence (Ponty, 1958, 430). The unintelligibility of the transcendental cannot be accounted for simply by grasping its projection of itself as 'the beyond', over and above the 'parochial' understanding of the empirical but also through the latter's finitude.

It's only by recognizing the other's own body that we can allow the shift 'from the solipsistic frame of reference to that which relies upon inter-subjective experience. This makes possible a series of analyses devoted to the constitution of inter-subjective objectivity' (Macann, 1991, p. 90). The possibility of an inter-subjectively constituted world – the possibility of 'a shared world' withers away as the body is transformed into insignificance. Consequently inter-subjectivity gives way to a subject-object relation.

Husserl, whose transcendental phenomenology adopts much of Kant's transcendental psychology, locates the foundational structures of the natural attitude in the subject's capacity for consciousness (Braaten, 1991, 80). Husserl traces the origin of the 'life-world' in the natural attitude which he situates in the mind- the conscious being, much like Descartes's thinking thing, does not necessarily require the presence of the body. Despite the stipulation of the 'life world' (a shared space which supposedly makes inter-subjectivity possible) transcendental philosophy can easily dispense with the body.

Now, however hard I try, I can find no other property besides thought which belongs to my essence. For example, although it seems to me that I have a body I can readily conceive of myself as existing without this body. Hence it is not an essential property of me that I have a body. I could conceivably exist after the body's demise. (Scrutton, 1995, 30). The superiority of the mind is not sufficient by itself for the establishment of the oppressive structure but the

fundamental dispensability of the body must also be ascertained. In general, the existential dimension of the notion of freedom endorsed by transcendental philosophy need to be appreciated in light of the expendability of the body and by implication of the other.

On Husserl's account bodily acts in no way constitute the body as a body for the embodied subject. The body is itself constituted intentionally only in the reflexive relation it acquires to itself when it perceives one of its organs by means of another (Carman, 1999, 212). It's not just the body's role in sensory experience that I find to be curious in Husserl's account of transcendental philosophy, but its status as a constituted object renders it existent and hence intelligible merely as an upshot of various productive processes which Foucault calls 'scientific discourses and disciplinary technologies'. Maurice Merleau-Ponty asserts the impossibility of a constituted body when he says, "Insofar as it sees or touches the world, my body can therefore be neither seen nor touched. What prevents its ever being an object, ever being 'completely constituted,' is that it is that by which there are objects (Ibid, 207).

Foucault analyzes the creation of docile bodies through various disciplinary mechanisms in the following manner 'A political anatomy, which was also a mechanics of power, was being born; it defined how one may have a hold over others' bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines' (Foucault, 1995, 138). The same techniques and mechanisms used to subject bodies can also be put to the extraordinary use of eliminating them.

'Subjection sets the limits for normal experiences, but these limits make possible transgressions that affirm the limitlessness of bodies and pleasures' (Oksala, 2005, 189). As we shall see in the subsequent part the object of power, the manipulated and normalized body contains the key to inter-subjectivity. 'Only the ontological wisdom of the lived body may bring us out of the abstract, dualistic egocentrism that produces so much suffering and destruction' (Zimmerman, 1990, 245).

Levinas, on the other hand, naively associates the appearance of the other 'without being reduced to somebody or something in the world' to the crowdedness of our world which ends up unfamiliarizing the 'common face'. In so arguing Levinas misses or appears to miss the ultimate objective of denying the specificity of 'the other', the point of transforming him into anonymity-

necessitated by the need for mastery/control. Accordingly Foucault's analysis seems more palatable than Levinas' to the extent that the former takes note of the demands of 'freedom as mastery'. However both responses should be credited for attempting to attend to the gap left open by transcendental philosophy and also by Heidegger.

Despite the fact that Heidegger scarcely alludes to the body we can still have an inkling of the existential implications of his analysis of freedom by examining the concept of authenticity.

Authenticity refers to 'an acceptance or ownership over one's choices. This usage does not imply a good or bad self but various modes of self-relation' (Nichols, 2014, 51). Thus, instead of talking in terms of authentic or inauthentic being we can only have an authentic or inauthentic relationship to the mode of being which we find ourselves in.

The notion of the 'They' by which Dasein's authentic relation to the world is mainly threatened should not necessarily be reduced to some sort of social body. It should rather be seen as Dasein's essential characteristic to 'depersonalize itself—to see oneself as essentially determined by things which are not one's own (i.e., by our factual conditions)' (Ibid). However, this externalization of the basic meaning of our selfhood is possible not because other people press themselves upon us, or because social relations are necessarily oppressive. Rather, it is possible only because within Dasein is the capacity to externalize the meaning of oneself, to depersonalize it and allow it to be determined by something (or someone) else. Thus, the difference between authentic and inauthentic being is not that authentic being is detached from others while inauthentic is engaged. Rather, it is a difference of how Dasein relates to others—the mode or manner of comportment with which Dasein engages its world—whether one loses sight of the fact that possibilities are never exhausted by the range presented to us in a given Life-world. (Nichols, 2009, 53)

Since other Dasein are defined via an existential analytic (i.e., in relation to the question of my own existence), we can demonstrate that placing them within a separate category of relations (separate to the category of relations Dasein has to things) is necessary. Thus, we can show that other Daseins do not exist in the world for me in the same way that equipment does. The possibility of acknowledging this exists within the structure of each Dasein's experience, is thus a priori, and demonstrates that authentic Dasein could not (by definition) mean a Dasein wholly

indifferent to others. This is to mean that although Dasein is different from things (something which rids it of any necessity) mainly because 'in its being this being is concerned about its very being. Thus it's constitutive of the being of Dasein to have, in its very being, a relation of being to this being' (Heidegger, 2010, 11), it cannot be described as an isolated subjectivity as long as the self occurs only as involved 'in the density of reality, in the facticity of the body and world, with which it's not identical' ((Luijpen and Dondeyne, 1960, 269).

Meaningful relatedness to others is an a priori possibility that makes actual respect for others possible, but it also makes possible forgetfulness of this special relation and the losing of oneself to others—in other words, non-self-aware-being, or inauthenticity (Nichols, 2014, 54). Since to be subject (to be man) is to be free and Dasein's being is existence and to exist is to co-exist it follows that freedom consists in the transcending of necessity which characterizes this subject. In other words, humankind becomes what it really is just when it figures out how to 'let beings be' what they are. Therefore authentic man is manifested through such concern.

Heidegger's analysis of Dasein in BT proceeds at three levels: the experiential, existential and ontological levels. But none of the existential or experiential levels provide an adequate account of the body.

It is clear from Heidegger's account of Dasein that Dasein is embodied, it is not a bare ego or an exclusively psychological subject. But he rarely mentions the body (Inwood, 1997, 28). It's worth pointing out that Heidegger made a significant departure from the transcendentalism of his predecessors by delineating Dasein's embeddedness.

We do not become aware of ourselves, or others, first as extended bodies on a par with stones and rocks, then as living organisms, then as animal bodies, and finally as human beings. We start off, at least in adulthood, viewing ourselves as whole human beings, and need a special sort of abstraction to see ourselves simply as animals or as bodies (Ibid, 28). Heidegger begins by considering Dasein rather than its body, the whole human being who asks the question 'What is my body?' The body is inconspicuous. It is there, but it lies in the background of Dasein's doings, not in the foreground (Ibid, 29). We can ascertain Dasein's embodiedness from Heidegger's articulation of our relation to nature. The beings of things which Heidegger calls 'ready to hand' appear to Dasein through the body- or more exactly it is revealed to the

embodied being which we are. By stressing the practical as the fundamental way of relating to the world, Heidegger intimates the significance of the body in inter-subjectivity.

It is not something added to Dasein, or to which Dasein is added. Dasein, as Heidegger describes it, essentially requires a body of a certain sort, and is not a soul or ego that might conceivably exist in a disembodied state or in a body quite different from the typical human body (Inwood, 1997, 29). Heidegger's analysis of Dasein proceeds in a manner which takes due cognizance of the embodied nature of human beings i.e. unlike the cogito or the transcendental subject Dasein is a cultural and historical being. Zimmerman testifies to this by acknowledging that 'Heidegger's focus on the disclosive and caring dimension of the human hand indicates that he understood the importance of "embodiment" for human existence' (1990, 244).

However, Heidegger's 'understanding of the importance of embodiment to human existence' was not accompanied by a comparable understanding of its significance in the exploitation and oppression of 'the other'; it's highly questionable if he was even aware of the existence of such a structure grounded on transcendental philosophy. This ignorance may probably explain the negligible treatment of the body in his account of freedom. Furthermore, his preoccupation with *seinsfrage* has resulted in the withdrawal of the embodied subject to the background. The last part tries to remedy this oversight by appealing to Maurice Merleau Ponty.

If precisely our relatedness to the world and to others begets our freedom, then the struggle for understanding comes to fore (Thiele, 1994, 288). Our understanding of freedom shapes and is also shaped by the precise manner that our relatedness to the world is conceptualized.

Relations of mastery will continue to delimit human identity and define human dignity. As long as our understanding of freedom is restricted to the exclusion of others from our personal space (or, as with positive liberty, to the mastery of ourselves and our world), then our politics will remain one in which the individual meets the world and the other in a singular struggle for self-assertion (Ibid, 288). Such relation implies what Taylor calls 'the sense of man as free, self-defining subjects, whose understanding of our own essence or of our paradigm purposes is drawn from 'within', (1996, 5).

Even Hegel, by calling for a move from dominating one another to dominating together, aligns himself with the long tradition of philosophers for whom freedom cannot be interpreted in any

other way than mastery when he argued 'modern freedom is gained only by exchanging the mastery of some over the lives of others for humankind's presumed mastery over history itself' (Thiele, 1994, 289).

On the other hand, 'the struggle for understanding typically entails the disclosure of the self and the other in the context of a shared world' (Ibid, 289). In contradistinction to freedom as mastery, in 'freedom as letting beings be' the relationship between the same and the other is original i.e. Dasein is seen as a 'being-with'. Accordingly, freedom is understood in terms of perpetual penchant toward understanding. It requires 'setting something free into its own presencing'.

The interminable struggles of identity may be waged interpretively, for understanding, as well as antagonistically, for mastery. The struggle for mastery need not entail an appreciation of the situated self, and seldom entails an understanding of the other, except insofar as it enables the other's exploitation (Ibid, 289). As we saw in the previous section, the transformation of the other into an object of knowledge does not aim at the understanding, much less at the recognition of the other. Contrary to 'freedom as letting beings be', 'freedom as mastery' constitutes the oppressive structure by denying the situatedness and embodiment of the other. It's characterized by struggle for domination- the existence of 'the other' is deemed a threat to one's identity. As a result the reduction of the other into an object of knowledge has the effect of eliminating the possible danger that 'the other' may pose to my identity. Yet as we can gather from the previous section not every violence on identity can be countered by an assertion of the self, sometimes in the spirit of Foucauldian body which is 'capable of generating resistance' one may have to engage in the denial rather than affirmation of the self.

Heidegger does not deny human being a "minimal" will and mastery, but he does seek to constrain its unbridled hegemony in the modern world (Ibid, 285). Heidegger should not be misread as if he wants to eliminate the elements of mastery and will which to some extent are essential components of the notion of freedom but he is wary of the dangers they pose for co-existence. But he reiterates that 'grand words and deeds, if carried out in the willful and forgetful pursuit of mastery, may also preclude freedom's greatest exercise' (Thiele, 1994, 288).

Despite his fervent attack on subjectivism and humanism, Heidegger firmly maintains human exceptionalism on account of the human capacity for freedom. Regardless of the transiency of

human life compared to the cosmic galaxies it's nevertheless the highest mode of Being when it becomes an existing out of and towards freedom (Ibid, 286). Some have embarked on the highly questionable project of using Heidegger's thought to defend the need for ecological concern. With respect to man's relation with nature, I don't believe that Heidegger offers anything radical to the exploitative and anthropocentric project of modern philosophy given especially his analysis of the being of things as 'ready to hand'. Nonetheless his thought records an extraordinary turn in the analysis of human freedom which he characterizes 'as exposure to the disclosedness of beings' (Heidegger, 1961, 7).

Man only attains his self-conscious, rational autonomy in separating off from nature, society, God and fate; he only wins through to inner freedom by disciplining natural impulse in himself, breaking from the unthinking bent of social custom, challenging the authority of God and sovereign, refusing to accept the decrees of fate (Taylor, 1979, 15). Freedom as mastery is conceptualized within the context of rebellion- liberation from control. To the extent that the subject sees itself as one who is capable of exercising power over herself and others, it comports itself towards liberation from the powers that be and ensure self-mastery. In Heidegger's words it involves 'the leveling down of all possibilities of being'.

According to this dominant conception of freedom, no one can be free in the true sense of the term without having another in a state of unfreedom. Freedom requires another entity which serves as a counterpoise- its very existence depends on its dialectical relation to this non-free entity. Accordingly freedom is articulated in such a way that its achievement demands the liberation of one from the other.

Heidegger equated "letting things be" with the act of "producing" things. To produce something in the right way means to disclose it in a way that shows concern for the thing's own character and possibility. Heidegger emphasized the role of the human hand in such authentic "letting-be" (Zimmerman, 1990, 244). This disclosive letting be which characterizes the ontology of freedom requires the original unconcealment of beings in contradistinction to the manipulating and other-defining propensity of 'freedom as mastery'. Zimmerman's use of the questionable terminology 'produce' can only be applied to the relation of Dasein with other 'things' which we have already mentioned are not better served in Heidegger's thought. It should however never be applied to other Daseins towards whom Dasein acts with 'ontological engagement'.

When Heidegger spoke of the "rootlessness" of modernity, he should have emphasized that it is from our own corporeality that we have become uprooted and alienated. Developing Heidegger's hints especially in light of Merleau-Ponty's work Levinas shows that bodily motility, gestures, and feelings are crucial factors in opening up the "clearing" of human existence (Ibid, 245).

Despite his disregard of the significance of the body for a proper articulation of inter-subjectivity Heidegger's analysis of Dasein is more in keeping with a historical and cultural being than with the anonymous subject of the transcendental tradition. Although Heidegger's treatment of man in 'The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics' leads him to the analysis of world, finitude, and solitude as the three fundamental aspects of man, 'BT' is largely concerned (especially Division I) with the shared public practices into which we're integrated.

The next chapter deals specifically with Heidegger's existential analysis of Dasein and the various conceptions of freedom which ensue from the analysis.

## **CHAPTER FIVE- Heidegger's Fundamental Ontology and Freedom**

This chapter analyzes Heidegger's portrayal of the relation between freedom and being. It proceeds by reviewing the various modes of relation between being and freedom.

In "*Being and Time*" Heidegger gives us a fundamental analysis of Dasein in terms of temporality where he makes an ontological examination of the meaning of being. The analysis is fundamental to the extent that its objective is not the ontic understanding of 'what is man' but the ontological concern 'that man is' - it involves the treatment of Dasein as 'a being for whom Being is a question'. Despite the significant amount of discussion accorded to Dasein, Heidegger is quick to point out that the analysis is just a preparation for the main task at hand viz. the meaning of Being.

In the subsequent sections I will discuss the existential analysis of Dasein in light of its average everydayness with a view to demonstrating the significance of the question of being in our attempt to formulate a genuine conception of freedom.

### **5.1. The Existential Analytic of Dasein**

The relationship between man and the world can be viewed from two historically significant perspectives. On the one hand western philosophy from Descartes onwards at least up to Husserl has been grappling with the problem of the existence of other minds and of the external world in more or less the same way i.e. the tradition starts with the individual, autonomous, isolated subject and sets out to prove the existence or otherwise of the external world including other minds. On the other hand some discourses especially those that emerged as a reaction against enlightenment's supposedly oppressive inclination, have largely accentuated the ontological primacy of man's social characteristic inducing the accusation of 'taking the individual out of the mass'. So Heidegger's analysis of 'the average everydayness' of Dasein could be understood as a significant stride towards remedying these extremities.

Heidegger unapologetically states his aim in BT to be the exposition of the question of the meaning of Being. He attributes the forgetting of this momentous question to the prejudices rooted in 'ancient ontology'. The acknowledgment of the universality of the concept (which is

not a problem in itself) has resulted in some uncalled for prejudices the sort of which Heidegger believes need to be addressed if any successful analysis of the question can be made.

According to Heidegger the western philosophical tradition is guilty of inferring unwarranted conclusions from the supposed ubiquitousness of being. Neither the claim of the indefinability of the concept nor that of its self-evidentness follows necessarily from the universality of the question of being. As he says 'the fact that we live already in an understanding of being and that the meaning of being is at the same time shrouded in darkness proves the fundamental necessity of retrieving the question of the meaning of "being"' (2010, 3). So in the end the proper formulation of the question proves to be no less important than the mechanism one adopts to deal with the question. We might even go to the extent of saying that an appropriate formulation determines the choice of *modus operandi*. Heidegger's assertion concerning the possibility of an 'exemplary' being or the priority of a being in the analysis of this fundamental question is testament to the aforementioned point; 'to work out the question of being means to make a being- one who questions- transparent in its being' (Ibid, 6). It simply means the exposition of the meaning of being uses the analysis of a being (note the role of the article 'a') as a means- this being is called *Dasein*.

'At the beginning of the analysis *Dasein* is precisely not to be interpreted in the differentiation of a particular existence, rather it's to be uncovered in the indifferent ways in which it is initially and for the most part. This indifference of the everydayness of *Dasein* is not nothing; but rather, a positive phenomenal characteristic. We call this everyday indifference of *Dasein* averageness' (Heidegger, 2010, 43). *Dasein* is not to be deciphered in the separation of a specific presence, rather it's to be revealed in the uninterested ways in which it is originally. This lack of concern of the ordinariness of *Dasein* which Heidegger discusses isn't nothing; but instead, a positive feature of *Dasein* whence every existing comes and returns back.

*Dasein*, whether in its average everydayness or otherwise, is in the world. Stones, trees, cows, and hammers are also in the world. But *Dasein*, unlike a stone, a tree, or a cow, is aware of and familiar with the world, aware of other things in the world and of itself, and it is so in virtue of its 'understanding of being'. (Inwood, 1997, 31-32). *Dasein* is anything but an isolated subject, mindful just of the content of its own consciousness. Assuming it were thus, it would have a distinct 'what' and would not be on the planet. Assuming *Dasein* had its very own determinate

nature and were not, basically to a limited extent, what it thinks about itself, it probably won't require a world to stay in. Be that as it may, as things are, Dasein, to be by any means or if nothing else to be in its own trademark ways, needs a world populated with elements for it to draw in with.

*Man is not simply regarded as a part of the world within which he appears and which he makes up in part. Man also stands over against the world. This standing-over-against is a 'having' of world as that in which man moves, with which he engages, which he both masters and serves, and to which he is exposed. Thus man is, first, a part of the world, and second, as this part he is at once both master and servant of the world (Heidegger, 1995, 177).*

Dasein can be understood as Heidegger's equivalence of the subject- a subject which Dreyfus regards as 'non-autonomous, culturally bound (or thrown) way of being, that can yet change the field of possibilities in which it acts' ( 2002, 1). The reference to the word 'subject' in describing Heidegger's Dasein may be objectionable in more ways than one, yet the comparison goes a long way to indicate the qualifications that need to be made between the two selves.

What Heidegger calls an 'existential analytic of Dasein' refers to the disciplined investigation of the everyday modes of engagement of Dasein (human beings) which is the necessary, albeit insufficient step to laying bare the underlying meaning of Being. Fundamental ontology is dependent on such analysis in as much as it implies a concern with the a priori, transcendental conditions that make possible particular modes of Being- as Heidegger puts it:

*'Ontologies which have beings unlike Dasein as their theme are accordingly founded and motivated in the ontic structure of Dasein itself. The structure includes in itself the determination of a pre-ontological understanding of being. Thus fundamental ontology, from which alone all other ontologies can originate, must be sought in the existential analysis of Dasein' (Heidegger, 2010,12).*

The question of what or who is Dasein is a path taken to arrive at the more basic question of 'What does it mean for anything to be? Or, simply, what is Being?- a level of analysis which Heidegger calls "fundamental ontology," and it is the primary aim of '*Being and Time*' to provide an answer to this question. Thus the impulse to transcend traditional ontology is

reflected through the experiential which, when reflected upon, lead to insights into the existential a priori conditions which structure Dasein's concerned relations with the world and itself. This would show, perhaps unequivocally, that the 'entry point for analysis of all Dasein, and indeed for all Being, is reflection on my own personal existence' (Nichols, 2014, 31). Thus the examination of the everyday life of Dasein should be understood in the context of Heidegger's insistence on the need for 'pinpointing the particular being that is to function as the primary being to be interrogated' (Heidegger, 2010, 15). But what is so special about human beings? What possible reason could have prompted Heidegger to give a major role to this 'being that we all are'? Dasein is chosen for interrogation over all other beings for specific reasons: if we look around at beings in general, we find that it is human beings alone who are able to encounter the question of what it means to be. More specifically, it is human beings alone who (a) operate in their everyday activities with an understanding, albeit pre-ontological, of Being and (b) are capable of reflecting upon what 'to be' really boils down to.

*Dasein takes priority over all other entities in several ways. The first priority is an ontical one: Dasein is an entity whose Being has the determinate character of existence. The second priority is an ontological one: Dasein is in itself ontological, because existence is thus determinative for it. Thus Dasein has turned out to be, more than any other entity, the one which must first be interrogated ontologically (Heidegger, 1962, 34).*

### **5.1.1. Being-in-the-world/ Worldhood/**

The analysis of Dasein reveals certain features which Heidegger calls 'existentialia' one of which is 'Being-in-the-world'- this is a mode of being which should be seen as an existential a priori for further knowledge of Dasein itself as well as for knowledge of Dasein's relation to other beings including other Daseins. Yet the understanding of this distinctive mode of being requires making, as Heidegger does, a careful analysis of the different senses of the preposition 'in' and eliminating the intellectual baggage that have been attached to the word 'world'.

The attempt to see through the multiple senses of the word 'in' should not deceive us into thinking that the distinction Heidegger makes between them implies mere linguistic analysis rather as Heidegger himself confesses the analysis aims primarily at 'seeing the primordial

structure of Dasein's being' (2010, 55). Dreyfus articulates the two senses in which Heidegger used the preposition 'in' as 'physical' and 'existential' - While the first and most ordinary sense of 'in' denotes location (Heidegger's examples include phrases like "the water is 'in' the glass), the other and the one which Heidegger meant by 'being-in-the-world' refers to a state of engagement or a mode of being (the meaning of 'in' in the following sentence can illustrate this meaning 'he is in love').

Heidegger warns us against treating the 'being-in' of Being-in-the-world in the usual way- in Heidegger's thinking the word 'in' is divested of its locational connotation. Accordingly this second sense of the preposition 'in' discloses Dasein's necessary involvement with the world. The analysis of this unique form of engagement is of paramount importance for an 'understanding of freedom as a particular mode or manner of involvement, engagement, or Being-in-the-world, rather than a detached standing or status to be achieved over against such worldly conditions' (Nichols, 2014, 33). In other words, our fundamental relation to the world cannot be grasped in terms of location instead it should be acknowledged that 'we reside or dwell there; that is, we are fundamentally familiar with the world' (Blattner, 2006, 42). It's this familiarity that transcendental philosophy entirely overlooks; by familiarizing Dasein with the world Heidegger dissolves the subject-object dichotomy.

For Heidegger our most basic way of knowing the world is through dealing with the world "concernfully," through being at work. This "knowing" is not the detached relation of a subject to an object. It is a practical kind of knowledge that is simultaneously an understanding of one's self (Sandel, 2014, 68). Nevertheless Heidegger's allusion to a kind of self-reference should not be interpreted in terms of 'an experience of an isolated and worldless self'. 'Self-reference is the self-reference of a world-immersed self, it does not imply a striving towards a detached and ontological self-contained self' (Escudero, 2014, 10). In stark contrast to Descartes' methodic doubt which ended up doubting the existence of the external world and also to Kantian transcendental idealism which infers the world from the structure of our consciousness, in Heidegger's thought being-in-the-world is given as the underlying structure of Dasein.

If we regard the world in Descartes's way, as a collection of extended things, then it is natural to view the self as a thinking thing, and, conversely if we view the self as a thinking thing it is natural to view the world it inhabits as consisting of present-at-hand extended things (Inwood,

1997, 37). Cartesian philosophy proceeds with utter disregard of the context within which the cognitive process takes place- this is manifested through Descartes's attempt to sunder the 'Cogito' from its world. But Heidegger claims that the cognitive activity which characterizes Descartes' cogito depends on a more fundamental way of being called being-in-the-world. In other words, 'familiarity is more basic than cognition, and that cognition is not self-sufficient, but rather a derivative mode of familiarity' (Blattner, 2006, 46). The special way in which we humans are in the world Heidegger calls it 'dwelling'. It's a kind of mode of existence for which 'direction on an object is not taken as the basic structure of consciousness (Inwood, 1997, 36). Far from what traditional philosophers have been advocating, the world is not unmistakable to everyday Dasein because of its essentially practical nature. Since dwelling necessarily implies practical engagement with the world and the things in it, Dasein's familiarity is not characterized by making conscious choices rather it involves a prereflective dealing with the world.

The other most important component –'the world' in being-in-the-world refers to the 'totality of meaningful relations that one always finds oneself within' (Nichols, 2014, 33). The Cartesian tradition all the way up to Husserl grappled with the external world in the same vein as they did with other minds i.e. they took pains to prove the existence of the external world as well as the existence of other minds.

But for Heidegger the world is 'a condition of possibility for Dasein' since Dasein's intelligibility depends on the background of some 'field of meaning'. This is to mean that Dasein does not appear first and then try to prove the existence of the world-rather Dasein is essentially with the world-Thus as Dreyfus would say 'the a priori mode of being that permits anything at all to matter to us, or to be rendered intelligible, is Being-in-the-world' (1991, 34).

The first aporia concerns the title "Ontology" itself. Ontology should introduce the essential distinctions of the methods of being of the elements, seen in the world. However, when perceived along these lines, it very well may be "ontology of the life-world" provided that "world" signifies the amount of that which can be separated by its method of being, or at least, if "world" means an article which is the entirety, all things considered. However, is the world simply a being in a similar sense as the complex creatures in the world? Husserl rejects such a comprehension of ontology: for Husserl, there is: 'a fundamental difference between the way we are conscious of the world and the way we are conscious of things or objects in the world. Unlike

the world, which exists with such uniqueness that it presupposes the world-horizon, we are conscious of things and objects as things or objects within the world-horizon' (Landgrebe et al., 1981, 120). Yet Husserl still belongs to that dubious tradition of separating the subject from the external world (the account of the relation in terms of subject knowing object- the world).

Heidegger's attempt to dig deeper and analyze the fundamental relation between the subject and the world has led him to distance himself from 'the kind of intentionality of subjects directed towards objects discussed and distorted by the tradition, and go behind the more basic intentionality of everyday coping, to the context or background, on the basis of which every kind of directedness takes place' (Dreyfus, 1991, 55). Dasein and the world are not two mutually exclusive entities. The world provides the context within which Dasein carries out its 'concernful dealings'. Polt expressly states this distinct mode of being human when he says that 'it can be said of Dasein in general that our relation to the world is not disinterested- it's active engagement. We are not, and never can be, radically detached from the world' (1999, 46).

Within this world, Dasein encounters other beings in two basic ways: ready-to-hand and present-at-hand. Ready-to-hand is the primary mode of relating to other beings- beings whose existence for us is linked intimately to their use and their relationship to other beings (Ibid).As such while Heidegger reserves the word "existence," to human beings he prefers to use "presence"--for the being of animals and inert things. And it is, according to Levinas, because man's essence consists in existence that Heidegger designates man by the term *Dasein* (being right-there) and not by the term (a be-ing right-there). The verbal form expresses the fact that each element of man's essence is a mode of existing, of being situated there (1996, 8).

As Heidegger explicitly states, 'those characteristics which can be exhibited in this entity are not properties present-at-hand of some entity and is itself present-at-hand; they are in each case possible ways for it to be, and no more than that. As we shall see later in this chapter the characterization of freedom as a mode of being rather than as an attribute possessed by a being is the logical consequence of the depiction of existence as man's essence.

Unfair criticisms have been forwarded against Heidegger concerning his view of the relation between Dasein and other beings. Heidegger does not condemn any encounter with things as present-at-hand, but he is unsympathetically opposed to giving primacy to such an encounter.

For Heidegger "things in use" are prior to "things in perceptual knowledge." To know them as "tools" and to know them as "objects of knowledge" really means to know them in two radically different and independent ways. And to each way of knowing them there corresponds a "mode of being." Heidegger thus distinguishes two "modes of being" of sensuous objects, their being present and their being at hand for use (Werkmeister, 1941,81).

Theoretical cognition is not primarily or even necessarily involved at all (Inwood, 1997, 33). Heidegger does not deny the significant role played by scientific knowledge and theory for the understanding of the human subject nor does he denounce the necessity of sometimes treating things as present-at-hand but he urges us to be bold enough to face the fact that such encounter does not even explain Dasein's every day, average, primary mode of dealing with things let alone exhaust the whole spectrum of Dasein's experience.

In all these existentials (ready-to-hand, present-at-hand, spatiality), Heidegger has attempted to demonstrate that 'epistemological theories that attempt to reconstruct the conditions for knowledge from the standpoint of a worldless, noumenal self will necessarily miss the crucial element of embodiment's foundational place in knowledge and subject formation (Nichols, 2014 35). The subject-object distinction sanctioned by transcendental philosophy does not only miss the essential element of subject-formation but it also fails to capture the human condition in its primordially.

Heidegger does not sympathize with Kant's lamentation concerning philosophers' failure to prove the existence of the external world. He would rather put the blame on the very hope of one day succeeding to prove its existence; in his own words 'the scandal of philosophy does not constitute in the fact that philosophers are unable to prove the existence of the external world but in the fact that such proofs are expected and attempted again and again' (2010, 197).

As Heidegger shows, the phenomenological notion of self is fully compatible with a strong emphasis on the fundamental being-in-the-world of each self. We find ourselves primarily as a worldly situated self, as already living in the world (Escudero, 2014, 10). Existential phenomenology implies a rejection of the ontological primacy of the individual sanctioned by Cartesian philosophy. Descartes' failure to capture our fundamental relation with the world can be attributed to this prioritization of the individual categories.

The discussion on epistemological determinacy, which we have undertaken in the previous chapters, has highlighted transcendental philosophy's tendency to treat Dasein in terms only of the categories of finitude. Heidegger rejects any concept of Dasein as a finished or, in principle, finishable self, an integrated whole, or an autonomous entity (Escudero, 2014, 11). The reference is not just to the existential indeterminateness of Dasein but also to the derivative claim that Dasein is not characterized by epistemological determinacy i.e. to the extent that Dasein is not finished or even finishable, it cannot be fully grasped as an object of knowledge. If we begin with human life and its natural conscious course, then it is a communalized life of human persons who immerse themselves in an endless world, i.e., viewing it, sometimes in isolation and sometimes together with one another, imagining it variously, forming judgments about it, evaluating it, actively shaping it to suit our purposes (Husserl, 1974, 19). Husserl perfectly captures the traditional conception of the relation between man and the world which is articulated in a subject-object relation where human beings are portrayed as fully capable of objectifying and even shaping the very structure of the object in a way that is particularly suitable to the finite categories of the subject.

It's interesting to note that in Heidegger's thought also 'man is not simply regarded as a part of the world within which he appears and which he makes up in part. Man also stands over against the world. This standing-over-against is a 'having' of world as that in which man moves, with which he engages, which he both masters and serves, and to which he is exposed. Thus man is, first, a part of the world, and second, as this part he is at once both master and servant of the world (Heidegger, 1995, 177). Despite the essentially being-in-the-world character of Dasein it can be conceived in relation to or even apart from the world which constitutes the very possibility of Dasein's actions.

### **5.1.2. Being-with**

The analysis of Dasein as being-in-the-world does not exhaust its existential structures since the inescapable question of the status of other Daseins continues to loom large. In contradistinction to the Cartesian tradition which has been advocating the contingency of other minds, Heidegger unequivocally states that other Daseins should be viewed as the essential component of this particular way of being that we are i.e. being-with (Heidegger's terminology to explain this essential feature of Dasein) is another existentiell structure which characterizes the ontological

status of Dasein. Being-in-the-world and coexistence are coordinate aspects of the single, unified basic structure of Dasein's existence (Dreyfus and Wrathall, 2005, 232).

The individual Dasein is therefore no isolated subject occupied with its equipment. As the environing world is not originally a world in which only one Dasein lives concernedly with its stock of tools, so the individual Dasein is not exhaustively defined by its "being-amidst" ready-to-hand entities (Overgaard, 2004, 135). The ready-to-hand entities, which I have discussed as being fundamental to grasping the relation between Dasein and the world, do not exhaust the range of possible relations that Dasein might encounter. Accordingly, the analysis of Dasein vis-à-vis other Daseins is crucial for coming into grips with the ontological status of human beings.

So, with an expression that may sound paradoxical at first, one can say that Dasein is in the world, though not as a thing or as an object, but as a "subject" for the world. This is simply how the human being is in the world (Overgaard, 2004, 128). This being a 'subject for the world' is completely different from the subjectification process sanctioned by transcendental philosophy. As we can gather from the foregoing sections Dasein is not an isolated, autonomous kind of being, our distinctive mode of being is rather characterized by what Heidegger calls being-in-the-world.

'Man does not approach things and fellow-men from without, since they are all already there when he exists' (Vietta, 1951,163). The external world including other people is the condition within which theoretical reflection is possible. Hence Cartesian doubt which entertained the real possibility of solipsism presupposes not only the existence of the context of significance which Heidegger calls 'world' but it also implies other Daseins. The world is always already the one that I share with others. The world of Dasein is a with-world. Being-in is being-with others. The innerworldly being-in-itself of others is Dasein-with (Heidegger, 2010, 115-116).

In describing the ontological character of being-with Heidegger states 'being-with existentially determines Dasein even when an 'other' is not factually present and perceived' (Ibid, 117). Heidegger himself warns us against conflating Dasein-with and being-with. Being-with is understood as the fundamental structure of Dasein but Dasein-with is a factual situation the possibility of which lies entirely on the ontological character of Dasein as a being-with. Accordingly, 'the existential-ontological' meaning contained in the statement 'Dasein is

essentially a being-with' ought to be isolated from the 'factual-ontic meaning that the word Dasein-with connotes. Nonetheless, the latter is possible merely because of the necessary character of the former. In his own words, 'Being-with is an attribute of one's own Dasein. Dasein-with characterizes the Dasein of others in that it's freed for a being-with by the world of that being-with. Only because it has the essential structure of being-with, is one's own Dasein encounterable by others as Dasein-with' (Ibid, 118).

Dasein's being-withness delineates the extent to which its relationality is central to its existence. The existence of other Daseins is not a problem for Heidegger. Unlike transcendental philosophy which characterizes 'the other' as a mind attached to a body, Heidegger did not need to account for the existence of others in so far as 'the world is one I share with the other'. This essentially social character of Dasein has compelled Blattner to refer to Heidegger's position as 'ontological communitarianism' as opposed to the political and ethical communitarianisms of Charles Taylor and Alasdair MacIntyre.

'Others are not encountered by grasping and discriminating beforehand one's own subject initially objectively present, from other subjects also present... As opposed to the theoretically concocted explanations of the presence of others, which easily urge themselves upon us, we must hold fast to the phenomenal fact that they are encountered in the surrounding world (Heidegger, 2010, 116). Cartesian ego, as well as the Kantian transcendental subject, can easily confuse other people with things to the extent that the objective presence of both entities is inferred from the knowing subject. On the contrary, the essential structure of Dasein as a being-with effectively precludes such confusion- whereas Dasein's encounter with other Daseins takes the form of 'concernful engagement', other entities are merely taken care of.

Even in behaviors and attitudes where the other is treated callously-as if he were a thing-this "as if" can never completely conceal the ontological difference between things and persons experienced in every encounter with other Dasein(Irene,2013, 144). The distinction Heidegger draws between things and persons is one of the most important aspects of Heidegger's analysis of Dasein. The ontological difference existing between Dasein and things determines the relation between human beings. The far reaching consequences of the ethico-political distinction, which is of titanic importance for understanding the inter-subjective potential of Heidegger's

conception of freedom, has been discussed in the previous parts. For now it suffices to say that being-with provides the ontological basis for Dasein's encounter with the other.

Instances in which our indifference toward others may seem to be the same as the indifference felt for objects-or simply a "negligible variation" thereof-are in fact radically, essentially distinct modes of being. There is a fundamental difference in kind between intraworldly beings and world-expressing Dasein (Ibid).Occurrences in which our indifference with regards to others might appear to be equivalent to the aloofness felt for objects- are basically particular methods of being. The basic distinction in kind between 'intraworldly beings and world-expressing' Dasein is manifested through the decisive role 'care' plays in the ontological status of the latter. In other words, Heidegger's conception of being-with as a formal structure of Dasein underpins the ethico-political concept of solidarity.

As Heidegger argues, there is no route from the subjective meaning-conferring acts of an isolated subject to the constitution of a genuinely inter-subjective, public world (Lafont in Dreyfus, 2005, 283). Unlike Heidegger for whom 'the lived context within which things are encountered is the source of meaning, the Cartesian-Kantian-Husserlian tradition takes transcendental subjectivity, to be the source of all meaning-giving' (Sheehan in Dreyfus and Wrathall, 2005, 197). The possibility of inter-subjective relation is foreclosed by the essentially isolated transcendental/autonomous ego.

Dasein's world is essentially a public world, accessible to others as well as itself (Inwood, 1997, 55). 'Others can actually be there with me, as well as be absent and missing, only insofar as I am already, in my own being, constituted by "being-with' (Heidegger, 2010, 120).

'By introducing the idea that Being-with is part of the way in which we perceive the world, Heidegger neatly avoids the two misguided approaches towards the question of the other-treating it as an object to which I contrast myself and seeing it as a member of a species to which I also belong' (Russow, 1980, 135). The abandonment of the subject-object distinction has wide-ranging consequences for the analysis of intersubjectivity. But as we shall see in the subsequent sections, the primary significance of this dissolution lies in the successful elimination of the biggest obstacle in the formulation of an appropriate conception of freedom.

The destruction of traditional western ontology that Heidegger is after does not ignore other aspects of the tradition. In fact Heidegger's criticism of Descartes explicitly indicates that the epistemological tradition is as much responsible, if not more, for the forgetting of the question of being. As we saw in the first chapter Descartes reduced the world into 'a collection of present-at-hand entities' when he embarked upon his ill-fated dichotomization of the world into subject and object. As such the understanding of reality in general and the understanding of the meaning of being in particular required, inter alia, ousting epistemology from its self-proclaimed position of preeminence.

Unlike Heidegger who conceives of the human way of being as essentially conditioned the Western philosophical tradition has often presupposed that the human subject can in some way transcend the material realm upon which it fixes its gaze. (Mulhall, 2005, 60). In the previous section I have tried to indicate how Descartes' analysis of the relationship between man and the world fails to provide a correct description of reality. It's important to note also that the objectification process (which is the necessary outcome of Cartesian philosophy) is not in principle limited to things in the world. It's rather destined to be extended to human beings albeit in some cases the humanness of these humans has been qualified. To put it differently, the distortion in reality Descartes involuntarily, we might suppose, endorsed has greatly affected human relationships.

Heidegger's all too well known objective- addressing the question of the meaning of being- has led him to the analysis of Dasein which in its turn called for the exposition of being-with as an element of the formal structure of Dasein. However, it's interesting to note that the idea of being-with supplies the necessary resource for rectifying the damage on the relationship between human beings inflicted by the Cartesian tradition.

Heidegger's distinction between authentic and inauthentic forms of being-with allows us to grasp the attempt at remedying this erroneous depiction of human reality. He contends:

*'Concern has two extreme possibilities. It can, so to speak, take the other's 'care' away from him and put itself in his place in taking care, it can leap in for him. Concern takes over what is to be taken care of for the other. The other is thus displaced, he steps back so that afterwards, when the matter has been attended to,*

*he can take it over as something finished and available or disburden himself of it completely. In contrast to this, there is the possibility of a concern which does not so much leap in for the other as leap ahead of him in his existentiell potentiality-of-being, not in order to take 'care' away from him, but rather to authentically give it back as such. This concern helps the other to become transparent to himself in his care and free for it' (2010, 118-119).*

The first kind of concern- leaping in is characterized by the relationship between a Dasein and a thing (the thing which supposedly became an issue for another Dasein). Accordingly the relationship evinces a denial of the other's subjectivity although it's camouflaged as 'care'. It needs to be pointed out that the relationship is a disguised form of subject-object relation which Heidegger labels as 'inauthentic being-with'. On the contrary, in leaping ahead the other Dasein is free in his being i.e. 'it is directed not towards the things with which another is concerned, but towards the other's own way of existing' (Polt, 1999, 61). In the subsequent sections I shall expound on the ethico-political implications of the treatment of human beings through the first kind of concern- referred to by Heidegger as 'leaping in'. An experience which is capable of revealing the other's subjectivity cannot take the form of a relationship between a subject and its epistemic object, for this kind of object-orientation would preclude the other appearing in experience as a subject (Mcmullin, 2013, 66). This was precisely what the western epistemological tradition had fixed its gaze on. If the relation between persons is to be articulated in such a way that it reflects the ontological structure fundamental to what it means to be human then the shift from a 'leaping in' kind of concern to a 'leaping ahead' is crucial.

Before examining the centrality of this shift for the formulation of an ontology of freedom, it's essential to analyze 'care' as the structure of Dasein.

### **5.1.3. Care as the Structure of Dasein**

Care is the term Heidegger employs to explain the unity of Dasein's existence. The existential structures I have examined in the previous sections make sense only in light of this essential structure of Dasein.

'Care is the Being of Dasein: without Care, no Being-there. Care is manifest in all understanding, from the intensely practical to the most purely theoretical. Dasein is not fundamentally the

rational animal, not basically the ego cogito, not primarily a knower. What is most fundamental to Dasein's Being is caring: Dasein is the being for whom things matter' (Melchert, 2019, 673). When Heidegger alludes to the reasons for choosing to dwell on Dasein in his quest for the meaning of being he says 'Dasein is a being for whom its own being is an issue'. This deceptively simple reference to what is mattering in Dasein's existence is the knot which ties the essentially worldliness and coexistence of Dasein.

Taking care of things is a character of being which being-with cannot have as its own, although this kind of being is a being toward beings encountered in the world, as is taking care of things. The being to which Dasein is related as being-with does not, however, have the kind of being of useful things at hand; it is itself Dasein. This being is not taken care of, but is a matter of concern (Heidegger, 2010, 118). Although dealing with things is a form of relation which Dasein may, from time to time, exhibit, it does not actually capture the mode of relation that Dasein may have with other Daseins. The being to which Dasein is connected as being-with doesn't have the sort of being of things ready-to-hand; it is itself Dasein. As a result, this relation can only be explained through concern as opposed to taking care.

Since being-in-the-world is essentially care, being-together-with things at hand could be taken as 'taking care' of them, while being-with the Dasein-with of others encountered within the world could be taken as concern (Heidegger, 2010, 186). Concern is the actualization of care as a possible way of being-in-the-world. Being-there concerns itself with activities that it performs and things that it uses. As the relation between being-there and the things that it encounters within the world, concern is characterized by circumspection (Schalow and Denker, 2010, 85).

Since "Being-in-the-world is essentially care", care is manifested even in moments that we would ordinarily describe as "carefree" or "careless": I am ahead of myself, already in the world, and at home amid entities, even when I am daydreaming, having fun, driving recklessly or calmly meditating (Polt, 1999,79). It's crucial to see the distinction between Heidegger's conception of care and the conventional narrow sense of the term which nowadays has come to be regarded as a 'female ethic'. While the latter specifically refers to the attachment (love) one has to something which exists outside of itself, Heidegger's conception does not necessarily imply affection although its presence is also not entirely occluded.

The formal existential totality of the ontological structural whole of Dasein must therefore be grasped in the following structure: the being of Dasein means: being-ahead-of-itself-being-already-in-(the-world-) as being-amidst (intraworldly encountering entities). This being fulfills the meaning of the title care, which is used in a purely ontological and existential way (Heidegger, 2010, 186). By explicitly aligning the meaning of care with its ontological and existential connotations, he's making an attempt to rule out any allusion to the ethical import of the term- an attempt which fortunately, as we shall see in the next chapter, is not an entire success.

Heidegger attacked the primacy that Husserl attributed to theory over lived experience and to the pure transcendental ego over what Heidegger at this point was calling the "historical ego" and the "ego of the situation (Sheehan, 2015, 123). In calling our attention to the situatedness of the ego, Heidegger is not only rejecting the undue emphasis given to the theoretical but by stressing the priority of the practical he's also pointing to the fundamental structure of Dasein i.e. temporality. As he says, Dasein is care and temporality is the structure of care. His ontology of human Dasein aims at demonstrating that temporality is the only horizon within which we understand the meanings of Being (Kearney, 2005, 35). Hence the analysis of Dasein can only be fully grasped by delving into the deeper structure of being.

Temporality is the ontological meaning of care and its original condition of possibility. The basic constitution of care can only be grounded in temporality (Schalow and Denker, 2010, 79). As such care has three structures: '[1] ahead-of-itself- representing the future [2] Being-already-in-(the-world)- involves the past [3] Being-alongside (entities encountered within-the-world)- involves the present' (Inwood, 1997, 91-92). Dasein's situatedness is manifested through its temporality. Heidegger makes use of the word "Facticity" to explain the being-thereness of Dasein; it's the designation he used for 'the character of the being of "our" "own" Dasein' or to put it differently it explains the facts about our being. Accordingly, thrownness which illustrates the second structure of care is our facticity.

The upshot of all this is that each of the three fundamental elements of Dasein's being (existence, facticity, and falling) is grounded in an aspect of time (past, present, future), and this is meant to shed light on the intrinsic unity of care (Blattner in Dreyfus and Wrathall, 2005, 312).

Another way in which Heidegger lays the ground for historical ontology is by his allusion to the contingency of the relation between Dasein and 'the one'- 'The 'they' is an existential and belongs as a primordial phenomenon to the positive constitution of Dasein. It has, in turn, various possibilities of concretion as a characteristic of Dasein. The extent to which its dominance becomes penetrating and explicit may change historically' (2010, 125). Consequently, Heidegger's original sense of the care structure takes being-with, and not fallenness, as the fundamental existential specific to encountering other Dasein (Irene, 2013, 109). Dasein's relation with another Dasein may appear in the form of 'fallenness' but fallenness unlike being-with is characterized by facticity- first the details of this relation is determined by the specific existential situations which supply the context of the relation and secondly being a representation of Dasein as a being-ahead-of-itself it merely implies the future. On the other hand, being-with which we have analyzed as being the essential component of Dasein's structure has a universal validity which renders it better suited for examining the care structure.

Dreyfus argues that Heidegger's analysis of care can be used to refute cultural relativism since 'there is a common structure to all ways of being human. Every culture is a different self-interpretation, but any self-interpreting way of being has the disclosedness structure called care' (Dreyfus, 1991, 144). Although this is a questionable claim which Heidegger may distance himself from, it should be understood that Heidegger's fundamental ontology is mainly, if not only, interested in analyzing the universal structure of the average everydayness of Dasein. As such he fails to be cognizant of the specific cultural and historical occurrences which shape this structure. So Dreyfus' statement seems to betray a regret aimed at redeeming Heidegger's failure to take Dasein's historicity into consideration.

To do justice to the fact that Dasein is Heidegger's name for us and yet avoid the centrality of human individuals is to see that what is to be studied ultimately is not Dasein but Dasein's way of being (Dreyfus, 1991, 14). Heidegger's determination to decenter human beings has been continually invoked by his critiques to support their claim that Heidegger's philosophy is characterized not so much by freedom as by 'deterministic fatalism'.

The subsequent section examines the various forms that Heidegger's conception of freedom takes in light of the existential analytic of Dasein.

## **5.2. Heidegger's Conception of Freedom**

### **5.2.1. Existential Freedom**

The exclusion of Heidegger from political discussions in general and a discourse on freedom in particular has been the order of the day for longer than it should have been. The years following the publication of *BT* have not brought any change with regard to recognizing the significant role Heidegger can play in overcoming certain political problems. Nevertheless this unfortunate historical mishap is not entirely groundless. Political philosophers through the years have tried to account for this failure by producing various political and philosophical justifications. The political ground which for many years had been taken to be the strongest reason for cutting Heidegger off political conversations pertains to Heidegger's own ill-fated decision to join the National Socialist Party. He did not do himself any favors by aligning himself with such blatant racism. So distancing oneself from Heidegger's thought seemed to many the most honorable thing to do.

When the force of this political ground began to wane through the passage of time, philosophical justifications came to take its place. The lack of explicit reference to freedom or to the political for that matter in his magnum opus has seen Heidegger lose ground in the battle for dominance over the political arena. As Fred Dallmayr explicitly states Heidegger's work is 'devoid of overt political ambitions'. This absence has been misinterpreted by many as the complete nonexistence of political import. Heidegger's unequivocal rejection of any such goal did not help his case either. Furthermore, there is an allegation that Heidegger's thought leaves no room at all for human will or freedom of choice. The chief advocate of this position Habermas claims that Heidegger tends to grant complete primacy to Being and its various disclosures at the expense of freedom thereby relegating human beings to mere 'shepherd and guardian of Being' and human existence to 'a fated or fateful event' (Habermas in Dallmayr, 1984, 209).

It's not the intention of this work to deal with what Dallmayr called superficial issue- the issue of whether Heidegger's involvement in the National Socialist party in anyway impacts his philosophical works (it should however be noted that the issue deserves recognition to the extent that it throws light on the historical Heidegger- since the present work is not interested in the personal correspondences nor in the life of the philosopher, the issue is simply disregarded).

However the more philosophical question of whether Heidegger's work leaves any room for human freedom shall be examined throughout this chapter. The fact that freedom is discussed indirectly in BT has, as we have seen, been one of the reasons for excluding Heidegger from scholarly debate on freedom until recently. There seems to be a general consensus that this is the main ground for the exclusion. In my opinion though there's a far more fundamental reason for ignoring Heidegger from debates on political philosophy. The whole spectrum of Heidegger's philosophy marks a significant departure from traditional western philosophy. The destruction of the history of ontology which Heidegger took to be a prerequisite for the understanding of the question of the meaning of being stands tall among these deviations. However some of his divergences have received less recognition than they actually merit. His approach to freedom, for instance, forms part of the less frequently mentioned but no less significant aspect of Heidegger's departure from traditional philosophy. The dominant conception of freedom which I have discussed in the previous chapters does not only provide us with one alternative among others but most significantly it aims at establishing the framework within which the intelligibility of the notion of freedom is rendered possible. Any discourse on freedom which fails to recognize this minimum requirement runs the risk of unintelligibility. This is exactly the risk that Heidegger had to take for rejecting the Kantian conception of freedom. Consequently, Heidegger's radical departure from the conception of freedom as a human property has resulted in the erroneous conclusion that Heidegger's work lacks any political significance. But the truth is Heidegger's work is 'encumbered by a heavy political baggage' and the question of freedom appears to be one of his chief preoccupations. Hence a strong case can be made for defending Heidegger's insightful treatment of freedom.

Freedom takes different but complementary forms in Heidegger: potentiality-for-being, epistemological indeterminacy and authenticity. I shall make a brief discussion of these forms before turning to Heidegger's unique contribution to the discourse on freedom which I would argue underlies the conceptions of what can be called 'second order' conceptions.

#### **5.2.1.1. Freedom as Potentiality-for-being**

Freedom as potentiality-for-being or what we could call disclosive freedom involves Heidegger's claim that potentiality is embedded within the very structure of Dasein's understanding though this does not necessarily mean that we are actually aware of this potentiality. Rather, Dasein is

“entrapped within its own unawareness of potentiality such that possibilities are foreclosed” (Nichols, 2014, 50). Heidegger calls Dasein’s tendency to eschew the plethora of possibilities open to it ‘falling away’ - a mode of being characterized by Dasein’s entanglement in the mode of the actual. The mode of analysis that defines selfhood only by the actual is a condition of “not-one’s own-ness” as an object away from oneself. Nichols claims ‘the capacity for existential reflection opens up a new space between actuality and potentiality and it is in this space where Heidegger’s conception of freedom has its grounding’ (Ibid, 32). He locates what he calls ‘situated freedom’ in Heidegger’s existential analysis or more specifically in the transition from the actual (factual to use Heidegger’s own word) to the potential.

This transition implies that although we are tied up with the world (as it has been illustrated by Heidegger’s analysis of worldhood) we are not determined by it. However the transition depends on what Heidegger calls ‘understanding’. Existential understanding, which Heidegger has in mind, must be appreciated in light of Dasein’s projection of itself to its possibilities. To the extent that Dasein is not determined by its ‘worldhood’ character it ‘constantly adopts the possibilities of its being’. While prior conceptions of understanding take it to be a mental phenomenon or a cognitive act, what Heidegger labels understanding involves Dasein’s practical understanding which manifests itself in its relation to equipment (ready-to-hand) and other Daseins.

As Heidegger himself puts it ‘Dasein is the possibility of being free for its ownmost potentiality for being’ (2010, 135). Heidegger’s denial of the objective presence of objects can be extended to Dasein’s relation to itself. This is to mean that Heidegger argues that the everyday encounter which Dasein has with objects is not a present-at-hand (a thing) but that of a ready-to-hand (equipment). Accordingly objects form part of the world of Dasein as significance. In a similar vein when Heidegger speaks of understanding he does not mean the cognitive awareness of objects which the Cartesian-Kantian tradition assumed to be objectively present but rather Dasein’s projection of itself as a potentiality for being. Despite the fact that the actual appears to be ontologically higher, understanding happens to be the loci of the possible in so far as the possible requires an awareness of the actual. In other words, ‘the meaning of our existence, of our lives, does not lie only in what we are, but also consists in what we can be, or what we could have been’ (Nichols, 2014, 48).

Potentiality-for-being is understood in terms of Dasein's ability to be- it refers to the fact that Dasein 'is constantly more than it actually is' (Heidegger, 2010, 141). Heidegger rejects any concept of Dasein as a finished or, in principle, finishable self, an integrated whole, or an autonomous entity (Escudero, 2014, 11). So freedom as potentiality-for-being manifests itself in this distancing of ourselves from the objective world (the world of present-at-hand) or in the refusal to be determined by the facts that surround us and in the recognition that they can be surpassed through our understanding of them.

#### **5.2.1.2. Freedom as Epistemological Indeterminacy**

Heidegger uses, in addition to the previous formulation, the notion of freedom to signal what he would call the world's (understood as the totality of this involvement) evasion of Dasein's attempt to formalize and structure it. Nichols (2014, 62) contends that 'our understanding of the world and the self stand in an immanent relationship to the forms of practical involvement that disclose the world to us in the first place' echoing Heidegger's emphasis on the primacy of practical engagement but this time not just subordinating theoretical to the practical but also and most importantly underscoring the epistemological limitations of the former.

No concept or line of inquiry can come before us that is not already within a determinate field of knowledge circumscribed by the form of life or factual conditions of our present ontological condition. However, within this circumscribed realm of intelligibility, there is always some 'play-room'. The event of disclosure reveals a range of possible meaningful modes of being for Dasein (ways of thinking, acting, living). Since it sets out the range, the event is characterized by closure and finitude. However, this does not mean that the event determines what particular modes of being will be actualized by Dasein in any specific historical moment. Dasein always has some "play-room" within the life-world to adopt this or that meaningful choice and actualize it. Heidegger writes: 'Every accounting for things must move within a sphere of what is possible. In accordance with its essence, such grounding always necessarily provides a given range of what is possible. We can see, therefore, that whatever actualized modes of being Dasein enacts will only be a subset within the range of the total possible, even while acknowledging that the range is not exhaustive of all possibilities (and is thus finite). In this sense, the life-world can always be said to have some measure of freedom built into its constitution. This is the final aspect of freedom as epistemological indeterminacy (Ibid, P 64). It is argued here that freedom

originally names the condition and feature of world-disclosure that permits the ever-present possibility of transformation. This ontological characterization of freedom as epistemological indeterminacy is understood in terms of 'indeterminacy, contingency, and non-closure in the historical presencing of a life-world' (Ibid, 16).

Being's tendency to evade Dasein's attempt to know it fully can also be directed towards the claim of scientific knowledge to have not only a fuller and complete knowledge of the world and human beings but also that other forms of knowledge are incapable of such knowledge in so far as they lie outside the realm of scientific knowledge- such epistemological determinacy does not only perpetrate what Santos calls 'epistemic injustice' against those that are situated out of the knowledge realm of scientific knowledge but it also obscures the finitude of human nature which is the cornerstone of the ontological conception of freedom.

By reducing Dasein's modes of being to mere 'knower', the epistemological tradition has confined Dasein's possibilities. The epistemological determinacy which I have already alluded to does not only apply to the world which, by being an object of knowledge, depends on the range of possibilities granted to it by the subject. On more abstract level it also applies to 'the subject' whose mode of being cannot exceed its actuality.

Heidegger's innovative analysis of our fundamental relation with the world has led him to the conclusion that our experience is characterized primarily by practical relation. This conclusion gives rise to another formulation of freedom- freedom as epistemological indeterminacy. Epistemological indeterminacy refers to 'the refusal of the world to be reduced to a determinant perspective or system of thought knowable once and for all' (Ibid, 60). It stands opposed to traditional Western Philosophy's ambitious endeavor to exhaust the whole spectrum of the world's as well as Dasein's experience. Husserl explains it in his 'Experience and Judgment' where he claims that 'the world is constituted by transcendental subjectivity as a pre-given world that is not a pure world of experience, but a world determined and determinable in itself with exactitude, a world in which any individual entity is given beforehand in a perfectly obvious way as in principle determinable in accordance with the methods of exact science' (Hill in Tymieniecka, 2009, 10). Unlike the potentiality-for-being conception we discussed in the foregoing section, in epistemological indeterminacy freedom is grounded in 'the infiniteness of the finite'.

### 5.2.1.3. Freedom as Authenticity

The authentic/inauthentic distinction Heidegger makes in 'Being and Time' is another implicit reference to freedom. I may be overwhelmed by the actual situations I find myself in and fall in line with it by responding merely to general situations in such a way that it reduces me to the status of the objectively present I mentioned previously.

Heidegger's application of the notion of 'inauthenticity' is at odds with the use of the word by professed existentialists like Jean Paul Sartre for whom the word takes an ethical connotation in the sense of leading a wrong or erroneous way of life (Sartre's 'mauvaise foi' is a good example). In Heidegger's parlance inauthenticity is understood in light of 'the they'. To be more precise, Dasein's relation to 'the they' determines the authenticity or otherwise of Dasein's mode of being. As such Heidegger's use of this typically existential word like 'authenticity' is existential bereft of any ethical import. Nonetheless, everydayness is an indifferent form of existence not because authenticity and inauthenticity are themselves non-evaluative but simply because in its average everyday mode Dasein is neither especially authentic nor inauthentic, neither "owning up" and gaining a proper sense of itself nor "disowning" itself and losing its proper self-understandingworld (Lafont in Dreyfus, 2005, 286). Average everydayness is the ordinary everyday foundation out of which Dasein should arise as understandable to itself in a specific way. Yet, the worth impartiality of normal ordinariness isn't equivalent to that of the qualification among credibility and inauthenticity comprehended as the contrast between my 'first-person relation to myself and my second- and third-person relations to others, or to myself as another'. Accordingly by equating authenticity with freedom Heidegger is not making any judgments concerning the relative worth of lives (since fallenness is a constitutive character of Dasein, it's essentially inauthentic) he's rather pointing out the small play-room within which Dasein is capable of owning its life.

It is clear that human life is a process, change, and becoming. To be an authentic self is to elect those specific possibilities which are uniquely one's own. Authenticity requires that one be just who one already is: finite transcendence (Esucdero, 2014, 10). Regardless of the absence of universal meaning for life which Heidegger shares with other existentialist philosophers, he contends that there's a small play room which allows Dasein to respond to the unique situation it

finds itself in rather than merely doing what one does or simply complying with the dictates of 'the they'.

I adhere to Joan Stambaugh's translation of 'Das Man' as 'the they' rather than Dreyfus' 'the one' because the former, despite its ambiguity, is much more intelligible to an English reader. However, the use of the expression 'the they' must be approached with discretion to the extent that its common denotation which includes all others except the 'I', runs counter to Heidegger's intention. He says "'others'" does not mean everybody else but me- those from whom the I distinguishes itself. Others are, rather, those from whom one mostly does not distinguish oneself, those among whom one also is' (2010, 115). Still further he relates 'the they, which is nothing definite and which all are, though not as a sum, prescribes the kind of being of everydayness' (Ibid, 123). Hence we can clearly see that 'the they' does not exclude 'the I' rather its marked importance lies in the very fact that 'the I' is part of that existential structure which is responsible for its 'leveling down'. Rather than being a specific social group (like cultural, religious or any other such group) to which Dasein belongs 'the they' refers to the characteristic within Dasein to depersonalize itself—to see oneself as essentially determined by things which are not "one's own" (Nichols, 2014, 53). 'By opposing Kant's conception of authentic freedom as the autonomous self-determination of the will guided by the moral law, Heidegger attempts to retrieve the meaning of authentic freedom as it reveals itself as the constitutive nature of the pre-thematic unity of theoretical and practical reason through resoluteness' (Nichols, 2000, 4).

Anticipation reveals to Dasein its lostness in the they-self, and brings it face to face with the possibility to be itself, primarily unsupported by concerned taking care of things, but to be itself in passionate anxious freedom toward death which is free of the illusions of the they, factual, and certain of itself ( Heidegger, 2010, 255). By capitulating to the dictates of the 'they' but without getting stuck in it, inauthentic Dasein tries not to claim its own life. On the other hand, resoluteness (authentic being) is conceived of as an independence from the 'they' not in a manner which requires one to detach oneself from one's social embeddedness (which is not an option because of Dasein's essential structure), but instead in such a way that one is able to respond to the unique situations that constitute the various ways of being that one's socio- cultural context makes accessible. In looking toward the future for various ways to be anticipatory resoluteness represents freedom as an authentic being.

However much elaborate and intricate the discussion of the aforementioned forms of freedom in BT might be, the basic fact that they exhibit a narrower conception of freedom remains the same. These forms can, with good reason too, be accused of being mere reformulations of the traditional conception which we have examined previously. However we need to state what is clearly lacking in the account of all previous notions of freedom (the above three formulations included)- that they rest on a more radical and fundamental understanding. It should also be pointed out that despite the implicit references to freedom we find in BT the notion of freedom which many claim is missing from the earlier Heidegger cannot be worked out without examining his later works especially his 'Lectures on Schelling', 'Building, Dwelling and Thinking' and 'The Essence of Truth'.

### **5.2.2. The Ontology of Freedom- Freedom as 'Letting beings be'**

Like his predecessors Heidegger's conception of freedom follows his analysis of human nature. This is to mean that he's interested in what can be expressed as 'an attempt to uncover and describe what human beings are in their most fundamental or ontologically basic condition. He thus hopes to describe Human Being as Human Being is "in itself," (Dickerson, 283). It's by examining this description (which we have analyzed in the foregoing section) that we can appreciate the radical nature of his conception of freedom. The explanation of Dasein's fundamental condition involves the analysis of its relation to the self.

The centrality of the question of Dasein's relation with itself to Heidegger's thought cannot be overstated. Though this question has been lingering around since Socrates' urge 'know thyself', how we define its place in Heidegger's thought depends on our articulation of what Escudero called 'freedom from traditional prejudices' (2014, 6). An authentic understanding of the self requires coming to terms with the fact that 'this first-person givenness of experiential phenomena entails a built-in self-reference, a primordial experiential self-referentiality. This first-person givenness, implicit in any experience, makes up the core of what is called "minimal self"' (Ibid, 9).

Since traditional western philosophy characterized the human subject as one capable of transcending the social and cultural milieu within which it's located, self referentiality did not necessarily imply reference to the other. On the contrary, in Heidegger's thought reference to the

other is inextricably intertwined with reference to the self. Hence the understanding of the self is simply the understanding of the self as being-in-the-world and as being-with. To further strengthen this position Heidegger points out that 'human life involves a continual self-interpretation from within a specific and limited historical context. Thus, the real "subject" is not an abstract and purely formal ego which lives outside of time and change, but the concrete and historically situated living human being who is always engaged in trying to give meaning to its own life (Ibid, 10).

No analysis of Dasein can be complete without taking the everyday meaningful world of significance into consideration. Unlike traditional philosophy according to which the world is inferred from my existence, in Heidegger's thought we start with the world- in fact we're dealing with a being-in-the-world. The proper articulation of this essential structure of Dasein is of massive importance in the explication of a radical conception of freedom i.e. the notion of freedom which deviates from the one in modern philosophical discussion.

The term "freedom" used in modern philosophical discussions tends to denote a human property and capacity for spontaneous initiative divorced or severed from ontological moorings (Dallmayr, 1984, 204). The dominant conception of freedom is characterized, inter alia, by oblivion to the essential relation between being and freedom. On the other hand, Heidegger's conception of freedom rests on the basic premise that 'the question of freedom is ultimately the question of being in as much as freedom is a way of being'. This explains, partly at least, the rationale behind the unconventional character of Heidegger's notion of freedom. Moreover, the unconventional character of his conception of freedom is manifested through the fact that this conception can be reduced neither to arbitrary choice nor to fatalism (Dallmayr, 1984, 213). After vindicating Heidegger from accusations of decisionism and fatalism, Dallmayr claims that these misrepresentations can be attributed to the unorthodox character of his conception of freedom- by which he simply means that Heidegger's conception of freedom proved to be unintelligible primarily because it was unKantian. It would not, however, be completely erroneous if we assent, partly of course, to these accusations to the extent that Heidegger's conception of freedom does not embrace arbitrary choice.

The distinction between these two models of freedom hinges on the disparate ways they portray Dasein's relation with other beings. 'Dasein transcends other entities and projects a world in

which they lie at a critical distance from Dasein itself. Thus Dasein is (unlike God) finite, in the midst of beings which it allows to be themselves, and thus encounters (Inwood, 1997, 94). However, the transcendence of Dasein Heidegger alludes to must be starkly distinguished from Husserl's transcendental subjectivity. The latter rises in such a way that it becomes a worldless, ahistorical subject. The skillful dealing which characterizes the relation between Dasein (as being-in-the-world) and equipments (as ready-to-hand) is a form of freedom understood as 'letting beings be'. Since other Daseins do not have ready-to-hand as their being 'letting them be' does not constitute in their skillful manipulation. Unlike these ready-to-hand things in the world, existence happens to be our way of being which according to Dreyfus means 'taking a stand in our being'. Accordingly, freedom understood as 'letting beings be' must be interpreted as allowing other Daseins be what they can be.

Traditionally freedom is viewed as one value among others, perhaps the chief value but all the same it's treated as one of the most valuable treasures of the human kind. Yet 'every valuing, even where it values positively, is a subjectivizing. It does not let beings: be. Rather, valuing lets beings: be valid-solely as the objects of its doing' (Heidegger in Thiele, 1994, 284). His rejection of valuation- of being or of God or freedom for that matter- is premised on his firm conviction that valuation is a disguised form of subjectivation. So instead of characterizing freedom as 'license to do' he equates it with 'participation in the revealment of what-is-as-such'. Hence, 'viewed as Dasein's ontological core, being free is neither imposed on Dasein as an external fate or destiny, nor can it be arbitrarily chosen or discarded' (Dallmayr, 1984, 214). Freedom is generally described as a 'disclosive letting-be'.

Freedom as a mode of being is characterized by the rejection of both 'deterministic fatalism' and 'arbitrary decisionism'. As such 'freedom signifies not so much an exercise of free will or the willful enactment(or omission) of particular deeds, but rather a mode of being free for the disclosure or unconcealment of Being' (Ibid, 215). In contradistinction to the Kantian conception of freedom which treats it as the property of the will, the ontology of freedom conceives of freedom as a mode of being- as a practical engagement. In other words, freedom is defined as 'a mode of being free for the disclosure or unconcealment of Being' or to put it differently 'freedom for disclosure in an open region lets beings be what they are; freedom reveals itself as

letting beings be'- freedom in this sense is nothing other than emancipatory care' (Ibid, 215-216).

But Heidegger is cognizant of the fact that this conception is open to two diametrically opposed interpretations. On the one hand, "to let something be" means we do not touch it again, to let something be has here the negative sense of letting it alone, of renouncing it, of indifference and even neglect. However, the phrase required now — to let beings be — does not refer to neglect and indifference but rather the opposite. To let be is to engage oneself with beings' (Heidegger, 1961, 6). Hence our ordinary sense of 'letting something be' does not capture what Heidegger means by 'freedom as letting be'. 'The resoluteness toward itself first brings Dasein to the possibility of *letting others who are with it 'be'* in their ownmost potentiality-of-being, and also discloses that potentiality in concern which leaps ahead and frees' (emphasis added) (Heidegger, 2010, 285). Letting beings be does not mean leaving others alone much less ignoring them, after all Dasein is care and cannot be characterized by the absence of concern. What it actually comes down to is 'to engage oneself with beings'. 'We are called upon to be the shepherds of Being indicates that we find our freedom not in a forgetful mastery but in a mindful, interrogative caretaking, in concernfully and questioningly letting the Being of beings be. Freedom is therefore most primordially manifest in our care-full being-in-the-world-with-others' (Thiele, 1994, 283). The lack of concern or heed implied by the ordinary conception of 'letting be' is the very antithesis of what Heidegger means by it since Dasein's being is care understood as 'anticipatory resoluteness'. After all, 'it is from the authentic being a self of resoluteness that authentic being-with-one-another first arises' (Dallmayr, 1984, 215).

On the other hand, 'freedom as letting beings be' may also be misconstrued as 'the mere management, preservation, tending, and planning of the beings in each case encountered or sought out' (Ibid). Nevertheless 'to let beings be as the beings which they are means to engage oneself with the open region and its openness into which every being comes to stand, bringing that openness, as it were, along with itself' (Ibid). The manipulation and control of 'the other' which forms a crucial part of the causal conception of freedom is entirely absent from the understanding of freedom in terms of a 'letting be of beings'. In Heidegger's own words freedom:

*is not merely what common sense is content to let pass under this name: the caprice, turning up occasionally in our choosing, of inclining in this or that direction. Freedom is not mere absence of constraint with respect to what we can or cannot do. Nor is it on the other hand mere readiness for what is required and necessary (and so somehow a being). Prior to all this (“negative” and “positive” freedom), freedom is engagement in the disclosure of beings as such. Disclosedness itself is conserved in ek-sistent engagement, through which the openness of the open region, i. e., the “there” [“Da”], is what it is (Ibid, 7).*

Human freedom signifies now no longer: freedom as a property of man, but the reverse: man as a possibility of freedom. Human freedom is a freedom which invades and sustains man, thereby rendering man possible (Dallmayr, 1984, 220). The possibility of freedom does not depend on the freedom of the will. On the contrary freedom of the will is possible because human Dasein is construed as freedom or a ‘mode of being free’. ‘Man is at best a property of freedom. Freedom is the comprehensive and pervasive dimension of being in whose ambiance man becomes man in the first place. This means: the essence of man is grounded in freedom’ ((Dallmayr, 1984, 223). One may infer from Heidegger’s critique of the causal conception of freedom’s transcendental character- that the question of freedom extends beyond the bounds of man.

‘The genuine or unperverted exercise of freedom is shown to be a persistent tendency toward human reconciliation and peace. Instead of vouchsafing individual isolation and selfishness, freedom in this view is the essential grounding of human solidarity- just as solidarity properly construed denotes a reciprocal effort of liberation or a mutual “letting-be”’ (Ibid, 1984, 228). In stark contrast to the Western philosophical tradition which treats human beings as only contingently possessed of a world, for Heidegger, no sense attaches to the idea of a human being existing apart from or outside a world. Accordingly, any notion of human solidarity which still carries the subject-object relation, as the conception of freedom as freewill does, will prove to be nothing more than mere rhetoric, albeit a very dangerous one. Since freedom as ‘letting beings be’ works by denying the very possibility of an isolated and worldless Dasein, it lays the foundation for a symmetrical relation between human beings

*Because truth is in essence freedom, historical man can, in letting beings be, also not let beings be the beings which they are and as they are. Then*

*beings are covered up and distorted. Semblance comes to power. In it the non-essence of truth comes to the fore. However, because ek-sistent freedom as the essence of truth is not a property of man; because on the contrary man eksists and so becomes capable of history only as the property of this freedom; the non-essence of truth cannot first arise subsequently from mere human incapacity and negligence (Heidegger, 1961, 8).*

Fundamental questioning which is implied by Heidegger's statement 'Dasein is a being for whom its own being is an issue' essentially precludes the activity of mastery which as we have been analyzing so far constitutes the essence of the causal conception of freedom. One may wonder, however, how mastery (of oneself as well as of others) impedes the possibility of fundamental questioning provided that every human activity (which includes mastery) uncovers being. The problem Heidegger identifies with the activity of mastery is that it discloses being only as forgotten, as covered up which comes down to saying that it's no longer subject to fundamental questioning.

Letting-be entails the formation of dynamic worldly relationships, relationships all the more dynamic because they are no longer constrained by the limitations of a subject/object dichotomy (Thiele, 1994, 284). By dissolving the subject-object distinction Heidegger took a giant stride towards removing that big impediment devised by transcendental philosophy and stood in the way of an original inter-subjective relation.

According to Maurice Merleau Ponty, 'for the 'other' to be more than an empty word, it is necessary that my existence should never be reduced to my bare awareness of existing, but that it should take in also the awareness that one may have of it, and thus include my incarnation in some nature and the possibility, at least, of a historical situation' (Ponty, XIV). Heidegger is not entirely unaware of this historical situation. Despite his reluctance to state this 'situation' clearly, his critique of transcendental philosophy goes a long way to unraveling the parochial relation inherent in the dominant conception of freedom.

Heidegger has, albeit belatedly, come to realize that Dasein is not ahistorical. In explaining his famous turn 'die Kehre' he has professed that he has come 'to think being historically'.

Moreover, in 'On the essence of truth' he declares that 'Man does not "possess" freedom as a property. At best, the converse holds: freedom, ek-sis tent, disclosive Da-sein, possesses man — so originally that only it secures for humanity that distinctive relatedness to being as a whole as such which first founds all history. Only ek-sistent man is historical. Nature has no history' (Heidegger, 1961, 6).

The historicity of Dasein has already been suggested even in BT where Dasein is analyzed in light of its temporality and spatiality. In fact the way he analyzed our mode of being (Dasein's I mean) as existence indicates a historical element in his fundamental ontology. By his own admission, 'a clarification of the fundamental ontological questions must proceed via an investigation of Dasein's understanding of being, since this is what defines the horizon within which worldly beings can be. Being is investigated "in so far as it stands within the intelligibility of Dasein' (Zahavi in Moran, 2008, 673). Being itself is historicized through Dasein. Fundamental ontology must necessarily be historical to the extent that 'the working out of the question of being requires the analysis of Dasein'.

As he famously declares 'Dasein is care and the structure of care is temporality'. The fact that Dasein's being is care and care is articulated only in terms of temporality reveals the essentially historical nature of Dasein. Heidegger also addresses the importance of indicating the spatiality of Dasein- a unique kind of spatiality which he calls 'insiderness'. He urges us to be wary of the danger of misinterpreting Dasein's character as 'being-in-the-world' as nonspatiality. However, by his own admission, Heidegger is interested in doing fundamental ontology which essentially occludes the possibility of a historical analysis of Dasein. When we argue, as I did above, that Heidegger recognizes the historicity of Dasein it does not mean that Heidegger has done or was doing historical ontology in BT albeit that possibility has not yet been ruled out. It's only if we take this significant point seriously that we can come to terms with his admission, after *die Kehre* of course, that mood is epochal. When he speaks of anxiety as peculiar to the modern world which he characterizes as technological he is contradicting himself or at least distancing himself from a universal characterization of Dasein in general and his moods in particular. Hence if we endorse the claim that Heidegger's earlier works especially BT is not oblivion of Dasein's historicity we must mean in very general terms – in so general terms that the only positive

assertion we can make about it may be that it's more historical than the anonymous transcendental subject.

'Being-in-the-world indicates that we are essentially involved in a context- we have a place in a meaningful whole where we deal with other things and people. The particular content of this context will vary from person to person, and from culture to culture' (Polt, 1999, 46). The fact that the world provides not just the context within which Dasein's actions are possible but that it leaves some room for the specificity and historicity of Dasein is beyond dispute. However, Heidegger's belated realization of the epochality of Dasein (not just its historicity- its place in time and space) does not rescue his treatment of Dasein, in BT of course, as a universal subject in much the same way as Husserl's treatment of the transcendental subject. Yet in Heidegger's defense it can be said that his fundamental ontology is the means rather than the goal of his ultimate objective namely the question of the meaning of being. In addition, to the extent that it's drawn as a broad context within which Dasein is intelligible Heidegger's analysis of Dasein as a Being-in-the-world does not occlude the specific cultural or historical form that this Being-in-the-worldness might take.

Despite the successful articulation of our basic way of being in the world, which is what Heidegger is after, and despite his effective critique of the causal conception of freedom and the relative potency of the alternative he came up with, he left out some important elements that would probably have helped in completing his project. Heidegger's notion of freedom is laudable to the extent that it doesn't allow dasein to ride roughshod over other daseins. However, if 'man is a possibility of freedom and if human freedom is a freedom which invades and sustains man, thereby rendering man possible' then it stands to reason that freedom requires a public space where it can be experienced through an interaction with the Other.

'Being and Time attempted to keep the existential analytic free of privileging any concrete, factual way to be, like Christian or Greek life. There is no suggestion at this point in Heidegger's writings that Greek existence was any more or less "primordial" than Christian existence, no myth of the Great Greek Beginning. On the contrary, both Greek and Christian alike represented "existentiell ideals" upon which the existential analytic drew in order to bring them to the level of ontological formality' (Caputo, 1993, 173). Heidegger has refrained from granting a privileged status to one particular mode of existence in his attempt to break the stranglehold of

the absolutistic philosophy of Kant. Nevertheless or precisely for this reason he has failed to show an express political intent.

In the subsequent part I shall examine Hannah Arendt's attitude towards freedom with the intention of remedying the void left by Heidegger.

The other oversight that Heidegger's philosophy is guilty of pertains to the body. The transcendental tradition from the cogito to consciousness has reduced the human subject to a mind attached to a body- the elimination of the body as I called it in the previous sections characterizes this tradition. For all his criticism of this tradition Heidegger still remains short of an adequate philosophical treatment of the body. Maurice Merleau Ponty's discussion in the subsequent part aims to rectify this unfortunate blemish.

## **PART FOUR- PHENOMENOLOGICAL INTERSUBJECTIVITY**

### **CHAPTER SIX- Two Ways to Complement Heidegger**

#### **6.1.Maurice Merleau-Ponty and the Existential Significance of the Body**

It's clear from the previous discussion that Heidegger recognizes the embeddedness of the subject. His characterization of Dasein in terms of a 'being-in-the-world' seems to imply that Dasein is grounded in the world. However, for all the plaudits that we could lavish upon Heidegger for his successful articulation of the situatedness of Dasein, one may accuse him of failing to complete the project to the extent that he eviscerated the body from his project. The credit for Dasein's embodiment in a concrete body with all its inter-subjective significance has to go to Maurice Merleau- Ponty. To understand Dasein's primordial embeddedness is one thing but it's a completely different project to elucidate the manner by which this local being intercourses with other such beings.

'Being-with' existentially determines Dasein even when an 'other' is not factually present and perceived. The being-alone of Dasein, too, is being-with the world. The other can be lacking only in and for being-with. Being-alone is a deficient mode of being-with, its possibility is a proof for the latter' (Heidegger, 2010, 117). In other words, 'the possibility of being-alone, the fact that I can miss another, reveal a more original togetherness' (Luijpen, 1960, 180). The existential character of Dasein as being-with is the strength of Heidegger's existential analytic of Dasein in so far as the physical presence of the Other is not required to establish the essentially intersubjective nature of Dasein. However, critiques might direct their attack towards this potential Achilles heel. The existential determinateness of Dasein does not necessarily provide a strong evidence to support Dasein's inter-subjectivity primarily because Dasein is deprived of a concrete body through which it experiences the contingent presence of Others. Yet Heidegger is not the first significant philosopher to downplay the role of the body in our interaction with others and with the external world. He's rather the latest in the long line of eminent philosophers who denied the body any meaningful role in our ordinary experience.

Needless to say that the urge to advocate the suppression of the body is not peculiar to the modern epoch, it's not even a significant component of modern philosophy except when it's viewed in light of Cartesian dualism. The ancient Greek philosophers were the chief advocates of

this position. However the denigration of the body in modern philosophy coincided with a historical incident of gargantuan significance- the meeting of the white man with the non-white man. No analysis of the grounds of the elimination of the body from epistemological as well as from the ethico-political world can explain the full implications of the story without taking this incident into consideration. As we have seen in the foregoing parts the elimination of the body from the ethico-political world in general and from considerations of freedom in particular has played a significant part in the successful oppression and subjugation of the non-western members of the human race.

The denigrating attitude towards the body has a long history in Western philosophy- a history which stretches back to the Greeks, at least to Plato's distinction between the rational and the sensuous, the soul and the body. 'Plato spoke of the body as a "prison" for the soul and the body became a symbol for human finitude and dependence. Western man came to identify the body with the female and the natural, i.e., with what is "lower" than the soul. In denying his finitude, patriarchal man attempted to make himself into a god: pure, immortal intellect' (Zimmerman, 1990, 245). The mastery of the self consisted in the subjugation of the bodily by the mental/spiritual. In describing justice as mental health Plato argued that the unjust man (by which he meant one who established the rule of the body over the soul) was characterized by chaos. The description of the body as the source of a 'self-destructive conflict' meant that the just man is just to the extent that she has successfully vanquished the desires that 'flesh is heir to'.

Both idealism and realism, the former by making the external world immanent in me, the latter by subjecting me to a causal action, falsify the motivational relations existing between the external and internal worlds, and make this relationship unintelligible (Ibid, 364). The responses that the history of philosophy has offered to the epistemological problem of how to account for a world which lies beyond and above me have largely been categorized into the idealistic and realistic camps. The failure of these two influential strands of thought to overcome this challenge could be attributed, at least partly, to the dichotomizing structure of Cartesian Cogito.

'The problem of the existential modality of the social is at one with all problems of transcendence. Whether we are concerned with my body, the natural world, the past, birth or death, the question is always how I can be open to phenomena which transcend me, and which

nevertheless exist only to the extent that I take them up and live them' (Ponty, 1996, 363). The problem of transcendence has become the most pressing epistemological problem in the sense that the material world (other minds included) is external to me and regardless of the naïve familiarity with which I relate to it, it remains alien and strange to me. Yet its strangeness requires a familiarity to me i.e. despite its transcendence its existence depends on my relation to it. Similarly, or by extension, the social or the cultural world (to be more Husserlian) does not simply exist as transcendence but it also depends on me. The attempt to prove the objective existence of the world is what Heidegger referred to as 'the scandal of philosophy'.

Nonetheless Heidegger's characterization of Dasein in terms of a being-with should not detract us from discerning the fundamental distinction which exists between my experience of myself and the other's experience of herself. Ponty's contrast of mortality and the social sphere is an endorsement of this distinction 'Just as the instant of my death is a future to which I have not access, so I am necessarily destined never to experience the presence of another person to himself. And yet each other person does exist for me as an unchallengeable style or setting of co-existence, and my life has a social atmosphere just as it has a flavor of mortality' (Ibid, 364).

Unlike Husserl in whose phenomenology one can trace a residue of the dichotomizing structure, Merleau-Ponty, much like Heidegger, tries to grasp the structures of our experience of the world without succumbing to the subject-object dichotomy. 'But whereas Heidegger does little more than mention the problem of embodiment in passing, Merleau-Ponty bases his entire phenomenological project on an account of bodily intentionality and the challenge it poses to any adequate concept of mind (Carman, 1999, 206). The deliberate constitution of the body isn't the result of a mental interaction whose means we could follow back to the establishing demonstrations of an unadulterated 'I'. The body in its perceptual limit simply is the 'I' in its most early stage perspective. Ponty's analysis of the primitive fact of existence in terms of the body unbridles the body by dissolving the seemingly insurmountable rift between mind and body created by transcendental philosophy.

In contrast to modern philosophy for which a human being is viewed as an immaterial soul attached to a body, Merleau-Ponty, thought "we are our body," which is to say, "we are in the world through our body in so far as we perceive the world with our body." In effect, "the body is a natural self and, as it were, the subject of perception (Carman, 1999, 224). Ponty's account of

the body is significant in light of transcendental philosophy's treatment of the body as transient or even worse as superfluous to his being. The body is the medium through which I experience 'the other' and I am experienced as 'the other'.

Our primitive understanding of bodies is therefore rooted in our bodily understanding of ourselves. The bodies of others, too, are intelligible to me not by an analogy I entertain in thought, but through my own spontaneous bodily skills (Ibid, 220). For Merleau-Ponty, then, the body is not an objective reality with which I identify; rather, the attribution of sensations to myself in the first place presupposes my own prior identification with my body (Ibid, 222). Thus Ponty's existential phenomenology discloses the body by stressing its primordially. A primordially implied by Heidegger's discussion of Dasein as temporal but largely inconspicuous throughout his analysis of Dasein.

What might be said about the body? Is that not a distinct, unpreventable 'what' that each person has? Ponty laments the continuation of the tradition to modern philosophy which he accuses of losing sight of 'the perspectivism of our experience' and of regarding our body 'as one of the objects of that world' (1996, 70). For Merleau-Ponty, by contrast, the body forms the permanent background of intentionality at large. The intentional constitution of the body is not the product of a cognitive process whose steps we might trace back to the founding acts of a pure I. Rather, the body in its perceptual capacity just is the 'I' in its most primordial aspect. It is 'my point of view upon the world'.

The body is neither an internal subject nor a fully external object of experience (Carman, 1999, 208). That is to say that the body is an ontological anomaly. My body raises an essentially different sort of problem than the one posed by the 'other's body'. While I can relate to the body of the 'other' as I would relate to any existential object through my consciousness, my body refuses to be classified under the category of external objects of the world to the degree that it's not entirely external or to be more precise to the degree that there's an internal element to it. No philosopher felt the pain of trying to locate the ground upon which the mind attempts to relate to its body more keenly than Rene Descartes. His initial supposition that the mind and the body are two different objects characterized by thinking and extension respectively was bound to lead him to that epistemological impasse he bequeathed to posterior philosophical inquiry; so in a way the problem is his own making.

However, the denial of Descartes' initial position has allowed phenomenologists in general and Ponty in particular to dissolve the problem. 'My body is constantly perceived. It's particularly true that an object is an object only in so far as it can be moved away from me, and ultimately disappear from my field of vision' (Ponty, 1996, 90).

If it's true that I am conscious of my body via the world, it's true for the same reason that my body is a pivot of the world: I know that objects have several facets because I could make a tour of inspection of them, and in that sense I am conscious of the world through the medium of my body (Ibid, 82). This works not only to my relation with equipment the being of which is 'readiness to hand' but also and most importantly to my relation with other human beings whose existence is essential to my very being.

We do not understand ourselves first as pure egos, only then identifying ourselves with the bodies in which we locate our sensations. Rather, by the time we are in a position to ascribe experiences to subjects at all, whether ourselves or others, we already understand them in primitive bodily terms (Carman, 1999, 223). Ponty makes the same claim that Heidegger makes in connection with our interaction with the world and other people i.e. Ponty's identification of the body with the individual is an extension of Heidegger's crucial observation that we are a 'being in the world' and a 'being-with'.

Since for Husserl the body is a noetic achievement of transcendental subjectivity it cannot be expected to constitute intentionality. On the contrary, Merleau Ponty conceives of the body as a primitive constituent of perceptual awareness which forms the permanent background of intentionality. Thus for Merleau Ponty, 'we are in the world through our body, and in so far as we perceive the world with our body. In effect the body is a natural self and, as it were, the subject of perception' (Ibid, 224). The alignment of the individual with the body is an essential step we need to take to laying bare the phenomenological intersubjectivity which we are laboring to understand.

Consciousness has to be conceived no longer as a constituting consciousness, and as it were, a pure being-for-itself, but as a perceptual consciousness, as the subject of a pattern of behavior, as being-in-the-world or existence, for only thus can another appear at the top of his phenomenal body, and be endowed with a sort of locality (Ponty, 1996, 351). Kant's transcendental

philosophy has rid the subject of its body so as to forge a parochial relation between the same and the other. Transcendental phenomenology has maintained this relation by endowing consciousness with a constitutive capacity. So the double-edged task of existential phenomenology requires the rejection of a disembodied consciousness with as much vigor as the rejection of a disembodied subject. After all I am in the world in so far as I am embodied and it's through this embodiment that I can really understand my relation with the Other.

Ponty claims that thought and sensation as such occur only against a background of perceptual activity that we always already understand in bodily terms. Moreover, the body undercuts the supposed dichotomy between the transparency of consciousness and the opacity of objective reality: "the distinction between subject and object is blurred in my body (Ibid, 206). The success of existential phenomenology in liberating the body does not only 'blur the distinction between mind and body' but it also overcomes the subject-object dualism thereby paving the way for an apposite inter-subjective relation. Zimmerman alludes to such prominent philosophers as Michel Foucault, Herbert Marcuse and Max Horkheimer to contend that 'the so-called domination of external nature is an outgrowth of the domination, discipline, and revilement of our own bodily existence' (1990, 245). This is to mean that by setting the record right in the treatment of the body, we can rectify the distorted subject-object relation.

It's through the perception of a human act and another person that the perception of a cultural world could be verified (Ponty, 1996, 348). The existence of other people is a difficulty and an outrage for objective thought' (Ibid, 349). This difficulty arises mainly because of the diametrically opposed qualities 'the other' possesses. On the one hand, the other is a being-in-itself in so far as his body ties him to the world thereby allowing it to form part of the collection of objects lying before me. On the other hand, he posits himself as a being-for-itself to the extent that the other is for himself (consciousness). This is problematic because 'I ought to both to distinguish him from myself, and therefore place him in the world of objects, and think of him as a consciousness' (Ibid). This 'contradictory operation' I am required to perform exists because the transcendental tradition insisted on separating the subject from the world and from other people which ultimately led into an existential impasse.

In so far as I constitute the world, I cannot conceive another consciousness, for it too would have to constitute the world and, at least as regards this other view of the world, I should not be the

constituting agent. Even if I succeeded in thinking of it as constituting the world, it would be I who would be constituting the consciousness as such, and once more I should be the sole constituting agent (Ibid, 350). So once again we are faced with the danger of solipsism- a danger which according to Sartre has not even been overcome by Husserl let alone by the Kantian transcendental tradition: 'Husserl has failed to overcome solipsism to the extent that he measures being by knowledge' (Sartre, 268). Existential phenomenology, on the other hand, renders the very possibility of solipsism dubious at best. Once we dissolve the dichotomic structure imposed by transcendental philosophy and we adopt a phenomenological attitude the possibility of solipsism would depend on whether we can find 'someone who managed to be tacitly aware of his existence without being or doing anything' which is highly unlikely given the fact that, 'existing is being in and of the world' (Ibid, 361).

However the danger of solipsism is not the only challenge that we have to grapple with, it's doubtful if it's even the principal challenge we are facing. The ethico-political challenge seems to me to be the most formidable one – how can I resist the temptation of conceiving the Other as mere thing, as a 'readiness to-hand' or as a 'means to my ends' if I draw the conclusion that 'I am the only constituting consciousness'? As we can gather from our discussion of Heidegger's existential analysis of Dasein existential phenomenology broke out of this existential impasse by making the Other integral to the very being of Dasein.

'Although my consciousness and that of the Other's, working through our respective situations, may contrive to produce a common situation in which they can communicate, it's nevertheless from the subjectivity of each of us that each one projects this 'one and only' world' (Ibid, 356). 'In the absence of reciprocity there's no alter Ego, since the world of the one then takes in completely that of the Other, so that one feels disinherited in favor of the Other' (Ibid, 357). The transcendental subject is immune from the requirement of reciprocity since it objectifies the Other without being in a position to be objectified. It has been transformed into the universal subject or what I call anonymity by the Cartesian-Kantian tradition. Accordingly it stipulates its point of view of the world as the only way through which the world can be experienced as the West did for over four centuries; it has taken in the world of others. So if we are ever to secure an inter-subjective relation between worlds we need to localize the anonymous transcendental subject so as to free it from its oppressive and dominating feature.

As a consequence of this localization all empirical beings ‘escape from every involvement and transcend others in so far as every situation and every other person must be experienced by them in order to exist in their eyes (Ibid, 359)’. This localization reduces us to the degree that we can no longer lay any claim to universality. But it also raises us in so far as it resuscitates us to the position of perceiving beings upon whose experience all existing things depend.

It’s as false to place ourselves in society as an object among other objects, as it is to place society within ourselves as an object of thought, and in both cases the mistake lies in treating the social as an object (Ibid, 362). So a return to the pre-reflective grasp of the social world requires the act of existing and relating to the world (which the sciences have objectified) in our fundamental way of being. This is the world within which processes of objectification are carried out but it’s also the world which is the condition of possibility of experience at all in as much as we are a being-in-the-world. Ponty’s recognition of Heidegger’s analysis of our embeddedness can be appreciated from the following statement:.

*My freedom, the fundamental power which I enjoy of being the subject of all my experiences, is not distinct from my insertion into the world. It’s a fate for me to be free, to be unable to reduce myself to anything that I experience, to maintain in relation to any factual situation a faculty of withdrawal, and this fate was sealed the moment my transcendental field was thrown open, when I was born as vision and knowledge, when I was thrown into the world (Ibid, 360).*

Human beings cannot be reduced to observable phenomena; we are indefinable, we defy the single category and vocabulary which does not capture the range of our experiences. In the spirit of Heidegger Ponty identifies freedom with practice; it cannot be separated from our lived experiences. In contrast to the dominant conception of freedom which conceives of freedom in terms of mastery (the absence of constraints and the ability to do what one wishes to do) Ponty associates freedom with our existence in the world. This relational conception of freedom allows for a wide range of possibilities for interacting with the world.

In so far as freedom is a way of being and to the extent that the world is an essential structure of Dasein through which, nay rather with which it can exist and further since the body is a part of these collection of things which we call world and our way of being is manifested through the

bodily interactions we form with other human beings it can be concluded that the demand for inter-subjectivity which we claimed is implied by a genuine conception of freedom stands in need of a profound understanding of the body.

## 6.2. Hannah Arendt and Political Action

Despite the successful attack existentialism launched against the philosophical tradition, existentialism can still be accused of falling in the same trap that modern philosophy finds itself in. Existentialism grounds its philosophy on the isolated subject in more or less the same way as the Cartesian-Kantian tradition. As such it runs the same risk of solipsism. Heidegger's refusal of the label existentialism could be justified in this particular case in as much as his analysis of Dasein as a 'being-with' takes due cognizance of the essentially pluralistic character of human beings. Yet his conception of freedom which is grounded in this existential analysis has not been fully developed for it stands in need of a space within which freedom can be practiced.

Freedom as 'letting beings be' has been deprived of this space lending support to the critiques of Heidegger who accused him of lacking any political intent. However, Heidegger's conception of freedom is too valuable to be dismissed from the political realm. So instead of denying Heidegger a place in political debates I have decided to supply the missing political element through a critical appropriation of Arendt's discussion of political action.

Despite Heidegger's lucid discussion of freedom which we have analyzed in the previous part, we still have to assent to the charge that freedom requires a space and that Heidegger's largely phenomenological approach has been prevented from providing that space by the not too insignificant existential element contained in the discussion.

Arendt follows in the footsteps of Heidegger in discerning the problem of alterity posed by a conception of freedom.

*In spite of the great influence the concept of an inner, nonpolitical freedom has exerted upon the tradition of thought, it seems safe to say that man would know nothing of inner freedom if he had not first experienced a condition of being free as a worldly tangible reality. We first become aware of freedom or its opposite in our intercourse with others, not in the intercourse with ourselves (1961, 148).*

Arendt has provided us with a profound analysis of the political implications of the causal conception of freedom where she highlighted, inter alia, the significance of the shared, public

space of freedom. That public space is politics. Politics provides ‘a guaranteed public realm, a worldly space for freedom to make its appearance’ (Ibid, 149).

There’s a long tradition in western history of ideas which managed to secure the divorce between freedom and politics. Arendt traces this tradition to Plato and Aristotle whose works glorified the ‘vita contemplativa’ over and against the ‘vita activa’. The tradition reduced freedom to the private sphere by identifying it with the internal state of the individual. In so doing it signaled a break from the political realm.

The dictum ‘freedom begins where politics ends’ became fashionable especially during the liberal days of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries where it was believed that ‘the highest purpose of politics (the end of government) was taken to be the guaranty of security; security in turn, made freedom possible and the word freedom designated a quintessence of activities which occurred outside the political realm’ (Ibid, 149). However the attempt to conceptualize freedom apart from and in contrast with politics is doomed to fail since ‘the raison d’être of politics is freedom and its field of experience is action’ (Ibid, 146).

‘Liberal politics must be concerned almost exclusively with the maintenance of life and the safeguarding of its interests, and liberal freedom gives the bourgeoisie license to produce, consume, and exploit’ (Hiruta, 2019, 27). Although the liberal conception of freedom can be distinguished from ‘the platonic freedom from the city to devote oneself to vita contemplativa and the Christian freedom from secular politics to lead a believer’s life’, they were essentially the same in that all three traditions advocated withdrawal from the political life. The accumulation of wealth is singularly emblematic of liberal freedom in that ‘it channels freedom from politics into the socioeconomic sphere’ (Hiruta, 2019, 27).

The influence of this liberal conception of freedom is far-reaching as it can be attested by the international legal instruments adopted by the UN and the domestic laws of its member nations. In particular it’s essential to look into the spirit which inspired the legislation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Although the document does not provide an explicit definition of freedom, the provisions in particular those which deal with the freedom and rights of human beings are suggestive of the fact that it operates within the aforementioned liberal conception of freedom.

‘This freedom which we take for granted in all political theory and which even those who praise tyranny must still take into account is the very opposite of ‘inner freedom’, the inward space into which men may escape from external coercion and feel free’ (Arendt, 1961, 146). In her refutation of the dominant conception of freedom Arendt underscores the contrast between genuine freedom and freedom as the property of the will. Being animated by the exigencies of inter-subjectivity, Arendt’s discussion of freedom lends great support to Heidegger’s ontological analysis of freedom which we argued is a compelling alternative to the dominant conception of freedom.

‘It would be foolish to ignore the repressive elements of Western Puritanism and the way the ideology of liberalism has made certain political conventions and standards of rationality sacred in order to legitimize the exclusion of disadvantaged groups from participation in and enjoyment of the public sphere’ (Bauman , 2003, 32-33). In the previous sections we have seen how western hegemony promoted oppression and exploitation in the name of freedom (the causal conception of freedom); the liberal ideology has been instrumental in the effective subjugation and domination of the subaltern. One of the ways by which the separation of freedom and politics achieved was through the identification of freedom with liberty. We can detect this tendency in the political works of such philosophers as Hobbes: ‘a free-man, is he, that in those things, which by his strength and wit he is able to do, is not hindered to do what he has a will to do’ (1967, 161). The act of liberation came to be treated as an act of freedom. Further ‘I am normally said to be free to the degree to which no man or body of men interferes with my activity’ (Berlin, 1969, 169).

But we cannot help but wonder, together with Arendt, whether the act of liberation was a sufficient condition for the attainment of freedom:

*Before it became an attribute of thought or a quality of the will, freedom was understood to be the free man's status, which enabled him to move, to get away from home, to go out into the world and meet other people in deed and word. This freedom clearly was 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. Freedom needed, in addition to mere liberation, the company of other men who were in the same state, and it*

*needed a common public space to meet them a politically organized world, in other words, into which each of the free men could insert himself by word and deed (1961, 148) (emphasis added).*

Arendt's analysis of liberty as an insufficient condition for the attainment of freedom should not mislead us into believing that liberty does not contribute to freedom. She underscores the importance of being liberated especially from what she refers to as 'the necessities of life'. Societies who are not politically organized succumb to the dire natural necessities which dictate their actions. As such it would be difficult to attribute the value of freedom to such societies. But what is more interesting in her description of freedom is the parallel she draws between freedom and inter-subjectivity. Following the line of argument adopted by Heidegger she defends the essentially pluralistic nature of genuine freedom. In contradistinction to the causal conception of freedom which takes the loss of freedom by one as a sine qua non for its attainment by another, the ontological conception of freedom vehemently asserts that the freedom of one is a condition of possibility of freedom by another. While the former proclaim that 'the freedom of some must be curtailed to secure the freedom of others' (Berlin, 1969, 173), the latter point out the need for an acknowledgment of the fact that 'we become aware of freedom or its opposite, in our intercourse with others, not in the intercourse with ourselves' (Dallmayr, 1984, 229).

Arendt goes a step further to the degree that she identifies and stipulates politics as the inter-subjective space within which this act of freedom can be realized. She contends that 'without a politically guaranteed public realm, freedom lacks the worldly space to make its appearance' (Ibid). Thus the ontology of freedom which, as a critique of the causal conception of freedom, requires us to be wary of the inter-subjective element incorporated in the conception of genuine freedom achieves its double-edged purpose only if it is allowed the inter-human space affirmed by Arendt.

## Conclusion

The epistemological allure that captivated the history of philosophy for such a long period was inspired by Kantian philosophy. Post-Kantian thought, which could not unbridle itself from the weight of Kantian philosophy, is a living testament to this enormous influence. Even such potent critiques of modernity and enlightenment as Foucault and Heidegger have fallen under this spell that they felt obliged to operate within the Kantian framework in order to make themselves intelligible. Transcendental philosophy has been at the heart of this epistemological influence.

The inception of transcendental philosophy might be traced back to the Greeks; however it was Kantian Philosophy and later Husserl who elevated it to the height of grandiosity. Transcendental philosophy is an attempt to explore the underlying structures of knowledge with a view to grasping how our understanding of the world is shaped by our cognitive faculties.

Transcendental philosophy is problematic for two reasons: the one epistemological and the other ethico-political. First it has been responsible for the epistemic injustices that have been perpetrated against the subaltern. The transcendental/empirical distinction Kant introduced in his critiques has created a system of thought which maintains Cartesian foundationalism and dualism. Moreover, it has brought an absolutistic epistemic standard which is characterized by a denial and rejection of the divergent epistemic modalities. The denial cultivated by transcendental philosophy has been brought to its fruition by the unapologetic and uncompromising method of scientific knowledge. The determinateness and definiteness that is supposed to characterize human beings (the infiniteness of whom has been completely disregarded by this system) is a direct result of the epistemological determinacy espoused by transcendental philosophy.

The new forms of knowledge serve as a kind of stratagem of the new growing mode of control. People are measured, classed, examined in various ways, and thus made the better subject to a control which tends to normalization. The being who is thus examined, measured, categorized, made the target of policies of normalization, is the one whom we have come to define as the modern individual (Taylor, 1996, 7). We have to learn about the other so that we can succeed in dominating her- knowledge is a sine qua non for domination and subjugation. The shift from a metaphysical –centered to a predominantly epistemological line of thought has brought a new

dimension in the relationship between men. Transcendental philosophy has supplied the theoretical tool which is capable of propelling the politics of domination and oppression. Cognitive violence is not the end it's just a means for a much deeper and as history later attested a more destructive use of violence.

Second the epistemic injustice perpetrated by transcendental philosophy has also been extended to the ethico-political world. It has made its presence felt through such ethico-political notions as justice and freedom. The autonomous subject is the ethico-political analogue of the transcendental subject not just in its independence and anonymity but most importantly in the fact that it cannot operate without a corresponding object which it creates and at the same time negates. Accordingly the transcendental character of my existence grants me an anonymous status by liberating me from my locality at the same time allowing me to objectify the external world and other minds. This privileged status has been the locus of every form of oppression and exploitation committed by the West. Hence the conception of freedom carved out of transcendental philosophy reflected the same pattern- a pattern that sanctions the dualistic structure in a way that maintains the subject-object distinction. More precisely it gave rise to a disconcerting notion of freedom- one which takes the loss of freedom on the part of one to be a sine qua non for its attainment by another.

Despite the fact that the undesirable epistemological consequences of transcendental philosophy are primarily attributed to Kantian philosophy, we should not understate the role played by Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. Husserl's phenomenological method, which resulted from a deep craving to return philosophy to its former glory, aimed at remedying the epistemological chasm between the subject and the object that his predecessors endorsed. Husserl insisted that the previous distinction between a knowing mind and the object of knowledge was unfounded. Instead the phenomenological method rests on the idea that there's virtually no distinction between consciousness and phenomenon. He tried to account for the problem of how we experience anything external to us through 'intentionality'. This intentionality enables us to perceive the world and its objects under some aspect. We can't experience anything except by virtue of our mental content which, according to Husserl, is the condition of the possibility of our being able to encounter objects in the world.

In spite of the fact that Husserl tried to overcome the problem of the external world through the phenomenological method, the essentially transcendental character of his version of phenomenology removes it from everyday concerns of human beings. The phenomenological reduction/epoché/ involves detachment from any point of view regarding the objective world. Accordingly Husserl urges us to bracket the whole stream of experienced life, including objects, other people and cultural situations. Accordingly putting phenomenology on the right path meant removing the transcendental wrapping which Husserl enveloped it with.

Until Heidegger and some other philosophers break out on their own, Husserl's identification of phenomenology with transcendentalism seemed irrefutable and led many to believe that phenomenology must be transcendental. Unlike Husserl whose transcendental Phenomenology is seen as a 'science of the essential structures of consciousness', Heidegger insisted on examining the fundamental structure of the practical dimension of human existence. Accordingly Heidegger's distancing of himself from transcendental phenomenology was an essential step in the attempt to put phenomenology to an ontological use.

Heidegger's rejection of transcendental phenomenology is a reformulation of phenomenology in a way that makes it suitable for an ontological inquiry. In contradistinction to transcendental phenomenology existential phenomenology is bent on examining the human condition in its originality and everydayness.

One of the chief accomplishments of phenomenology is its successful amalgamation of the subjectivist/objectivist and the idealist/materialist attitudes towards our conception of the world and towards the experiences which shape that conception. But it's essential to go beyond the epistemological sphere to explore the manner by which that success could impact such ethico-political notions as justice and freedom. The analysis in this dissertation has demonstrated how existential phenomenology helps us to critically examine our conception of freedom and to point out the way by which this conception can be improved. The phenomenological method has also been employed to examine the various practices of freedom that the dominant conception of freedom has begotten.

Although the influence previously enjoyed by the Kantian conception of the epistemological significance of man manifested through his relation with himself and with the world seems to be

on the wane, it still tends to betray its existence in the emancipatory discourses that are widely accepted in the post-modern world. This is to mean that the emancipatory discourses upon which we entrench the idea of freedom are more or less direct or indirect results of the transcendental conception of man introduced by Rene Descartes and brought to its full fruition by Immanuel Kant and Edmund Husserl. Accordingly a critique of these discourses will have to allude to the critiques directed at this foundational structure built by modern philosophy.

Postmodernism is a discourse which, albeit it claims to react against modernity and all its baggage, operates within the dichotomizing structure of transcendental philosophy. The amalgam of concepts labeled postmodernism must be appreciated against the backdrop of the foundationalist philosophy of Descartes and other modern philosophers. Reacting against the procrustean tendency of essentialism, postmodernism argues that the foundation of knowledge can be located in the specific and conditioned human relationships.

Postmodernism is also a celebration of epistemic and cultural diversity to the extent that it denounces the idea of a universal truth that can be used as a foundation of knowledge. It argues that the nature of knowledge, its scope and validity is dictated by the specific intellectual tradition that one adheres to. It's also characterized by a categorical denial of absolute metaphysical systems and their claim to objective truth.

Postmodernism can also be seen as a strategy for liberating 'suppressed narratives and voices drowned out by univocal projections of master narratives . . .' Postmodern critique, it is argued, 'illuminates the underside of master narratives, thereby exposing the subordination and marginality of alternative social visions whose relegation to the status of exception to the rule, counter-tradition or minority perspective can no longer be objectively justified.' A major theme in postmodernism is subversion, the commitment to undermine dominant discourse. As opposed to the modern political culture which is characterized by extreme centralizing and totalizing tendencies the goals of postmodern politics are stated in terms of a radical and a plural democracy.

According to Michel Foucault, the background structural standards for the validity of discourses is defined by the specific 'regime of truth' that gives impetus to the exercise of power. As such it's difficult to see how freedom can ensue from a shift in power relations within the same

‘regime’. Though this intricate relationship that characterizes Foucault’s trilogy of power-truth-freedom has more or less been acknowledged, not enough has been said of the manner in which the regimes of truth (or truth as such) can be manipulated to stifle resistance to power. Despite the adamant militancy with which postmodernism reacted against the onslaught of modernity, it failed to overcome the charms of the conception of freedom that Kant universalized.

To the extent that postmodern freedom enables us to explore possible avenues for coming to the knowledge of the self it’s believed to have provided humans with a greater degree of freedom than its predecessors. Postmodernists also believe that the kind of freedom they advocate is capable of rising above the limited knowledge of the self and create an understanding of ‘the other’.

Foucault seems to share Heidegger’s conception of Freedom as practice. However, the postmodern understanding of freedom is questionable in two respects. First unlike Heidegger who is unequivocal in his rejection of the possibility of an autonomous subject Foucault’s conception presupposes a sovereign subject (much like Kant’s) capable of self-creation and self-invention.

But most importantly the conception of freedom advocated by postmodernism remains attached to the dominant conception in its adherence to mastery. As Thiele vehemently contends, ‘despite the differences between positive liberty, negative liberty, and postmodern liberty, the identification of freedom with mastery remains central to all’ (1994, 281). The failure of postmodern freedom to provide a viable alternative to its modern counterpart should be appreciated against the backdrop of the undisputed triumph of the Kantian conception of freedom the influence of which extends to its critiques i.e. it supplies a framework, a foundation which even its critiques can only ignore on pain of unintelligibility.

It is on the basis of the aforementioned considerations that this research tried to develop an ontological analysis of freedom that takes due cognizance of the post-modern developments in our philosophical and political thinking.

The apparently insurmountable chasm between the extremes of modernity (absolutistic and objectivist) and that of postmodernism (relativistic and subjectivist) pales into insignificance when one examines the conception of freedom that these two strands of thought advocate. On the

other hand, the ontological conception of freedom retains the historical character of freedom without necessarily condemning man/ Dasein to solipsism. It opens up an inter-subjective space in the relation with the 'Other'. The need for an alternative strategy is necessitated by the failure of Kantian philosophy and postmodernism to carve out a conception of freedom which is informed by the demands of inter-subjectivity.

The ontology of freedom is a critique of transcendental phenomenology and by association a critique of the dominant conception of freedom sanctioned by the transcendental structure. The orientation of freedom in terms of mastery has pervaded the political spectrum in such a significant way that we cannot envisage freedom except by taking it to be a property of the will. This is to mean that both positive and negative freedoms exhibit, albeit in distinct ways, the essentially uncompromising character of the causal conception of freedom.

The articulation of Freedom in Heidegger's works, which sets itself against the epistemologically unjust and the ethico-politically pernicious view of freedom propounded by the conception of freedom as mastery, takes different but complementary forms: existential and ontological.

Existential Freedom involves Heidegger's claim that potentiality is embedded within the very structure of Dasein's understanding though this does not necessarily mean that we are actually aware of this potentiality. Rather, Dasein is "entrapped within its own unawareness of potentiality such that possibilities are foreclosed" (Nichols, 2014, 50). Heidegger calls Dasein's tendency to eschew the plethora of possibilities open to it 'falling away' - a mode of being characterized by Dasein's entanglement in the mode of the actual. The mode of analysis that defines selfhood only by the actual is a condition of "not-one's own-ness" as an object away from oneself. The tendency of man to view one's specific way of being-in-the-world as the only mode of being-in-the-world has the unfortunate effect of narrowing the horizon of possibilities thereby alienating one from the range of possible ways of being.

Heidegger's innovative analysis of our fundamental relation with the world has led him to the conclusion that our experience is characterized primarily by practical relation. This conclusion gives rise to another formulation of existential freedom- one which involves the world's reluctance to be defined, to be determined by a single epistemic structure. It validates the historical and situated character of Dasein by contending that being free involves grasping the

infiniteness of the finite world. In addition this formulation indicates Heidegger's commitment to the practical which he valorizes at the expense of the theoretical the epistemological limitations of which he underscores.

Being's tendency to evade Dasein's attempt to know it fully can also be directed towards the claim of scientific knowledge to have not only a fuller and complete knowledge of the world and human beings but also that other forms of knowledge are incapable of such knowledge in so far as they lie outside the realm of scientific knowledge- such epistemological determinacy does not only perpetrate what Santos calls 'epistemic injustice' against those that are situated out of the knowledge realm of scientific knowledge but it also obscures the finitude of human nature which is the cornerstone of the ontological conception of freedom.

The ontological conception of freedom takes it to be a practical engagement or more precisely a 'letting beings be' which accentuates freedom in light of its relation to being. The ontological analysis of freedom heavily relies on the existential analysis of Dasein in that the being-in-the-world and being-with character of Dasein is fundamental to its tendency to 'let beings be'. Dasein allows beings to be whatever and whoever they can be to the extent that 'the other' is an integral part of what it's to be Dasein. In short, freedom as 'letting beings be' recognizes the infiniteness of the finite.

In other words, the essence of freedom, understood as the foundation of knowledge, practical action, and the good life cannot be properly approached until the binding of the human subject to the object of knowledge is released.

As Dallmayr vehemently asserts Heideggerian freedom is not characterized merely by its ontological ground but most significantly it also opens up an 'interhuman space'. This interhuman space sets the stage for human solidarity in a way that reformulates the very essence of inter-subjectivity. Being animated by the exigencies of inter-subjectivity, Heidegger's ontological analysis of freedom vouchsafes a compelling alternative.

In general, if we had the awareness to conceive of freedom as practical engagement rather than willful mastery then the whole scenario of our political culture- a culture which ideologizes domination and subjugation- would have been different. Some have even been bold enough to indicate the adverse effect that equating freedom with the power to control has had upon our

relation with nature- attributing the upset in the ecological structure of the world to our conception of freedom. However in this research I have limited myself to the analysis of the distortion in human relation and the subsequent political disarray epitomized by the various emancipatory discourses and the practices premised on them. Although I have refrained from analyzing the asymmetrical relation between man and nature which is the logical outcome of the dichotomizing structure of transcendental philosophy it provides a viable starting point for any interested researcher.

Heidegger's **Being and Time** may be suspect for at least two reasons: first Heidegger has not managed to provide a political space for the realization of freedom and also he has failed to offer an adequate discussion of the body without which the historicity of Dasein would simply be inconceivable. These blemishes have been remedied by an appeal to the works of Hannah Arendt and Maurice Merleau Ponty. The second, which is adjudged to be beyond the scope of this work and hence is left to other researchers, involves Heidegger's endorsement of the asymmetric relation Cartesian Philosophy sanctioned between man and nature. I have tried to examine Heidegger's attempt to eliminate a distorted human relation perpetrated by Descartes, Kant and subsequent philosophers. But Heidegger himself can be accused of endorsing this distortion in the relation between man and nature to the extent that he reduced the latter to mere equipment. Thus it would be fair to say that Dallmayr gets carried away by dubbing Heidegger 'a philosopher of human solidarity'. But it's no exaggeration to say that a philosophy of human solidarity can be worked out of Heidegger's analysis of the human condition in so far as his discussion of the relation between Being and Freedom gives us a reason to be optimistic about the future.

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