

# **Freedom in the World: Reconciling Scientific Self-Knowledge with Moral Agency**

**by**

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**Abstract:** This thesis examines the tension between the notions of free will and determinism, and how such a tension emanates from a view of freedom which is erroneous. The project starts by showing the presentation of the tension in traditional philosophy, before showing why such a presentation is misplaced once we come to see that freedom itself is only comprehensible *within* the world. Such an observation provides a way of constructing a new and original notion of freedom, which is more than just a matter of being free to choose, but also encompasses the effect these choices have on us in the form of self-disclosure. Thus, our freedom to choose makes possible self-evaluation and re-evaluation in the context of the world within which our choices are made. Such a notion of freedom affords us the benefit of being able to see that determinism, which is taken here to result from our scientific understanding of ourselves and the world around us, itself rests upon, or is only intelligible on the basis of, our being free in the first place. The thesis thus achieves two goals: on the one hand, it provides us with a new and original notion of freedom, which coheres with the sense-making activity of creatures in a world. On the other hand, it demonstrates how such a notion of freedom can defend itself against the traditional determinist criticism.

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*Finally, Neil Booth: the brave; the benevolent and the happy. You were always more than a father to me. Rest in Peace.*

*Part One*

Concerning the Problem of Natural  
Necessity

# *Introduction*

## **1.1 Opening Remarks**

When questions of freedom arise, the debate generally centres on whether the will is free – or, as the case may be, determined by factors beyond our choosing. And when debate regarding our status as free agents is had, freedom is usually thought of as an ability, peculiar to humans, to choose between different possibilities, or courses of action, and in so doing, choose things *for* and *about* ourselves. The challenge for those who oppose such a view, is to demonstrate that what appears to us to be such an ability, is really illusory, and all that is in fact happening are (natural) responses to events, and these responses are not something we can initiate. The challenge for those that endorse the former view, that of freedom, is to try to curtail the suspicion that even if it seems we are free to choose things, we are in fact not. There are, of course, various nuances to the way these two opposed positions can be expressed. However, they tend to share in the essential feature of viewing freedom as an *ability* or a *power*, as described above, that we either have or do not have.

What I intend to argue in this thesis, is that a fruitful option is being overlooked by both sides of the debate. I shall propose the view that freedom is not really an *ability*, as such, that we possess as subjects, but a result of the way that we relate to the world we find ourselves in. Part of the process of constructing such a notion of freedom will be to elucidate, in detail, exactly what this relation between self and world is, by showing how both are correlated with one another in a primordial way. One of the major benefits that emerges from the view I propose is that it shows that the determinist position itself depends upon the sort of freedom that I will come to argue for. Put simply at this point: there could be no determinist argument at all unless that argument was constructed and argued for by a being that possesses a fundamental freedom through their relation to the world – this kind of



freedom I will call "*Freedom-in-the-World*" – the central concept of this thesis and one which will be detailed in depth in Chapter 7. The other major benefit of the notion of freedom here outlined is that it is *comprehensible*, in the sense that in locating our freedom in our relation to the world we are in, it is found that this is the only place freedom could be that makes real, practical sense.

What is apparent, is that existing notions of freedom seem detached from the world in which the beings that are supposed to possess freedom operate. A key feature of the observation of the way people live their lives is that they do so *alongside each other*. This itself comes with certain challenges which can be seen to place constraint on our ability to exercise our freedom. Such an observation is generally missing from the standard accounts. It is not necessary to hold that our social interactions and position determine the choices we make, merely that the social world is the only arena in which our freedom can be meaningfully played out. This social world is part of the world we find ourselves in and is an essential component of our relation towards it and as such, is a phenomenon that will form part of the account of *Freedom-in-the-World*.

Resulting from such a position are important epistemological and metaphysical issues and as the account develops, we will see how these potential issues become less worrying, as the effectiveness of *Freedom-in-the-World* becomes more apparent – in other words, as it begins to become clearer throughout the course of this work how effective *Freedom-in-the-World* is as a position on the free will debate, it will also become clear that it has implications far beyond this scope, making it something more than another nuanced position on the freedom of the will. Because of this implication, part of the task of this work is to carry out a sustained examination of the relationship between freedom and knowledge of the self and the world it occupies. It is with this observation in mind that I will argue that what conventional accounts of freedom lack is not merely a worldly aspect, but instead, an *essential* relation to the world. This amounts to arguing for the point that was alluded to in preceding paragraphs: that the very manner in

which agents relate to the world they occupy, draws upon comprehensible freedom.

## 1.2 Structure of the Project

Before the idea that our freedom and our relation to the world are tied together can be thoroughly established, some prior groundwork needs to be carried out. Therefore, Chapter 2 will set out the understanding of free will and determinism I intend to work with in the form of what I term *the problem of freedom and natural necessity*. Although there may be *prima facie* simpler ways of expressing the initial problem, I will use Chapter 2 to highlight the specificity of the problem with which I aim to deal: namely, that the problem is one of finding a way to make the very notion of freedom itself intelligible *within* a world that is determined by natural processes. This issue finds what I believe to be its most interesting and traditional expression in the work of Immanuel Kant, and whilst the problem is certainly related to the broader debate between those who endorse the freedom of the will and those who proclaim determinism to be correct, the introductory chapter will attempt to present a more refined debate. Another reason I turn to Kant is because he is seen as someone who presents us with a way to reconcile the tension between free agency and a physically deterministic universe, with his transcendental idealism. Thus, Chapter 3 aims to elaborate Kant's proposed solution to the problem. Kant informs us that the fact that a human being can interpret the world within which it dwells as being natural and mechanistic can and does say nothing about the way things are in and of themselves.

Chapter 4 draws on the work of Hegel, who, I argue, offers an attack on Kant's transcendental idealism in various portions of his work, but importantly, in a relatively overlooked section of his *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Here, Hegel deals with forces and the scientific laws which are constructed to describe their underlying relation to things. I offer an interpretation of this section of the *Phenomenology* which presents Hegel as saying that Force, as generally conceived, has as an essential feature its *very observation*. Thus, part

of how it is in and of itself is that it is observed. This ambiguity in the nature of Force, I argue, allows, Hegel to advance a rejection of transcendental idealism and, it follows, Kant's proposed solution to the problem of freedom and natural necessity.

Chapter 5 takes the direct focus away from freedom for a time, instead to analyse the Heideggerian notion of Worldhood. The exegesis of the relevant portions of *Being and Time* presents a view of the world that can explain the peculiar observation in Chapter 2 that certain ideas pertaining to the natural world have at their source an essential reference back to the being performing the observation. Thus, Chapter 6 uses the theoretical tools afforded by the analysis of Worldhood to investigate the phenomenon of *Disclosure*, found again in the work of Heidegger. Disclosure gives a strong account of the correlation between human interpretative behaviour and the way that things in the world and in nature "present themselves" to us. It allows us to read certain sections of Heidegger's work post-*Being and Time* as offering an account of freedom, which in turn, affords us the benefit of re-interpreting Worldhood and Disclosure in *Being and Time* as always referring to human freedom. This serves as a transitional point into the foundation and construction of the central idea of this work: Freedom-in-the-World, which takes human interpretations to be meaningful only if an interpreter is essentially free, but also understands that freedom is only intelligible upon the basis of humans being *in* a world (rather than merely observing one).

Chapter 7 is an attempt to develop the notion of Freedom-in-the-World. It progresses by presenting four features of the account: (1) that it is *non-transcendental* in nature, meaning that its intelligibility is not in any way dis severed from the world itself; (2) it is *irreducible*, such that its features cannot be reduced to any mechanical process; (3) it is *world-disclosive*, therefore it is the basis upon which things in the world are disclosed to an interpreter; and, finally (4), it is *self-disclosive*, whereby the self is disclosed to itself through its world. But then the chapter raises some critical questions that must be answered if the account of Freedom-in-the-World is to be satisfactory. Thus,

those fundamental features of the human being that we *do not* choose would seem to form a set of things which directly affect the things that we can choose. Or, perhaps more severely, the set of things we cannot choose seems to come to bear upon the manner in which the self is disclosed to itself. The latter part of Chapter 7 aims to assuage these important challenges, which I term the *argument from the facticity of the free self*.

Chapter 8 probes deeper into these challenges, citing the counterexample in the work of Susan Wolf that she uses to address issues she sees with the account of the free, self-interpreting agent – specifically those accounts presented by Charles Taylor and Harry Frankfurt. I argue that Wolf’s position in her own work on sanity and responsibility can comfortably be read as an argument from the facticity of the free self. As such, her counterexample is a particularly clear example of a more general concern one could have with the notion of Freedom-in-the-World. It is here that a revisiting of the Heideggerian notion of “Thrownness” and its relationship to facticity furnish Freedom-in-the-World with the necessary theoretical backing to strengthen the position. For what makes one free does not hinge upon whether or not one interprets oneself and one’s world in a “sane” way, but that one is ultimately able to do so in the first place.

The work concludes by asserting that what is presented here is not a “phenomenology of freedom”, but more an account of freedom which makes use of Heideggerian phenomenology to shed light on a debate within the Anglo-American tradition. On this topic, I have made every effort to deliver a standard of clarity that would be acceptable within the Anglo-American approach. However, sometimes, the norms and conventions of modern philosophical writing in the United Kingdom and United States (and it goes without saying, other countries as well) can on the one hand convolute and yet on the other, oversimplify crucial subtleties in the work of the European thinkers I draw upon. This can become particularly evident in the heavier exegetical portions. In this vein, the selection of secondary literature and the use of new terms is largely neutral to both strands of thought and instead aims

to present ideas, arguments and analyses with faithfulness to the primary sources.

# *The Problem of Freedom and Natural Necessity*

## **2.1 Introduction**

Philosophy must ... assume that no contradiction will be found between freedom and natural necessity in the same human actions, for it cannot give up the idea of natural necessity any more than that of freedom.<sup>1</sup>

This quotation, extracted from *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals* by Immanuel Kant, sheds light on the inherent tension between freedom in human action and the limit placed on us by nature. This tension emanates from the opposition between two initially plausible concepts: that of human freedom and that of natural necessity; the kind of necessity that presents itself in the observation of the processes of nature.

For Kant, each of these concepts is indispensable to understanding human beings and their interactions with the world around them. For on the one hand, and from within, human beings experience agency – the ability to act in such a way that these actions have their source in the choices one makes for oneself and these choices in turn have their source in the agent. Yet, on the other hand, human beings are, at base, still nonetheless natural beings. What this means is that they belong to the very same world as the rest of nature. Human beings are still subject to the same laws that any other member of nature is; be it plant or animal. In the passage above, Kant observes that a human being's place in nature is as inescapable an aspect of ourselves as our freedom to choose.

Despite observing this indispensability, Kant also observes the tension that arises by trying to retain both concepts, when he states that “[man] is also conscious of himself as a part of the world of sense, in which his actions are found as mere appearances of ... causality ... Those actions belonging to the

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<sup>1</sup> Kant, I. *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals*, 4:387

world of sense must be regarded as *determined by other appearances ...*<sup>2</sup> This problem, whereby we have two initially plausible concepts that appear to contradict one another, I will term *the problem of freedom and natural necessity*. Not only did Kant observe the opposition between freedom and natural necessity, but he also presented us with a novel solution. In order to approach this problem, it will be essential to see how Kant tries to dissolve this tension. He attempts to do this by rendering showing that freedom and natural necessity can coexist. However, what I am to show, is that such a coexistence is not an issue, because when freedom is considered properly as freedom-in-the-world, we need not buy into such an opposition in the first place.

All the same, whilst I feel it is essential to examine Kant's position in some detail, I do not aim to focus this project as a whole on Kant's work. The preliminary exposition of the Kantian position will merely serve as a point of departure from the problem of freedom and natural necessity towards the goal of developing a worldly, comprehensible account of freedom, which focuses on the way an agent is always already *in* the world, rather than the way an agent operates *with* the world.

## **2.1 Freedom of the Will *versus* Determinism**

From what has been stated, the problem of freedom and natural necessity is one of trying to see how two equally plausible concepts contradict one another. We cannot escape the observation of nature's lawlike structure, any more than the our seeming ability to author our own actions. But this specific problem can be used to introduce a broader concern. For at base, the problem of freedom and natural necessity is at the heart of the disagreement between those who argue that we have freedom of the will and those who argue that we do not. The proponent of the freedom of the will is going to argue that:

The choices we make about ourselves and our actions are genuine choices, based on our ability to be the author of our own lives.

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 4:453 (*Italics are my own*)

Contrary to this, the determinist is going to state:

There are no such choices (as described above). Even actions which appear to result from the deliberations of a free agent are not actually *free*. The apparent “authorship” of the agent always depends upon physical/neurological/biological/socio-cultural phenomena, which are the true causes of the agent’s action and utterly beyond the agent’s power to choose and control.

However, natural necessity encompasses *indeterminism*: the idea that there are at least some events that are not caused deterministically. But, this is distinct from the assertion of the freedom of the will, as events at the quantum level, whilst only probable and not necessary, will only ever manifest themselves in the world of the macroscopic as events of necessity. Ultimately, this says nothing about agents being the primary cause of their own actions.

The debate here can be said to centre on the idea of whether or not, or to what extent, an agent can set up a “causal chain”. A causal chain would look as follows:

- (1) A is reading and wants to carry on, but it becomes too dark to read.
- (2) A decides to turn on the light and presses the light switch.
- (3) The light comes on.

So, as laid out above, we can see that our causal chain is one in which (2) issues from the situation described in (1) regarding it being too dark for A to continue reading, which in turn leads to the action A performs in (2) and determines illumination of the room in (3). These chains can quickly become quite large and complex, hence, I will deal here with only three steps.

What is it about the above causal chain that is likely to cause disagreement between proponents of free will, or those who claim



determinism is ultimately true? Given our definitions of these positions above, we can say that the two positions are apt to disagree about the nature of *agency* involved in (2). For the free will proponent (*FWP*), (2) demonstrates the power of a free agent to initiate causal chains.

The determinist, on the other hand, is going to deny this claim. She will say that it may appear to *A* that they chose to go to turn on the light with the intention of lighting the room, but this “choice” is brought about by factors such as the sun’s position and the physiological features which make it so that *A* wants to continue to read. And were the *FWP* to raise the point that initially, it was *A*’s choice to act upon such an impulse to turn on the light, the determinist will merely cite other features of *A*’s situation. We may even compare the causal chain of the *FWP* to the case of a street light. As the sun’s position changes and the region becomes darker, photosensitive cells in the light detect the dimmer illumination, which in turn causes the light to switch on. Thus, the determinist will deny that *A* has any real ability to set up causal chains. A determinist may re-write the causal chain as:

- (1) *A* is reading and wants to carry on, but it becomes too dark to read.
- (2) *A*’s visual apparatus and brain detect that it has become too dark which causes *A* to turn on the light.
- (3) The light comes on.

So, translated into determinist terms, the possibility that any choice *A* has made starts off the causal chain is denied, in favour of reducing *A*’s choice to physiological factors beyond their control: *A* cannot truly initiate a causal chain. Whilst simplified, the above example clarifies what is going on when *FWPs* engage with determinists.

Importantly, the move made by determinists works towards explaining away freedom of action as well. For if there is no meaningful way in which an agent can be said to author an action, then there is no meaningful way in which her actions themselves are free. The act of turning on a light, under the

determinist picture, is at base, nothing more than an involuntary response to A's eyes and brain no longer being able to process data due to it being too dark.

This reduction is characteristic of some scientific attempts to explain away freedom. The consensus between philosophers and scientists who are committed to some form of determinism, is that the weight of empirical evidence leaves no space in nature for agent causation. Their reasons are interesting, strong and cannot be easily dismissed. It may seem then that if we do not want to let go of freedom of the will, but also do not want to deny the effectiveness of scientific discourse in explaining the way the world is, we may be pushed into a position that gives freedom a transcendental nature, as alluded to in the opening of this piece. This brings us back to our original motivation; the problem of freedom and natural necessity (where "problem" here indicates the conflict or opposition between the two).

In the end, the concept of freedom-in-the-world will undercut this debate, by showing how determinism depends upon the deliberations of a free agent. Put another way, freedom-in-the-world will show that freedom is a condition for the possibility of the very intelligibility of determinism.

# *Kant's Transcendental Solution*

## **3.1 Transcendental Ideality and Empirical Reality**

I now intend to take some time to lay out the Kantian view that a solution to the problem of freedom and natural necessity, and by extension the problem of the freedom of the will and determinism, can be reached via the introduction of the “transcendental”.

This chapter will aim to lay out what Kant deemed to be a solution to the problem of reconciling freedom and natural necessity. It will do so by clarifying Kant's important introduction of the transcendental, what is meant by this term, and whether it provides a successful solution to the problem under consideration. It also aims to restate the problem of free will and determinism in a way which brings to the fore the epistemological problems that can relate to it, which will come to bare later in the thesis. Under this picture, whatever freedom will turn out to be, its nature will be beyond immediate appearance and thus beyond the realm of natural necessity.

To this end, I will offer an analysis of Kant's transcendental idealism and the relationship between ideality of the transcendental kind on the one hand, and empirical reality on the other. But, in looking at Kant's distinction of all things into phenomena and noumena, we can see how Kant reveals an essential relationship between the self and the external world. So knowledge of the self will turn out to depend upon the external, but the meaningful appearance of the external will turn out to depend upon the self. This idea will be a running theme throughout the thesis and will become central to the formation of freedom-in-the-world.

To begin with, I shall draw attention to the following statement found in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

We therefore assert the **empirical reality** of space ... though to be sure its **transcendental ideality**...<sup>3</sup>

This is a crucial characteristic of Kant's position. That space and time and the things within them are empirically real, but, simultaneously, are "transcendentally ideal". If empirical realism is the assertion that things exist externally to us and have objectivity, then what can be said of transcendental idealism?

I understand by the **transcendental idealism** of all appearances the doctrine that they are all together to be regarded as mere representations and not as things in themselves, and accordingly that space and time are only sensible forms of our intuition, but not determinations given for themselves or conditions of objects in themselves.<sup>4</sup>

Above is an explicit statement, in Kant's own words, of what transcendental idealism amounts to. Appearances are "mere representations" and thus do not deliver to our faculties things as they are in themselves. As he states in the passage, Kant believes space and time to be "sensible forms of our intuition" and they are therefore not features of things in themselves. Whilst it seems like objects are "in" space and time, according to Kant, this is only the result of our intuition, which is conditioned in the very representation of those objects.<sup>5</sup> Things "in" space are always external in virtue of the fact that matter, or objects that consist of matter, cannot occupy the same position in space. They are *external* to one another and thus external to the subject. However, space itself is still a form of intuition, hence, Kant's proclamation that space is "within us". External things consequently receive their externality, or are intuited as being external, due to their representation as being in space, which happens within the subject. Transcendental Idealism thus amounts to the doctrine that space and time are intuited in the subjective representation of objects and that things in and of themselves are not determined or conditioned in space and time beyond the subject.

External things consequently receive their externality, or are intuited as being external, due to their representation as being in space, which happens

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<sup>3</sup> Kant, I. *Critique of Pure Reason*, A28

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, A369

<sup>5</sup> *Idem*.

within the subject. It is at this point that it can be said that transcendental idealism amounts to a realism regarding the way things appear for us but stops short of saying anything about the metaphysical status of things as they are in themselves, for such a thing is not possible – things as they are in themselves cannot be represented, merely things as they appear. Kant's position is that because space and time are intuitions, they are *forms of the subject's intuition*; they are *ideal* in nature.

This is important because this means our knowledge of objects as they appear is still *objectively valid* – we can still say true and false things about objects. As such, our talk of objects as having spatiotemporal relations and properties is still very much true. But owing to the transcendental ideality of space and time, we cannot infer from the validity of our talk of appearances anything at all about things in themselves. Validity and objectivity, for Kant, are limited to appearances. However, this limitation need not mean that the effort towards valid and objective descriptions of objects is a project in vain. But, the caveat is:

It is only of objective validity in regard to appearances, because these things are **objects of our senses**; but it is no longer objective if one abstracts from the sensibility of our intuition, thus from that kind of representation that is peculiar to us, and speaks of **things in general**.<sup>6</sup>

Kant's idealism affords us the benefit of still being able to treat objects as being empirically real. However, what it does deny is that we are able to infer from appearances anything valid about things as they are, considered in themselves. Validity and objectivity are only intelligible insofar as they refer to appearances.

The cost of Kant's position is that things as they are in themselves can never be known about – we have no access to them. We know only the world of appearances and from this we cannot know anything of the nature of things beyond how they appear for us. However, the condition for the possibility for meaningful appearance in the first place is the subject itself.

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* A35

What I aim to show now is, that whilst Kant gives us valuable insight into the notion of the self being the condition of meaningful appearance, the very idea that things may be considered as they appear and as they are considered in themselves is extremely problematic. This leads me to turn to the work of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, whose view on scientific understanding may offer also a compelling critique of the Kantian distinction between phenomena and noumena.

# *The Hegelian Dialectical Response*

## **4.1 Hegel's Critique of Kant**

In this chapter, I aim to show that Kant's transcendental project is ultimately unsuccessful. This is the main motivation for my turn to the work of Hegel. Whilst I do not intend to present Hegel as providing theoretical apparatus from which the notion Freedom-in-the-World can be constructed, his work in particular sections of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* provide valuable historical insight into why exactly Kant's project of the transcendental fails to overcome the problems it sets out to dissolve.

Hegel's criticisms of Kant's idealism have long been subject to various interpretations. This is due in part to the lack of references Hegel makes to Kant directly, with the exception of his essay "Glauben und Wissen". There is also an element of confusion regarding Hegel's use of language, which he tentatively attempts to defend by claiming he wants to "teach philosophy to speak German."<sup>7</sup> Paired up with the fact that the *Phenomenology of Spirit* as we have it is haphazardly assembled, as he rushed to complete the work, the task of finding a correct way to interpret Hegel is a challenging task.

These difficulties aside, it would be wrong for us to dismiss Hegel's criticisms on this basis. When we cut to the core of this element of his work, what we find is actually an illuminating and original attempt at exposing certain worries about Kant's position. Firstly, we can look to Hegel's methodological concerns in the Introduction to the *Phenomenology*. The motivation for taking this as our lead is because this section is, by far, the one that has received the most attention both on the Continent and in the Anglo-American tradition (with regards to Hegel's attitude towards epistemology at least). Also, it is easier to see, by beginning with this section, traits in Hegel's

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<sup>7</sup> Hegel, G.W.F. "Letter to Voss"

thought that run throughout his body of work. Hegel remains consistent in his concern for the same basic problems; the only thing that really changes is the angle from which he approaches these same problems. In fact, we might think of Hegel's whole approach, particularly in the *Phenomenology*, as exploring different "layers" of consciousness's experience of itself and the world. In other words, on my reading, the *Phenomenology* charts consciousness's *intellectual* development - a point which will become important later.

Once it is clear what Hegel is offering us in the Introduction, it will allow us to see the moves being made further on in the *Phenomenology*, at the tail end of the section on "Perception" and the picture Hegel paints in "Force and the Understanding: Appearance and the Supersensible World". It is in this section, I argue, that Hegel attempts a *reductio ad absurdum* of Kant's distinction between phenomena and noumena.

#### 4.1.1 Epistemology

In the Introduction to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel assembles a criticism of epistemology as attempted by his predecessors. However, Hegel is characteristically unspecific about which thinkers exactly his argument is aimed at. Part and parcel of Hegel's philosophical approach is to avoid getting entangled with individuality, both in terms of particular thinkers or their theories. So any attempt to clarify his position in the *Phenomenology* will require a certain amount of interpretation without, of course, speaking *for* Hegel too much. What we can take from the argument in the Introduction is that whilst the criticism applies as much to Locke as it does to Fichte and Schelling, for our purposes, it is also aimed at the work of Kant.

For Hegel, previous attempts at epistemology have made a significant mistake. The error lies in separating the external object that consciousness is aware of from the processes that go to make up this awareness in the first place. This may not sound so counter-intuitive. In fact, it is quite natural to assume that the external things we encounter are fundamentally different



from the “internal” apprehension we have of these things. Hegel himself admits this:

It is a natural assumption that in philosophy, before we start to deal with its proper subject-matter, viz. the actual cognition of what truly is, one must first of all come to an understanding about cognition, which is regarded either as the instrument to get hold of the Absolute, or as the medium through which one discovers it.<sup>8</sup>

In fact, with regards to this point, Kant makes use of both of these erroneous metaphors. “The medium through which one discovers” the external object, for Kant, would equate to “sensory intuition”; the sense organs as they are exposed to the properties of objects. On the other hand, Kant would also make use of the “instrument” analogy, as that active aspect of cognition which operates on sensory intuition so as to make it intelligible: the categories of the understanding. Hegel criticises such a distinction, because it creates a chasm between the object as it is in-itself and our knowledge of it. In his lectures on Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, Theodor Adorno sets up the problem like this:

... [T]his duality in the concept of things inevitably leads to certain difficulties, huge difficulties, in fact, for the theory of cognition. The effect is that the world can be said to be doubled, in the paradoxical sense that true existence at the same time becomes something wholly undefined, abstract and ethereal, while conversely what we definitely know, positive existence, is turned into the mere delusion of appearances, the mere interconnection of the phenomena at our disposition. And at the same time we are denied the right to reach compelling conclusions about the true nature of existence.<sup>9</sup>

Kant’s transcendental idealism proceeds by attempting to demonstrate that whilst reality does exist in and of itself, the very structure of the human understanding imposes structures onto the world that are not in fact there in reality. We can never know the in-itself, merely the way things *appear for us*. Reality as it is in itself remains *unintelligible*. This, of course, is the upshot of

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<sup>8</sup> Hegel, G.W.F, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 46

<sup>9</sup> Adorno, T. *Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 108-109

Kant's Transcendental Idealism: the operation of the categories upon sensory intuition means that the object as it is *independent* of consciousness is unknowable. We can only *know* what appears to us, but what appears to us is conditioned by the pre-set structures of the understanding, in the form of the categories. On this issue, Hegel states:

This feeling of uneasiness is surely bound to be transformed into the conviction that the whole project of securing for consciousness through cognition what exists in itself is absurd, and that there is a boundary between cognition and the Absolute that completely separates them.<sup>10</sup>

In the context of Hegel's criticism, these metaphors cannot secure for us the nature of the thing-in-itself because the instrument/medium necessarily distorts the object in our awareness of it.

This may seem like no sort of criticism at all. In fact, when we dwell on Kant's idealism, we see that this is really his conclusion, and it must be. This is the way Kant reconciles the tension between a scientific account of the world as composed of matter, following mechanical laws, and the seemingly autonomous way the self interacts with this world. As we have seen in the previous section, to overcome the apparent way in which the materialist world view and the "moral" world can seem incommensurable, Kant allocates each view to a specific aspect of reality. The phenomenal aspect, the world as it is *for us*, is subject to the laws of science. However, the noumenal aspect, the world as it is *in itself*, transcends these laws, for we can know nothing of it. It is for this aspect of reality that we can reserve questions of God, immortality, and morality.

Thus, it would seem at this point as if Hegel is merely repeating Kant's conclusion. This is not Hegel's aim. Hegel thinks this kind of separation is destructive. It is destructive because we have already presupposed a picture of cognition, as opposed to building one by paying careful attention to the way

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<sup>10</sup> *Idem.*

that cognition actually works *as it is working*. Though probably not the source of the problem Hegel is identifying, we can see an early and obvious example in Descartes' *Meditations*. The whole progress of these meditations is entirely dependent upon an epistemology which has its starting point a separation of mind and body (although only implicit at the start). What is more, it assumes that the sensory (that is, bodily) part of the separation somehow fools the mental part:

Everything I have accepted as being most true up to now I acquired from the senses or through the senses. However, I have occasionally found that they deceive me, and it is prudent never to trust those who have deceived us, even if only once.<sup>11</sup>

The most immediate problem here is that for Hegel, doing epistemology properly would rule out statements such as "the senses deceive me" as it would need to be shown that it is in fact sensory distortion, or whether it could be, say, the effect of our cognition on raw sensory input, that causes such "deceptions". Descartes presupposes that the realm of the mental or rational is pure, absolutely personal (implied by Descartes' consistent use of "I" or "me") and subject to the distortive forces of the senses (which are impure and impersonal). None of this has been demonstrated by Descartes. In fact it is this very presupposition that gets his argument moving.

We may think that Kant moves beyond this, but for Hegel, he is still trapped in this Cartesian approach to epistemology. Take for example an opening section of Kant's 'Second Analogy' in the 'Transcendental Analytic':

I perceive that appearances succeed one another, that is, that there is a state of things at one time the opposite of which existed in a previous state. I am therefore really connecting two perceptions in time. Connection is not the work of the mere sense and of intuition, but is here the product of a synthetic power of the faculty of imagination ...<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Rene Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, p. 19

<sup>12</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B233

Now, Kant is careful not to fall into the same trap as Descartes in terms of assuming some inherent feature of sensory perception that deceives the subject. In fact he does state, with the last sentence, that something else besides rational intuition and sensory perception does the “synthesising”. But for Hegel, the above passage from Kant would, like Descartes, stand as an example of the passive approach to epistemology he is trying to oppose. The assumption that the “I” can somehow “stand back” from cognition and analyse it from the outside is flawed, and is, for Hegel, the source of the “epistemological-gap”. “I” should not come into any enquiry until its proper link to cognition has been ascertained. Until then, all we have is consciousness – a dynamic awareness of things, including the “I”.

The very concepts that we are meant to be discovering - “cognition”, “subject”, “object” - presupposed at the outset in both Descartes and Kant. Although Descartes will go on to doubt the existence of objects, he comes to the conclusion that he cannot possibly doubt the existence of the “I” - and he relies as a matter of principle on doubt, which is a form of cognitive activity itself. “For to give the impression that their meaning is generally well known, or that their Notion is comprehended, looks more like an attempt to avoid the main problem, which is precisely to provide this Notion.”<sup>13</sup> Hegel also puts it nicely in the Preface to the *Phenomenology*:

[T]hese [terms] are used just as thoughtlessly and uncritically [in philosophy] as we use them in everyday life, or as we use ideas like strength and weakness, expansion and contraction; the metaphysics is in the former case as unscientific as are our sensuous representations in the latter.<sup>14</sup>

The point is this: how can epistemology, or philosophy in general, progress as if it already knows about the things it is trying to discover? What Kant should be doing is explaining what cognition *is*, or what it is to perceive an object, *from within these very operations themselves*. Hegel's accusation here is

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* p. 48

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* p.30

that Kant is an example of a philosopher who does not do this; his first *Critique* proceeds as if these issues have already been illuminated and the problem is really about showing how these things impress on one another. In proceeding in this manner, Kant cannot move beyond the idea that consciousness is internal, and therefore closed off from the things it is aware of, which are external. Hegel's point here is simple: just because this *seems* intuitive, does not mean it should be presupposed. In fact, this leaves our epistemology wide open to scepticism. If we presuppose a gap between consciousness and the things consciousness is aware of, then it becomes impossible for us to bridge the gap. We cannot escape the internal nature of consciousness in order to apprehend what exists beyond it, externally. This methodological malaise is particularly evident when philosophers refer to the objects of perception and the cognitive processes associated with them as always already belonging to some underlying "I".

The crux of Hegel's criticism is that if we cannot escape our own experience, in order to verify whether this experience really "corresponds"\* with the things it is "about", then we cannot hope to conclude that we know anything at all. If we suppose, as Kant did, that this distinction accurately reflects the way we come to know things, then we may be justified in asking how we know anything at all, or at least we could say that this knowledge could never be true, in the sense that it could never reflect the way reality *actually* is. For knowledge to be true, presumably we would want it to reflect the way things really are. But if our faculties alter the object of awareness in their very function as faculties, then it seems we are not permitted to hold that our knowledge is genuine knowledge – or that it does not get at the truth of the object.

These metaphors presuppose that there is a distinction to be made between the self and the object of knowledge. We can still describe the functions of the internal faculties, but the real content of these faculties, that

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\* The use of "... " around "corresponds" here is meant to emphasise the fact that I am not speaking of any sort of correspondence theory of truth.

which apparently lies outside of consciousness, will remain beyond comprehension. In fact, in his essay “Glauben und Wissen”, Hegel accuses Kant's idealism, and his whole project, of being thoroughly subjective, explaining nothing beyond the confines of our internal life.

... [T]he whole task and content of this philosophy is, not the cognition of the Absolute, but the cognition of subjectivity. In other words, it is a critique of the cognitive faculties.<sup>15</sup>

The argument Hegel is giving us is an argument against the enterprise of epistemology as traditionally conceived. It is not epistemology in general that Hegel is rejecting, but the presupposition that there is a gap that needs to be closed between consciousness and the world. If we start epistemology from this point, we will inevitably end up with a conclusion open to scepticism. As such, this will only ever leave us in a position of being able to explain our subjective faculties and never what goes on beyond them.

The fact of the matter is, despite how “natural” it seems, we need not assume that cognition does anything to the object of knowledge. Hegel thinks we should in fact assume otherwise, that all cognition does is bring the thing closer, or “into view”. We would be much in error if we were to treat cognition as doing anything more than “creating a merely immediate and therefore effortless relationship.”<sup>16</sup> This would seem to indicate that Hegel is in agreement with the idea that cognition is in fact passive. However, if we conceive of cognition as a medium, and subtract its “law” or “refraction” from the end result we would be left with something empty. If we were to, as Kant can be read as arguing\*, consider something as it is in itself, we would not have insight into things entirely unconditioned, but instead, into something devoid of any real intelligibility.

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<sup>15</sup> Hegel, G.W.F, “Glauben und Wissen”, p. 68

<sup>16</sup> Hegel, G.W.F, *Phenomenology of Spirit* p. 47

\* Cf. the discussion of this in the previous chapter, under “Transcendental Idealism Reconsidered”

For it is not the refraction of the ray, *but the ray itself whereby truth reaches us, that is cognition*; and if this were removed, all that would be indicated would be a pure direction or blank space.<sup>17</sup> [emphasis added]

For Hegel, we need to give up the notion that our senses and conceptual schemes are “tools” through which we come to *know* about external objects. It is not the case that our faculties are closed off from the world, but are actually part of the world we come to know. It is as Heidegger explains,

... '[W]orld' is not a way of characterising those entities which Dasein [human existence] essentially is *not*; it is rather a characteristic of Dasein itself.<sup>18</sup>

The world, for Heidegger as for Hegel, is not to be conceived of as being external in the sense that we are separated from it; that group of things which we *are not*. Instead, we are always already *in* the world, alongside objects even when we abstract from everything in order to “think” philosophically about them. Consciousness is in fact part of the world that we experience. It is not the case that there is the object *and* the object as it is for consciousness. There is just my consciousness of the object. From this we cannot, and should not, construct an image of cognition that radically separates what we are aware of from that awareness.

From this, we resolve the apparent difficulty of there being an appearance of the object *for* consciousness and the nature of the object as it is *in itself*, outside of consciousness. If what we are trying to make sense of is how consciousness is related to objects, and to do this we make consciousness the focus of our enquiry, then there is nothing that is unavailable to us. There is no “beyond” which lies outside of consciousness; even any positing of such a “beyond” is a positing done within consciousness, which means that the *in-itself* is always bound up with our awareness of objects. For Hegel, what Kant failed to realise was that it is not even possible to conceive of a beyond, a

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<sup>17</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>18</sup> Heidegger, M. *Being and Time* p. 92

noumenal. Any attempt to do so is an attempt *by* consciousness, and so such a beyond is available *to* consciousness.

So much for Hegel's criticism in the Introduction to his *Phenomenology*. Perhaps a more incisive, and less analysed criticism of Kant comes further on, towards the end of the section on perception and throughout the section on Force and the Understanding. Its expression is (somewhat characteristically where Hegel is concerned) dizzying, but once you find yourself afloat in its content, it is indeed an illuminating piece of work, a *reductio ad absurdum* of Kant's system. That said, I wish to demonstrate exactly what is going on in this part of the *Phenomenology*.

#### 4.1.2 Perception

In his chapter on perception, Hegel lays out a broadly Lockean account of perception and representation, before showing how it falls apart. Consciousness deals with objects as they appear through their properties, but is unable to account for the underlying substance in which these properties must inhere. This is a familiar philosophical debate: how can an object merely be the sum of its properties, when these properties would seem to *belong* to an object? For Hegel, consciousness in the form of perception cannot provide an adequate explanation of this appearance, and so it becomes consciousness in the form of "Understanding". Hegel seems to be alluding to scientific enquiry here, because he claims the only way consciousness can account for the unity of properties with substance is through developing the notion of "Force"; that invisible phenomenon which is nothing other than its own external expression. This expression in turn is nothing more than that which binds properties and substance into a unified perception. But this would leave us with a realm of scientific forces and laws which are utterly invisible to the understanding, whilst being necessary to overcome the problems of perceptual consciousness. We end up with an unseen world, "behind the scenes", which acts as a "substratum" to the objects the Understanding attempts to synthesise. However, this is just the return of the Kantian thing-



in-itself which we were trying to avoid. To see why, we need only focus on the fact that for Hegel, a force is only evident at all in its “expression”: the effect it has on perceivable items. Recourse is made to a realm of forces which we cannot know “in themselves”, only in their effect – which is also their (mere) appearance.

But, before going into greater detail about Hegel’s description of the Understanding, it is necessary first to refer back to the end of the section on perception. Here, Hegel states “... but the many are, *in their determinateness*, simple universals themselves. This salt is a simple Here, and at the same time manifold; it is white and *also* tart, *also* cubical in shape ...”<sup>19</sup> So when we perceive an object, say, a grain of salt, we perceive it as a specific thing, a single object (a “Here” as Hegel puts it). But this object also has individual properties which we might say are brought together in the perception of the specific object. Hence: the salt is white in colour, but *also* bitter to taste, *also* crystalline and so on. The importance of this point is that the perception of one of these properties excludes the others. We “shift” through each property, so that when we perceive the salt as being salty, this property is perceived in isolation from the rest; in effect, we do not directly perceive the salt as being white *and* bitter at the same time. The “manifold” Hegel mentions is this “also”, the fact that in perceiving one particular property, we isolate this property from all the others the object possesses.

But for all that, there must also be a thing in which these properties hang together as a whole. We still apprehend that in tasting the bitterness, we are perceiving the same grain of salt we were when, a moment earlier, we were seeing “whiteness”. We recognise the bitterness and whiteness as properties relating to *this* salt, and in fact, the recognition of properties demands that there be a unitary object. This means that the actual object and its recognisable properties are inseparable, but this is not to say that the object *is merely* its properties. A property without a substrate is inconceivable. But also, if an object were merely to be its properties, presumably its nature would change

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* p. 68

depending on which property had entered perception. So Hegel wishes to retain consciousness's recognition of individual properties, and at the same time the unity of these properties in the thing. However, Hegel also notices another peculiarity regarding perception's inability to do the necessary work at this level; it comes in the form of the "in-so-far-as".

What the nature of these untrue essences is really trying to get [perceptual] understanding to do is to *bring together*, and thereby supersede, the *thoughts* of those non-entities ... But the Understanding struggles to avoid doing this by resorting to 'in so far as' ...<sup>20</sup>

What is being said here resonates with an interesting issue in medieval philosophy. The classic example is that of what it is that makes a particular old, ugly and wise man Socrates, but also what it is that makes Socrates human. The properties of being "old", "ugly" and "wise" are not properties of *all* humans. However, at the same time, we need to account for how it comes to be that being old, ugly, wise and human are properties in the same substance; how do all these individual properties hang together in the requisite way? Not just that, but the property of being human seems to exclude the properties of being old, ugly and wise, in the same way that one property of a grain of salt excludes the others in Hegel's example. Thus, on the one hand, we have an issue of "substrate": what is it that allows the properties of "oldness", "ugliness", "wisdom" and humanity to be held together in a particular individual (Socrates)? On the other hand, we have a "formal" problem of trying to understand how Socrates can be human *in-so-far-as* he is *not merely* old, ugly and wise, since we can have a human being that is none of these things.<sup>21</sup> In Hegel's words, we need to explain how it occurs that we have "... the thoughts of that universality and singular being, of 'Also' and 'One', of the essentiality that is *necessarily* linked to the unessential moment, and of an unessential moment that yet is necessary."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* p. 78

<sup>21</sup> Frederick C. Copleston, *A History of Medieval Philosophy* pp. 109-110

<sup>22</sup> *Op. Cit.*

At this point, perceptual consciousness is unable to account for this peculiar observation. It needs to resort to a phenomenon which can unify the object with its properties, but this must be something unseen. Therefore, it cannot be perceptual consciousness any more, seeing as this form of consciousness is trapped within the things it can have presented to it through experience. It becomes "Understanding", the kind of consciousness which can synthesise the data given to it through the senses by positing phenomena that act unperceived. So it is apparent then that Hegel has been led to Kant's position. The Understanding is that faculty which consists of conceptual apparatus, which it then applies to reality. That said, for Hegel, the Understanding represents only one manner in which the self can interpret reality; and this process of interpretation will only ever be, in the last analysis, a process of *self-confirmation*.<sup>23</sup> But this is not to say that Hegel is agreeing with Kant. In fact, we shall see that Hegel plays "devil's advocate" here, adopting Kant's position in order to show how the Understanding, like Perception, breaks down when faced with a certain inconsistency.

#### 4.1.3 Force

This unperceived substrate, that allows things to have properties and maintain interactions with one another, Hegel calls Force; an allusion to scientific enquiry. Force, for Hegel, has two attributes. It operates "behind the scenes", but we come to know of it through its expression in appearances. Force in-itself and Force expressed are essentially bound together, such that it looks as if Force is nothing other than its expression.

In Newtonian physics, for example, Newton gave us a mathematical definition of Force: mass multiplied by acceleration ( $m \times a$ ). Now if this is the definition of Force, are we not thereby defining Force purely in terms of its quantification? But Force cannot in fact *be* mass times acceleration, this is just the way we represent and measure it.

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<sup>23</sup> Solomon, R. "Hegel's Epistemology" p.40

So Force as it acts in-itself gets re-described by the Understanding, such that we lose that qualitative action of Force in order to capture its expression formally. Force in-itself essentially and necessarily gets “translated” into talk of Force as it is observed. Content becomes form. Thus, Hegel’s dialectic of the Understanding begins to unfold. But Hegel is more general than to speak of just one Force (gravity, say) and instead is thinking more of Force as a term which covers all possible forces (by today’s standards, the four fundamental forces as well). Jean Hyppolite understands Hegel as going on to say:

When we envisage the fall of a body in space, we posit the same being twice: as reality, the motion is a juxtaposition that can be broken down into parts ... but we can consider the “whole of the motion”, the integral of which it is the realization. We then have force, the content of which is identical to its manifestation, but which *formally* differs from that manifestation.<sup>24</sup>

Force itself differs from its appearance but is nonetheless only evident in its appearance as a Force that *affects* objects. Take for example the idea of the “composition” of forces in physics. If we want to know the movement of a body in motion, we can consider two or more “compositional” forces acting upon the body. Thus, the resultant force equals the sum of the compositional forces. So, in the case of the movement of a bicycle, we can do the following: refer to the “driving force” (which is the force exerted on the bicycle by the rider), the weight of the bicycle and the rider, air resistance against the bicycle and the rider and the friction of the wheels against the ground. By taking all these components together and subtracting those aspects which impede the motion of the bicycle, we can generate a single value, which represents the resultant force of the bicycle in motion: that is, the force which accounts for the acceleration of the bicycle.

With respect to Hegel, when we consider the notion of a resultant force we end up with something peculiar: the content of the resultant force is the same as its manifestation as the sum of the compositional forces. However, the

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<sup>24</sup> Jean Hyppolite, *Genesis and Structure of Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 122

*form* of the resultant force is somehow different. It differs in terms of form because the value of the resultant force is one, single value, which is different from all of the constituent values of the other forces. But, we can only generate this single resultant value by taking together the values of the compositional forces. The point is that whilst the form is different because we have a different value, the content is the same just because that value is *composed* of the value of the other forces in play. It seems then that the Understanding plays the role of synthesising the compositional forces into one, expressed Force. This Force exists only insofar as it can be expressed, yet it can only be expressed insofar as we can ascertain the value of the compositional forces.

Through a series of dense descriptions, Hegel shifts from talk of a “play of Forces” (*spiel der Kräfte*) to an actual conflict of different Forces. The thought being that the initial Force would have no expression at all were it not for the interaction it has with another Force. The one Force “solicits” the other. We can see this in the idea of a magnet. Magnetic Force itself is “indifferent” to which pole is negative and which positive. The Understanding consciousness selects these labels quite independently of any essential feature of a magnet. All we can really say is that two poles of the same type repel whilst poles of different types attract. The point is that whether it be negative-negative or positive-positive, the observable phenomenon is the same: repulsion. But for all that, we would not be able to understand magnetic Force as doing anything at all were it not for the introduction of another piece of metal to “solicit” the initial one. This creates an expression which we can observe and attempt to describe.

Hegel wants to criticise the notion that we are explaining something when we posit two forces acting on each other. It seems to be that the introduction of two Forces in opposition is just a pragmatic way of explaining observable phenomena, but we are not explaining anything about the phenomenon of Force itself. The repulsion of two magnets is utterly indifferent to the labels we assign to the non-perceivable forces in action. Just as in the idea of composition, the values of the compositional forces are used

to provide a value for the resultant force, but to what extent is this “resultant force” really explaining the acceleration of a body any more than the compositional ones? It seems, were Hegel to talk of resultant force, all we are really doing is providing a *re-description* of the observable. A group of bicycles differs from an individual one only formally; it tells us nothing about the nature of a bicycle. A group of compositional forces gathered together into a resultant force only differs insofar as we get *one* value instead of many. It tells us nothing about the nature of Force itself. Pushed to its extreme, we may even say that we are positing *non-existent* forces to account for observations in existent entities. And if this is the case, which Hegel certainly seems to be saying it is, what we find in the supersensible beyond is not a set of forces acting unperceived, but the activity of our own consciousness.

Thus, the truth of Force remains only the *thought* of it; the moments of its actuality, their substances and their movement collapse into an undifferentiated unity, a unity which is not Force driven back into itself ... but its *Notion qua Notion*.<sup>25</sup>

#### 4.1.4 Laws

If we grant the above as being true, we may still, at this point, rest assured that laws do the real explaining; one explanatory law to explain the very nature of a Force’s interactions and relations. However, Hegel rejects the idea that introducing Laws gives us an explanatory advantage over Force. We can witness today the enduring search for a Law/set of Laws that has the explanatory power to unite quantum physics with Einstein's physics of relativity (action at a distance providing an interesting example of such difficulties). Such a set of simple Laws would thus be able to reconcile the merely probable phenomena at the quantum level with the “macroscopic” and definite, law-like interactions of bodies of mass in space-time. Hegel would deny that such a reconciliation is possible. The idea being that scientists seek

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<sup>25</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 86

to “let many laws collapse into one law”<sup>26</sup> but are unable to achieve this, on dialectical grounds.

The problem can be seen as follows: we construct *one* Law to explain a certain phenomenon, and a different Law to explain another. However, in their character as Laws, we must then construct yet another Law to explain how these two Laws relate to each other. Hegel is demanding *unification*, when all he takes himself to be getting from science (the Understanding) is an ever expanding number of seemingly incommensurable laws. We can see a similar argument in F.H Bradley's *Appearance and Reality*. Bradley states that the very idea of universals and particulars, or subject-predicate judgements is problematic. When we predicate something of a subject, e.g. “the sky is blue”, we require a relation to demonstrate how “blue” can be predicated of “sky”. But then this relation itself requires another relation to demonstrate how it links the initial judgement together. We are thus sent off on an infinite regress, constantly needing to compose new relations to account for the previous ones.<sup>27</sup>

So, Hegel talks of Laws becoming superficial. On the one hand, they are so phenomena-specific that they end up looking a lot like our appeal to Force: arbitrary and entirely dependent upon another Force for qualification. In other words, Hegel sees a problem in how we can map a general law onto specific phenomena, without thereby losing explanatory power. On the other hand, if we keep constructing Laws that are more and more general to encapsulate the “lower” Laws, we will eventually construct something so general that it is “just the *mere Notion of law itself* ...”<sup>28</sup> We would end up with something that has the form of a Law without any of the content. “The law becomes more and more superficial, and as a result what is found is, in fact, not the unity of *these specific laws*, but a law which leaves out their specific character ...”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* p. 91

<sup>27</sup> Francis Herbert Bradley, *Appearance and Reality* pp. 25-34

<sup>28</sup> *Op. Cit.*

<sup>29</sup> *Idem.*

#### 4.1.5 The Supersensible “*Verkehrtwelt*”

If we recall, the transition from Perceptual consciousness to the Understanding was tracked because unity in phenomena posed a problem for perception. However, the understanding strives for just this; unity is the aim of the Understanding, that form of consciousness that actively posits Force to relate phenomena, and Laws to explain Force. But Law, as with Force, comes out looking problematic, and it would seem at this point that a transition to another form of consciousness is required to overcome the problems associated with the Understanding. At this point though, Hegel thinks the Understanding makes one last attempt to salvage its explanatory power and this is where Hegel begins to adopt the Kantian notion of the “noumenon”, which Hegel terms the “supersensible”. Hegel thinks that this supersensible realm is either a realm of Forces and Laws underneath the appearances, or it is a realm where consciousness actively transcends appearances, so there is nothing there but the activity of consciousness. Hegel's argument going forward is reminiscent of the approach taken by Kant in his antinomies, and we can express it as a simple either-or: either we, **(a)** like Kant, deem the supersensible to be the noumenal aspect of reality, ultimately and essentially beyond knowledge; or we **(b)** conclude that the world of appearances is itself contradictory. Both routes for Hegel are equally fruitless.

Hegel introduces the easily misunderstood notion of the *Verkehrtwelt* – a “topsy-turvy” or “inverted” world. In this world, everything is the complete opposite of how it appears.

According, then, to the law of this inverted world, what is *like* in the first world is *unlike* to itself, and what is *unlike* in the first world is equally *unlike to itself*, or it becomes *like* itself ... [T]his means that what in the law of the first world is sweet, in this inverted in-itself is sour, what in the former is black is, in the other, white.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* p. 97



Here, Hegel seems to be following what Adorno terms Kant's "duplication of the world"<sup>31</sup> With this bizarre description, Hegel does not mean to paint what he thinks is a true picture of reality. He is setting himself up to demonstrate how perverse the notion of the noumenon actually is. The Understanding, by trying to account for phenomena with scientific explanations, winds up creating a world that is by its own standards inconsistent. The move seems to imply that Kant was stuck at the level of the Understanding all along, whereas what he should have realised was that whilst the Understanding cannot gain epistemic access to this world, Reason, as Hegel conceives it, can. Reason deals with the world as it is "in-itself-for-us".<sup>32</sup>

In keeping with the rest of this chapter thus far, Hegel introduces another supersensible world which is in conflict with the former. The former supersensible world is this scientific realm of Laws and Forces, whilst the second is the *Verkehrtwelt* proper. Now in the realm of appearances, the world as it is for consciousness, we are aware of *changes* in phenomena. This simply means that when, say, the north pole of one magnet is exposed to the south pole of another, the two magnets attract; there has been a change, in space, of the position of the magnets. The Understanding accounts for this change by constructing universal Laws, the content of which remains constant (like, for example, Einstein's idea that the speed of light  $c$  is constant). So, in the world of experience, we observe change over time. However, in the first supersensible world, we have unchanging and eternal phenomena: Laws. Hegel's second supersensible world, as the opposite of the first, contains again ever changing and differing phenomena: "Through this principle, the first supersensible world, the tranquil kingdom of laws, the immediate copy of the perceived world, is changed into its opposite"<sup>33</sup> If this second supersensible world is the reality of the world of Laws, then the apparently constant laws which we used to explain change in appearances are also subject to change. The Laws lose their character as universal by definition, since we are using

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<sup>31</sup> Theodor Adorno, *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason* p. 109

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* p. 102

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* p. 96

them to explain the specific and dynamic. Hegel's claim is that at the level of the Understanding, consciousness will demand deeper and deeper levels of explanation; but the deeper the levels get, the shallower the explanations become.

Unlike the world of Laws, Hegel seems to want to make the baffling claim that the second supersensible world is indeed real. This would mean that here, Hegel is taking the second route **(b)** mentioned earlier: that the world in itself is contradictory. However, Hegel is taking route **(b)** in order to demonstrate the absurdity of Kant's position. For if we propose a noumenal realm, we are in no way justified in saying what the properties of things in this realm are like. The noumenal properties of objects that are supposed to structure the appearance of phenomenal properties may be the complete opposite, or in no way similar, to their phenomenal counterparts. The existence of a noumenal realm *leads to* contradiction in reality.

#### **4.1.6 Implications for Transcendental Idealism**

When pushed to its limits in this way, transcendental idealism creates more problems than it solves, because it implicitly allows for the possibility of a contradiction at the ontological level. But it is quite perverse to say that contradictions exist. One might respond to this by saying that the noumenon does not in itself contradict the phenomena or vice versa. There would be no contradiction to notice if it were not for the appearance of phenomena in consciousness, and this, for Kant, is none other than the imposition of concepts upon the noumena. Or that the understanding and its conceptual structures are the condition for the possibility of any recognition of contradiction, and as pre-categorized, the noumena cannot intelligibly be said to contradict anything at all. However, the point can be pressed: if the imposition of concepts upon reality leaves space *for the possibility of* contradiction *in* reality, then why should we hold to such a distinction in the first place? Hegel's answer is that we really should not. We would be in a much less perverse position if we assumed that we experience reality directly, and that cognition

does nothing but create “a merely immediate and therefore effortless relationship.”<sup>34</sup> Hegel seems to be attempting to show that from adherence to Kant's notion of the noumena, anything can follow, even a bizarre world of opposites.

This is the true power of Hegel's argument here. Kant was aware of such a situation, as alluded to in his antinomies, where Kant demonstrated that an attempt at knowing the thing-in-itself causes irreconcilable contradiction.

Here reason tries at first, with the illusion of great plausibility, to establish its principle of **unconditioned** unity, but soon becomes entangled in so many contradictions that it must, with regard to cosmology, give up its claims to such unity.<sup>35</sup>

But the problem, as far as Hegel sees it, is that if positing a “beyond”, a noumenal, creates such entanglements, then we should not abide by such a positing. For him, all of this unrest in the dialectic of the Understanding amounts to one thing: that the Understanding (science; transcendental idealism) is a stop-gap in the actual phenomenology of Spirit. The confusion indicates nothing else than that transcendental idealism is to be overcome (or “sublated”; transcended and preserved) by a new form of cognition.

However, this does not remove the difficulty which motivated Kant: how can one reconcile the scientific world view with the moral/human one? That is: if we are to agree with Hegel, that what appears to us in consciousness is the way reality is in itself, then a major epistemological conflict still seems to exist; the conflict between scientific and human world views.

We should consider one important way in which the *Phenomenology* progresses – from one form of consciousness to another, it is this: the (*very same*) world *appears* differently to different forms of (*the very same*) consciousness. A useful way to compare this is by thinking of Heidegger's distinction between the present-at-hand and the ready-to-hand (which will be

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* p. 47

<sup>35</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B433

explained in more detail in the next chapter). When viewed theoretically, the world throws up all the structures of science. It becomes impersonal because our actual view of the object has changed. The mountain can either be a source of building materials, when viewed practically or “ready-to-hand” but when viewed theoretically, “present-at-hand”, it becomes a geological structure. This is not to say that we never apprehend the object as it is in-itself, but merely that any apprehension of an object is loaded with a significance, dependent on our practical context. When we *want* something from an object, or have a desire to put it to use, it gains a practical significance. However, when we merely want to examine an object to gain scientific knowledge, it is furnished with a theoretical significance. Nothing about the object has changed, merely the manner in which it is apprehended.<sup>36</sup> A tree still maintains the same basic properties (of being tall, brown and with foliage [dependent on the season]), but it is loaded with a different significance *for* specific instances of observation or observers. But without a consistent apprehension of the tree as it is in-itself, it remains impossible to see how these varying instances could be unified. Hegel eliminates the need for a noumenal and sees the commensurability of these instances as lying within a dialectical process that is beyond the individual Spirit, but non-transcendental in nature; it lies within the interactions between multiple observers and hence, Hegel proceeds to the dialectic of Lordship and Bondage.

That said, when looking at Hegel’s argument about scientific Forces from a modern perspective (having the advantage of living in a post-Einsteinian age), we see that it is somewhat dubious. We seem to be learning more and more about the nature of forces themselves and the fundamental effects they have had on the universe as a whole. With the benefit of such hindsight, we might even question whether modern physics really does operate as Hegel describes it. This is a debate out of place in this thesis. The real point here is when we take Hegel to be opposing transcendental idealism in ‘Force and the Understanding’, there is a genuine and valuable argument.

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<sup>36</sup> Heidegger, M. *Being and Time* pp. 91-107

*Part Two*

Concerning Heideggerian  
Worldhood and Freedom

# *Heidegger and the Notion of Worldhood*

## **5.1 Introduction**

We have seen how Hegel makes important moves towards going beyond the Kantian philosophy of his time. In his dialectic on Force and the Understanding, Hegel develops an argument that accuses Kantianism of *material* contradiction. We can – and must – distinguish between this type of contradiction and that of *conceptual* contradiction if we are to understand Hegel clearly enough. For Hegel’s dialectic makes definite use of the latter, showing how apparently opposed concepts inherently bleed into one another, such that, in the case previously discussed, the expression of some physical force turns out to be nothing other than the activity of the understanding when it attempts to explain observations regarding the world. But this contradiction lies merely in force and the understanding *qua* concepts. What this dialectic shows is that Kantianism, in its commitment to the idea of an unknowable thing-in-itself, is guilty of a more severe contradiction that Hegel succeeds in avoiding.

However, Hegel does not move beyond idealism completely. For him, the only notion of a thing-in-itself that makes sense is one which is merely the expression of some aspect of consciousness. The Absolute Idealism which Hegel espouses is one that unfolds in the *Phenomenology*; in other words, the whole of the *Phenomenology* is the description of consciousness as it proceeds towards greater and greater self-knowledge, and, by extension, greater knowledge of reality in itself. It becomes difficult to see how Hegel’s advances over Kantianism do not in the end collapse into a form of idealism that is even more ontologically suspect than Kant’s. For if reality is the reflection of the multitude of ways that consciousness apprehends itself, we seem to lose the epistemological gap at the cost of any account of a concrete world. But this is misleading. It is more accurate to see Hegel as attempting to bring all of reality

*within* the domain of the understanding. Not, as in Berkeley, by claiming that the understanding constitutes reality, but by showing that reality and the understanding are intimately tied together. In other words, the Kantian thing-in-itself can be nothing other than an aspect of the understanding.

At the very least, Hegel's engagement with Kantianism provides us with a way beyond representational theories of knowledge. It also allows us to salvage the *a priori* without being committed to the idea that we cannot know anything about reality beyond the use we make of these *a priori* categories. The drawback is he still does not move beyond idealism. To achieve this, I propose a turn towards the work of Martin Heidegger, whose phenomenological investigations into the nature of object and world-disclosure furnishes us with all the advantages of the Hegelian move beyond Kant, whilst also avoiding the collapse into any form of idealism.

This chapter aims to move beyond German idealism completely. We have already seen, through Hegel's forms of consciousness, how the Kantian phenomenal realm fails to deliver on its promise to dissolve the tension between freedom and natural necessity. We saw Hegel develop forms of consciousness to compensate for this, Kant being one step in a teleological journey that brings us closer to Absolute self-knowledge. But as we have discussed, Hegel was still very much locked within the idealism of his predecessors, albeit in a different form. Introducing the Heideggerian notion of Worldhood allows us to see a way out of idealism on the one hand, and gives us the theoretical apparatus to conjure a new notion of freedom that can successfully dissolve the problem of freedom and natural necessity – that of Freedom-in-the-World.

To begin this turn of focus, I suggest we pay close attention to a passage in Heidegger's *Being and Time*. Of 'worldhood', Heidegger says:

*That wherein Dasein understands itself beforehand in the mode of assigning itself is that for which it has let entities be encountered beforehand. The "wherein" of an act of understanding which assigns or refers itself, is that for which one lets entities be encountered*

*in the kind of Being that belongs to involvements; and this "wherein" is the phenomenon of the world.*<sup>37</sup>

There are two main reasons I begin with this passage. (1) It is a great example of Heidegger's use of original terminology; he makes a very explicit attempt to avoid using the terms of other philosophers, which can be both fascinating at times, and frustrating at others. (2) Packed into this passage is, in fact, a succinct definition of *exactly* what Heidegger understands worldhood to be. However, to see this exactness, it is necessary to unpack both the terminology in the passage and the steps leading up to it.

## 5.2 Hegelian and Heideggerian Phenomenology

Firstly, we need to be sure about what "phenomenology" means to both thinkers. They use the same term in different senses. As we have seen, Hegel's intention in the *Phenomenology* is to allow us to observe the different *forms* of consciousness; the development of consciousness as it advances in its understanding of the world, and, by extension, itself. Thus, "phenomenology" as Hegel conceives it is not a method but a movement, which he describes as "the way of the Soul which journeys through its own configurations as though they were appointed for it by its own nature."<sup>38</sup> Hegel is really only attempting to lead the philosopher through different modes of consciousness to the point where one is set to realise that all along, what we assumed to know about *external* objects was merely self-reference – that the thing-in-itself coincides with the thing as it is *for-consciousness*. In turn, the progress of philosophy as a whole coincides with the progress of consciousness at the level of Spirit. With that in mind, we can say that Hegel's use of the term "phenomenology" refers to "the *absolute self-presentation of reason ...*"<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Heidegger, M. *Being and Time* p. 119

<sup>38</sup> Hegel, G.W.F *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 49

<sup>39</sup> Heidegger, M. *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit* p. 30



His motivation for this is to “help bring philosophy closer to the form of Science, to the goal where it can lay aside the title ‘love of knowing’ and be *actual* knowing...”<sup>40</sup>

This has little, if anything in common with the way in which Heidegger uses the term “phenomenology” in relation to his own project. On this very issue, Heidegger states:

The *Phenomenology* has nothing to do with a phenomenology of consciousness as currently understood in Husserl’s sense – either in its theme or in the manner of its treatment, or above all in terms of its basic questioning and intention. This is true not only if this phenomenology of consciousness is given the task of universally grounding and justifying the scientificity of every conceivable science, but also if the transcendental phenomenology of consciousness is obliged to take on the task of exploring and grounding the constitution of human culture universally, with reference to consciousness.<sup>41</sup>

So, where Hegel attempts to describe the forms of consciousness as they progress and develop, with the intention of making philosophy “actual knowledge”, phenomenology as Husserl conceives it is a *method* of understanding the intentional structure of consciousness – the peculiar fact that consciousness is always *about* something; it always has an object. Husserl was also not concerned with making philosophy more scientific *per se*, but instead he saw philosophy as having the power to ground the sciences; in a sense, his motivation was to make the sciences themselves more philosophically rigorous. It is this latter sense of the term “phenomenology” that Heidegger inherits.

However, Heidegger is more sensitive to the subtleties of the Ancient Greek terms that go to make up the word “phenomenology”. This modern term is composed of the Greek verb φαίνόμενον, “*phainomenon*” (“to show”, to become “unhidden”), and the Greek noun λόγος, “*logos*” (“to say”, “speech”, “discourse”). Sensitivity to this composition allows us to see the

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<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.* p. 3

<sup>41</sup> Heidegger, M. *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 28

specific way in which Heidegger will use “phenomenology”. It is a method of letting “that which shows itself be seen from in itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself.”<sup>42</sup> In other words, phenomenology of this sort is concerned with things exactly as they are disclosed to some observer or other. These ideas of something becoming “unhidden” or “disclosed” will play a crucial role in the development of Freedom-in-the-world later in the thesis.

That said, and despite Heidegger’s protestations in the passage above, there is an important way in which Hegel’s and Heidegger’s phenomenologies are similar. They both place emphasis on self-manifestation. The main difference is that in Hegel’s work we are presented with the self-manifestation of Reason, whereas in Heidegger, we are given an actual mode of doing philosophy, which dedicates itself to describing the manner in which objects are manifested in experience. In any attempt to bring these two thinkers together, it is essential to notice this difference, because it is a difference that determines the “arm’s length” at which we should also keep the two apart.

There is also another possible confusion that I wish to allay here. One might question whether my selection of Heidegger to supplement Hegel is a somewhat arbitrary move. Or maybe one would wish to criticise such a move on the grounds that I may be guilty of trying to clear up a possible complexity in Hegel’s thought with the possible complexity of someone else’s. This is not the case. What should be stressed is that the notion of “subjectivity” implicit in Heidegger’s conception of World bears a striking similarity to Hegel’s analysis of our relation to knowledge of the in-itself. Or more precisely: both thinkers attempt an abandonment of the traditional notion of “subjectivity” as a private realm, in favour of one which places the subject in the world *essentially*. I will present Heidegger’s move in this respect later, but for now it suffices to say that this similarity is enough to justify the introduction of Heidegger in response to Hegel.

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<sup>42</sup> Heidegger, M. *Being and Time*, p. 58

### 5.3 Readiness-to-hand and Presence-at-hand

Any proper understanding of Heidegger's concept of World requires an understanding of one of his insightful distinctions – “*zuhandenheit*” and “*vorhandenheit*”; “Readiness-to-hand” and “Presence-at-hand”. To understand this distinction is essential because it is in highlighting these differing manners in which we grasp external objects that Heidegger argues we can come to a clear definition of the phenomenon of World. The importance that readiness-to-hand will end up carrying is significant enough for me to dedicate a substantial section to showing what it is and how Heidegger thinks it can lead us to World.

But first, it is necessary to give ourselves an indication of why Heidegger believes an elucidation of World is needed, or what possible thing he could be aiming to clarify when he refers to World. As humans *in* the world, our mode of Being (the manner in which we exist) may be described as Being-in-the-world. Therefore World is “one of the constitutive items of Being-in-the-world.”<sup>43</sup> However, Being-in-the-world is a way to describe an agent's “Being”, as it is existing. It is an *existential* characteristic and thus World is classified as what Heidegger calls an *existential* – it is something that goes to make up part of our “existence-structure”.<sup>44</sup> “Ontologically, ‘world’ is not a way of characterising those entities which Dasein essentially is *not*; it is rather a characteristic of Dasein itself.”<sup>45</sup> Dasein is Heidegger's term for the human being, but he sees it as a less presumptuous term. For it pertains to the feature of a human being that it is “there” *in* the world, hence, “*Da*” (there) “*Sein*” (being) – “there-being”. Heidegger wants to be able to refer to the human being in such a way that our inherited assumptions regarding “human being” (such as “consciousness”, or “rational animal”) do not creep in to the phenomenological analysis itself.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> *Being and Time* p. 92

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.* p. 70

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* p. 91

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.* p. 17

That said, in treating the world in this manner, we do not necessarily need to make our investigation a purely subjective one. We can still inquire about World by treating the Being of entities in the world. If we fail to notice that Being-in-the-world “is a state of Dasein”<sup>47</sup> then we immediately lose access to the World. “[E]ven the phenomenon of ‘Nature’, as it is conceived, for instance, in romanticism, can be grasped ontologically only in terms of the concept of world ...”<sup>48</sup> One of the crucial breakthroughs of Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology is something that is retained in Heidegger’s existential analytic, and we see this retention nowhere more clearly than in the above statement regarding the avoidance of subjectivity.

It would be a naive misreading of phenomenology in general if we were to argue that it is too subjective – that in analysing one’s own experiences, all we achieve is a clarification of the structure of our own experiences alone. But, as mentioned, the phenomenology that Husserl developed (and was in some respects inherited by Heidegger) is safeguarded against such a misreading.

I must develop a purely *eidetic phenomenology* and that in [this] alone the first actualization of a philosophical science – the actualization of a “first philosophy” – takes place or can take place. After transcendental reduction, my true interest is directed to my pure ego, to the uncovering of this de facto ego. But the uncovering can become genuinely scientific, only if I go back to the apodictic principles that pertain to this ego as exemplifying the *eidos* ego: the essential universalities and necessities by means of which the fact is to be related to its rational grounds (those of its pure possibility) and this made scientific (logical).<sup>49</sup>

What is meant here is that, by focusing on the content of one’s own experiences, phenomenology is that procedure by which we achieve truly objective results. The phenomenological method of enquiry takes as its object phenomena that are so basic, that if they are true of one’s own experience, they must also be true of anyone else’s. By finding what is necessarily the case for the structure of *my* experience, I subsequently find what is necessarily the case

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* p. 93

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* p. 94

<sup>49</sup> Husserl, E. *Cartesian Meditations*, §34

for *any possible* experience. By focussing on the meant content of my experience I am able to identify the structures of consciousness that make that content possible, and in doing so identify *a priori* the structure of any possible similar experience. Phenomenology allows us access to the universally applicable truths of the subject. As I only have my own subjectivity to observe, I must start with this single case. However, in finding what is most basic and primordial for my own subjectivity, I find what is most basic and primordial for any possible subjectivity. So, whilst the starting point of pure phenomenology is the experiences I have, or the Being that I am, its findings are held to apply universally - thus, any accusations of "subjectivity" cannot gain a foothold.

With that in mind, Heidegger's investigation into World will take the form of his "existential analytic" of Dasein. When we consider the Being of entities, we must do so as we encounter them in our everyday operations. This is when we are most "wrapped up" in the world. This relates to Heidegger's criticism of the idea that *res cogitans* (thinking substance) and *res extensa* (corporeal substance) can be distinguished neatly as thinking-thing and the object of thought. "For in our natural comportment toward things we never think a *single* thing, and whenever we seize upon it expressly for itself we are taking it *out* of a contexture to which it belongs in its real content ..." <sup>50</sup> Objects are cognitively present to us, Heidegger does not deny this. However, he thinks that when we are going about our everyday lives, thinking about, say, a wall, we in fact take that wall out of the context in which we initially encountered it - as part of a broader mass of other objects in the surroundings. In a manner of speaking, to "think" of a wall, in order to say, paint a certain section of it, we isolate the wall from the rest of the structure it is connected with, yet when we most immediately encounter this wall in our everyday dealings, we encounter it in its very connection with the rest of the structure. We do not just see a wall, but many walls, floors, skirting boards, shelves and whatever else. What is most primordial, for Heidegger then, is that initial

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<sup>50</sup> Heidegger, M. *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* p. 162

experience of the whole of the structure and, only on the basis of this, can we then isolate individual features of things.

The walls are present even before we think them as objects. Much else also gives itself to us before any determining of it by thought. But how? Not as a jumbled heap of things but as an environs, a surroundings, which contains within itself a closed, intelligible contexture.<sup>51</sup>

This is not to say that we gradually construct such a contexture as we progress through our everyday lives, but things are given to us *primarily* within this contexture. So “World” lies then in this contexture within which objects are most primordially encountered. In proceeding with a clarification of World, Heidegger believes it necessary not to concern ourselves with objects in the world as such, but the manner in which we grasp them as objects in the first place. So the phenomenological description of “World” will not be concerned with describing entities “in” the world as they appear to our senses. It is a case of describing these entities in their ontological dimension, which means “to exhibit the Being of those entities ...”<sup>52</sup> To highlight their *intelligibility* to the phenomenological observer and describe the structure of this intelligibility – the exposition of the *Being* of things.

Heidegger thinks that the most immediate “things” we apprehend are articles of equipment. Clearly there are specific categories or contexts of equipment, “equipment for working, for traveling, for measuring, and in general things with which we have to do.”<sup>53</sup> Despite this, we first encounter a totality of equipment (“*zeug*”), a whole of equipment which consists of the different types. This primary “seeing” of the equipmental totality is what Heidegger calls *circumspection*. This is our “practical everyday orientation.”<sup>54</sup> It is through circumspection that things are apprehended as articles of equipment. Equipment is not taken as a “theme” in thought; it is “non-thematic”. When philosophers take particular objects as examples of certain

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<sup>51</sup> *Op. Cit.* p. 163

<sup>52</sup> *Being and Time.* p. 91

<sup>53</sup> *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* p. 163

<sup>54</sup> *Idem.*

acts of thought (e.g. Descartes' wax) they are actually making the object their theme explicitly, thereby taking it out of the context within which it is actually most immediate to experience. "We say that any equipmental contexture environs us."<sup>55</sup> So our explication of Being must begin with the entities which go to make up our environment in everydayness. These will be entities with which we enter practical relations – tools, equipment, pens, mugs and so on. However, Heidegger's main intention is to find the underlying possibility of us being able to enter practical relations in the first place. "In the disclosure and explication of Being, entities are in every case our preliminary and our accompanying theme; but our real theme is Being."<sup>56</sup>

These objects, which we make our "accompanying theme" are not sorts of epistemological tools. We do not use them to analyse or make sense of the world in a theoretical way. "[T]hey are simply what gets used, what gets produced ..."<sup>57</sup> It is not a case of examining such objects and describing their ontical characteristics. As phenomenologists, we need to "determine the structure of Being which [these] entities possess."<sup>58</sup>

Thus, we do not need to place ourselves in a particular mode or "mindset" so that we can "imagine" a situation where we are engaged practically with objects. We do not need to construct thought experiments. This is because, as a matter of fact, this practical engagement is "the way in which everyday Dasein always is ..."<sup>59</sup> The aim is not to interpret our everyday dealings *per se*, but to describe our dealings with entities. These specifically are the entities Heidegger gives the name "equipment" to. "The kind of Being which equipment possesses must be exhibited ... [T]his lies in our first defining what makes an item of equipment – namely, its equipmentality."<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>56</sup> *Being and Time* p. 95

<sup>57</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.* p. 96

<sup>59</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.* p. 97

For every instance of equipment, we can say of it essentially that it is “something in-order-to ....”<sup>61</sup> For example, “this mug is used *in order to* drink from”, “this pen is used *in order to* write with ....” We can notice a “totality of equipment”<sup>62</sup> by noting a series of “in-order-to’s” that form a reference to different instances of equipment like links in a chain. “In the ‘in-order-to’ as a structure, there lies an *assignment* or *reference* of something to something.”<sup>63</sup>

Equipment ... [A]lways is *in terms of* its belonging to other equipment: ink-stand, pen, ink, paper, blotting pad, table, lamp, furniture, windows, doors, room.<sup>64</sup>

Heidegger thinks in this instance what we first proximally encounter is a room. But we do not encounter it as a spatial restriction “between four walls”, but “as somewhere to reside”. It is from this encounter that the arrangement emerges.<sup>65</sup> What is so important for Heidegger here is that the totality of equipment, stuff with all its relations to other stuff, is encountered before we seize upon any individual item of equipment. No matter how quickly I seize upon, say, the hook in-order-to hang my jacket, my most immediate experience is of the totality of equipment arranged in the room.

So Heidegger thinks that “[e]quipment can show itself only in dealings cut to its own measure ...”<sup>66</sup> Thus, the hook for hanging jackets is most apparent when we put it to use “in a way which could not possibly be more suitable.”<sup>67</sup> The equipment is constituted by its in-order-to structure, so when we use the hook in-order-to hang jackets, we enter into the most basic (primordial) relation with it, “and the more unveiledly is it encountered as that which it is – as equipment.”<sup>68</sup> The act of hanging my jacket reveals the specific function of the hook. In fact, we can explicitly state that it is in virtue of its function that we can take the hook as exactly what it is. “[T]he

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<sup>61</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>62</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>63</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>64</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.* p. 98

<sup>66</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>67</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>68</sup> *Idem.*



functionality that goes with ... [something] ... is exactly that which makes the thing what it is.”<sup>69</sup> Thus, something with this mode of appearing, whereby the thing is revealed to us as what it 'is' in virtue of what it can be used for (equipment) is what we call *ready-to-hand*. It is only because equipment can be ready-to-hand that it can be manipulated. The external appearance of an object will not suffice to reveal its readiness-to-hand. I cannot merely stare at the hook and find it useful. The act of putting equipment to use is not blind.<sup>70</sup> It is engaged, and this engagement imbues the object with its “specific Thingly character.”<sup>71</sup>

However, *presence-at-hand* is that mode of encounter we have with objects whereby we merely look at them or observe them for scientific or investigative reasons. We wish to make no use of them, we just aim to apprehend them. But as we have seen, Heidegger thinks that objects do not come to us in this manner, but to take an object in its presence-at-hand is to take it out of the context in which we first encountered it. When it comes to clarifying World then, the ready-to-hand will be given priority.

That said, the reader may well have been led into thinking that our everyday dealings “proximally dwell with the tools themselves.”<sup>72</sup> This is not the case; what we actually concern ourselves with is the work we intend to produce (where Heidegger uses “*werk*” in quite a specific manner – as in “A work of art” and not “I have to go to *work* today.” We would read the latter sense of “work” as “*arbeit*”). “The work to be produced, as the “*towards-which*” of such things as the hammer, the plane, and the needle, likewise has the kind of Being that belongs to equipment.”<sup>73</sup>

Heidegger's craft-like examples help to clarify the arguments at work here. If I intend to produce a bench, I am going to need the things mentioned in the passage above. Whilst each piece of equipment has its very own in-order-to structure (e.g. “hammer *in-order-to* bang nails into wood.”) their use

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<sup>69</sup> *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* p. 164

<sup>70</sup> *Op. Cit.*

<sup>71</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.* p. 99

<sup>73</sup> *Idem.*

is motivated by a definite goal or end, which is the thing to be produced – the bench. What we end up with then is a referential totality. “The saw in-order-to cut wood, the hammer in-order-to bang nails into wood, the plane in-order-to shave the wood, and all of this in-order-to construct the bench.” But the bench is ultimately constructed in-order-to sit on. It is for-the-sake-of Dasein to sit on (this is a point we will come back to later). For now it is enough to note that even in the series of in-order-to's leading to the completion of the bench, we are referred to a broader totality.

Hammer, tongs and needle, refer in themselves to steel, iron, metal, mineral, wood, in that they consist of these. In equipment that is used, 'Nature' is discovered along with it by that use – the 'Nature' we find in natural products.<sup>74</sup>

In this situation, we are not to conceive of Nature as merely being present-at-hand. Nature becomes an expanse of usable equipment – it is ready-to-hand. It is easy here to read Heidegger as justifying some form of extreme environmental consumption. However, he seems to be making the simpler point that when we are engaged in production, Nature becomes an extended member of the referential totality. We can of course view Nature in its pure presence, when we have no practical concern with it – in its presence-at-hand. When we do this, its readiness-to-hand is concealed. “The botanist's plants are not the flowers of the hedgerow; the 'source' which the geographer establishes for a river is not the 'springhead in the dale!’”<sup>75</sup> The observation of nature for scientific purposes and nature as present for use offer up two distinct realms of intelligibility.

Heidegger also notes that the work to be produced carries with it a reference to the person who it is designed for. “The work is cut to his figure; he 'is' there along with it as the work emerges.”<sup>76</sup> This need not be a particular individual, but it can, and more likely does, refer to the average, generalised

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<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.* p. 100

<sup>75</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>76</sup> *Idem.*

person who we may associate with the work. If I produce a javelin, I would have in mind a general conception of the athlete who would throw it. In fact if I didn't, the javelin may not even turn out to be fit for purpose. "Thus, along with the work, we encounter not only entities ready-to-hand but also entities with Dasein's kind of Being ..."<sup>77</sup> Importantly then, any work that we may be wrapped up in is ready-to-hand not only in the workshop environment, but also in the public sphere. In this public sphere, or public world, entities in the environment, accessible to everyone, direct us towards nature. The bridge directs or refers us to the river or crevice which it enables us to cross, the streetlights indicate what point in the day it is if they are on or off and "in the clock, we tacitly make use of the sun's position."<sup>78</sup> So it is not just the bare materials used in the construction of work, but the finished work itself which carries a reference to Nature.

Presence-at-hand is revealed only when we abstract from our view of objects as ready-to-hand. "*Readiness-to-hand is the way in which entities as they are 'in themselves' are defined ontologico-categorially.*"<sup>79</sup> Despite this, we must still maintain that there could be no ready-to-hand objects without there being entities merely present-at-hand. "Does it follow, however ... that readiness-to-hand is ontologically founded upon presence-at-hand?"<sup>80</sup> We seem to hit up against a circular argument here: on the one hand, we have to "penetrate *beyond*"<sup>81</sup> the ready-to-hand to reach presence-at-hand, yet the ready-to-hand seems to ultimately depend upon there being entities present-at-hand. What is more, Heidegger raises the question of whether readiness-to-hand, even if demonstrated to be more primordial than presence-at-hand, could even give us what we are looking for – the ontological significance of the concept of World. In fact, it seems that all our talk of entities within-the-world actually presupposes World (as is evident in the term *within-the-world* itself). "If, then,

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<sup>77</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.* p. 101

<sup>79</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>80</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>81</sup> *Idem.*

we start with the Being of these entities, is there any avenue that will lead us to exhibiting the phenomenon of the world?"<sup>82</sup>

The goal then is to explain how we can get to the concept of World from the entities bound up in it. It is important to notice that the world is not an entity within-the-world, but it is a condition of these entities "showing up" in the first place.

Has Dasein itself, in the range of its concerned absorption in equipment ready-to-hand, a possibility of Being in which the worldhood of these entities within-the-world ... is ... lit up for it, *along with* those entities themselves?<sup>83</sup>

It is this route that Heidegger will take in clarifying the concept of world. By studying Dasein's concerned dealings, in which that worldhood which is bound up with these dealings becomes apparent, we have a platform upon which to build a concept of "World".

The usefulness of equipment will depend upon a certain "mode of concern"<sup>84</sup>. If we need to hammer some nails into our bench and the hammer falls apart, then, according to Heidegger, we do not discover the hammer is useless just by looking at it. We discover it through the "circumspection of the dealings in which we use it."<sup>85</sup> The hammer is not fit for purpose, in the sense that it cannot perform its "in-order-to", and therefore that link in the chain with regards to the work we are trying to produce is broken. The equipment becomes "conspicuous".<sup>86</sup> "This *conspicuousness* presents the ready-to-hand equipment as in a certain un-readiness-to-hand."<sup>87</sup> We might think of it as a "dissonance" between the purpose of the equipment and its suitability for this very purpose. The conspicuous equipment becomes present-at-hand. It is no longer a "hammer" *per se* but a thing that "just lies there"<sup>88</sup>. The implication

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<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.* p. 102

<sup>83</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>84</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>85</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>86</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 102-103

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.* p. 103

here is that something appeared ready-to-hand has at the same time always been present-at-hand.

Pure presence-at-hand announces itself in such equipment, but only to withdraw to the readiness-to-hand of something with which one concerns oneself – that is to say, the sort of thing we find when we put it back into repair.<sup>89</sup>

Heidegger states that when equipment is present-at-hand in this manner, it does not follow that it is a mere thing and the damage to it is purely just a change in its properties. Heidegger is not here explicit about why it does not follow, though presumably it is because the ready-to-hand *withdraws* to the present-at-hand. Something which was at one point fit for purpose could never take on the full status of the being of a mere thing, because even a broken hammer still refers us, in some sense, back to the fact that it was once a useful hammer.

That said, we do not just encounter equipment that is not fit for purpose. Heidegger sees something significant in the idea that we also come across missing equipment, things which “not only are not 'handy', but are not 'to hand' at all.”<sup>90</sup> Despite the difference in situation, the mode of concern remains the same – we encounter the un-ready-to-hand.

Take for example the workshop where all the tools have a very specific place, demarcated by an image of each tool on the walls. We reach for a file only to find its image where the file should be. When we realise something is missing, all the other equipment ready-to-hand becomes “obtrusive”.<sup>91</sup> The hammer next to the place where the file should be is in the way, it imposes itself upon my concern precisely because it is not what I want.

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<sup>89</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>90</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>91</sup> *Idem.*

The more urgently we need what is missing, and the more authentically it is encountered in its un-readiness-to-hand, all the more obtrusive does that which is ready-to-hand become ...<sup>92</sup>

Things become so obtrusive that they seem to lose their readiness-to-hand, they are just “in the way”. The obtrusive becomes present-at-hand. Heidegger considers this concern a deficient mode. We treat the ready-to-hand equipment as “present-at-hand-and-nothing-more”<sup>93</sup> only because what we urgently need is missing.

There is yet another way something can be un-ready-to-hand. We have already seen how something can be “conspicuous” or “obtrusive”. Heidegger also thinks something can be “obstinate”<sup>94</sup>. Here, something can be in full working order and not in fact missing, but are in the way of the completion of our project. There are also things that “call for attention” in the sense of something which needs to be attended to and “stands in the way of our concern.”<sup>95</sup> Whilst I am working on the bench I might occasionally catch a glimpse of the door of the workshop which needs repairing. However, I keep putting it off for other things, like the bench. The door is obstinate because it does not fit in with my current concern – it is un-ready-to-hand, in the same way a sink full of dirty dishes might be when one is trying to read. This obstinacy actually disturbs us, because it reveals “that with which we must concern ourselves in the first instance before we do anything else.”<sup>96</sup>

What all these modes of concern have in common is that they “all have the function of bringing to the fore the characteristic of presence-at-hand in what is ready-to-hand.”<sup>97</sup> However, what is ready-to-hand does not become present-at-hand by being stared at. As we have already seen, this presence-at-hand is all along bound up with readiness-to-hand. Whilst all our talk is still currently of entities within-the-world, these instances put us in a position to

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<sup>92</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>93</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>94</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>95</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>96</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.* p. 104

bring into view the phenomenon we are currently striving to clarify – World or “Worldhood”.

As aforementioned, when something is unusable, its presence-at-hand is revealed. It is un-ready-to-hand. Whilst Heidegger's choice of the term here can seem awkward, it is actually very helpful. It enables us to see that something un-ready-to-hand does not completely lose its initial character as ready-to-hand. If it did, there would be no sense in using the term at all. We could just use “present-at-hand”. The use of “un-ready-to-hand” illustrates how equipment retains an element of our initial encounter of it being ready-to-hand. The use of the “un-” still refers to “ready-to-hand” in the same way the “un” in “unusable” refers to something which would have been “usable” at another time or in a different context.

[Readiness-to-hand] does not vanish simply, but takes its farewell, as it were, in the conspicuousness of the unusable. Readiness-to-hand still shows itself, and it is precisely here that the worldly character of the ready-to-hand shows itself too.<sup>98</sup>

The Being of something ready-to-hand “is determined by references or assignments”<sup>99</sup> such as the in-order-to structure. Heidegger thinks that in our everyday concern we actually deal with things *in themselves* (*contra* Kant of course). We encounter things in themselves in the kind of concerned dealings just touched upon, where we “make use of [things] without noticing them explicitly ...”<sup>100</sup>

Our practical engagement with objects is “passive” in the sense that when using, say, a hammer, we do not take the thing explicitly as a hammer – we merely use it. When something becomes unusable, it breaks down our “in-order-to-towards-which”. “But *when an assignment has been disturbed ... then the assignment becomes explicit.*”<sup>101</sup> When the unusability of equipment occurs, and our absorption in the project breaks down, that “towards-which”

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<sup>98</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.* p. 105

<sup>100</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>101</sup> *Idem.*

we were working on becomes explicit. In Heidegger's words, we “catch sight of the “towards-this” itself ...”<sup>102</sup> In this moment, the entirety of the things related to the project become apparent.

The context of equipment is lit up, not as something never seen before, but as a totality constantly sighted beforehand in circumspection. With this totality, however, the world announces itself.<sup>103</sup>

This goes without saying not just for the conspicuous, but the obtrusive also. When something is in its place it is so obviously there we have only ever implicitly noticed it. When we discover that it is not where it should be, “this makes a *break* in those referential contexts which circumspection discovers.”<sup>104</sup> The absence of the equipment makes explicit what we needed it for, not only regarding the immediate in-order-to, but also the towards-which, the work itself we are trying to complete. This work and everything else revealed is nothing ready-to-hand or present-at-hand but is that upon which these modes are founded before all circumspection. (Heidegger uses the somewhat confusing expression “it is in the 'there'”<sup>105</sup> to describe the references as being neither present-at-hand nor ready-to-hand.)

#### 5.4 Clarification of ‘Worldhood’

The world, then, according to Heidegger, “does not 'consist' of the ready-to-hand.”<sup>106</sup> This is evident in the fact that the three modes of concern just covered reveal equipment as present-at-hand, so that it is “deprived of its worldhood.”<sup>107</sup> This point is important because it highlights that the world is not founded by our practical engagements, but that these presuppose World. When we take objects as “inconspicuous”, “unobtrusive” or “non-obstinate”,

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<sup>102</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>103</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>104</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>105</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.* p. 106

<sup>107</sup> *Idem.*



we are actually encountering the in-itself of entities according to Heidegger. In other words, when the ready-to-hand is encountered as “doing what it is supposed to”, and not standing out because it is broken, missing or recalcitrant, then we are in the presence of the object in-itself. It is taken as it in fact *is*. This means that if we try to locate the in-itself in the present-at-hand, we cannot reach any ontological clarification of the in-itself. “... [O]nly on the basis of the phenomenon of the world can the Being-in-itself of entities within-the-world be grasped ontologically.”<sup>108</sup> This is important when considering the Kantian noumena. Under Heidegger’s picture, the reason why Kant was led to opening up a chasm between things as they are for us and things as they are in themselves, is because he passed over the phenomenon (in Heidegger’s sense of the word) of readiness-to-hand, in which things are most immediate to us.

But if the world can be revealed through the deficient modes of concern, “it must assuredly be disclosed.”<sup>109</sup> By “disclosed”, it is important to see that Heidegger means something like a “laying open”, so that whilst we still have no explicit understanding of that which is disclosed, we are in a position to analyse it further. The content has been made available for further investigation. So the ready-to-hand discloses World, and it does so *prior to* those deficient modes of concern which reveal the un-ready-to-hand. “The world is therefore something 'wherein' Dasein as an entity already *was*, and if in any manner it explicitly comes away from anything, it can never do more than come back to the world.”<sup>110</sup>

So the preceding analysis reveals that Being-in-the-world is being “absorbed in” a network of practical relations and “assignments”, and from this it seems to follow (for Heidegger) that we can become caught up in that familiarity with the world which facilitates our concern with the ready-to-hand. So Heidegger sees it necessary to ask exactly what it is that we are so familiar with. “The presence-at-hand of entities is thrust to the fore by the

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<sup>108</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>109</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 106-107

possible breaks in that referential totality in which circumspection 'operates'; how are we to get a close understanding of this totality?"<sup>111</sup>

We have already seen that as a mode of Being of entities within-the-world, readiness-to-hand must stand in relation to the worldhood of the world and it must do so ontologically. "In anything ready-to-hand the world is always 'there'."<sup>112</sup> World is a condition of the possibility for anything to be ready-to-hand. "Our analysis hitherto has shown that what we encounter within-the-world has, in its very Being, been freed for our concerned circumspection."<sup>113</sup> In other words, what we encounter in experience has been "made available" for our circumspection. But we have seen already that the ready-to-hand is constituted by reference or assignment in the form of the in-order-to and the towards-which. We need to ask how objects can "be freed" or "made available" for this kind of relation.

It should be borne in mind that the in-order-to of an object ready-to-hand is not a property of it. The "hammering of the hammer"<sup>114</sup> does not "belong" to the object like its colour, or shape or volume. Formally, we cannot represent the in-order-to as "the hammer *is* hammering" like we can for instance with "the hammer *is* solid". If we consider "property" to mean something an object "possesses", then there is no way the in-order-to could even be anything remotely like a property at all. "Anything ready-to-hand is at worst appropriate for some purposes and inappropriate for others; and its 'properties' are, as it were, still bound up in these ways in which it is appropriate or inappropriate ..."<sup>115</sup> A hammer is solid in virtue of its needing to be used for hammering. It is made with denser materials in order to perform its function. If it were made of glass, therefore not as durable, it would not be fit for purpose - hitting nails into wood would hardly be successful with a glass hammer. In fact, though it may look like a hammer, I would be confident

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<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.* p. 107

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.* p. 114

<sup>113</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>114</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.* p. 115

in saying that Heidegger would not consider it a hammer at all, seeing as it could not enter into the “in-order-to” that a hammer is supposed to.

Heidegger thinks that in the idea of the ready-to-hand being constituted by reference or assignment, lies the further idea that the ready-to-hand has the character of “*having been assigned or referred.*”<sup>116</sup> We discover an entity when we assign of it a certain role or function and “[are] referred [to it] as that entity which it is.”<sup>117</sup> So, where any ready-to-hand entity is concerned, it is “involved” in something. This involvement defines the character of the ready-to-hand. “The relationship of the “with ... in ...” shall be indicated by the term “assignment” or “reference”.”<sup>118</sup>

When an entity within-the-world has already been proximally freed for its Being, that Being is its “involvement”.<sup>119</sup>

This involvement ontologically defines its Being or is what makes it intelligible as that which it is. That said, we can also see involvement when we consider the towards-which of the entity. With the hammer, “there is an involvement in hammering; with hammering, there is an involvement in making something fast; with making something fast, there is an involvement in protection against bad weather; and this protection 'is' for the sake of providing shelter for Dasein ...”<sup>120</sup> So when anything ready-to-hand can be said to have an involvement with something, the nature of this involvement is already implicit in our understanding. It is “for-the-sake-of” a possibility of our Being – whether we stay dry or not – that we can trace back through that series of involvements to the appropriate ready-to-hand item. Dasein is always at the head of any in-order-to chain. It is the towards-which proper and it is for the sake of Dasein that anything ready-to-hand comes to be involved.

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<sup>116</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>117</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>118</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.* p. 116

<sup>120</sup> *Idem.*

[T]he totality of involvements itself goes back ultimately to a “towards-which” in which there is *no* further involvement: this “towards-which” is ... an entity whose Being is defined as Being-in-the-world, and to whose state of Being, worldhood itself belongs.<sup>121</sup>

But we do not just treat this final towards-which as any other. Due to the fact that its mode of Being can be defined as Being-in-the-world, we say that this final towards-which is a “for-the-sake-of”. According to Heidegger, only beings with Dasein's kind of Being can have and do things *for the sake of* something. “[T]he 'for-the-sake-of' always pertains to the Being of *Dasein*, for which, in its Being, that very Being is essentially an *issue*.”<sup>122</sup> At this point, Heidegger reminds us that more work must be done to clarify the notion of “involvement” if we wish to properly understand World.

When we allow an entity to be involved, this involvement is what gives the entity its character as ready-to-hand. But in discovering something ready-to-hand, the intelligibility of which is involvement, this involvement is only intelligible on the basis of a *totality* of involvements.

In letting entities be involved ... one must have disclosed already that from which they have been freed [for this involvement]. But that for which something ... ready-to-hand has thus been freed ... cannot itself be conceived as an entity with this discovered kind of Being.<sup>123</sup>

Entities are always “freed for the sake of” Dasein – or a possibility of Dasein. Thus, ultimately, what an entity is “freed for” is essentially not the same kind of thing that the entity is. When entities are freed for involvement, they are discovered as ready-to-hand. Thus, the entities here being referred to are what Heidegger calls “discoverable”. It is a possibility of the Being of entities that they are discovered as ready-to-hand. “The previous disclosure of that for which what we encounter within-the-world is subsequently freed, amounts to

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<sup>121</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 116-117

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.* p. 118

nothing else than understanding the world – that world towards which Dasein as an entity comports itself.”<sup>124</sup>

Every totality of involvements, as we have seen, “stops” at Dasein. But this totality is intelligible upon the basis of a further “in-order-to” which Dasein assigns itself to. This in-order-to is what Heidegger calls Dasein's “potentiality-for-Being”. Dasein is always for-the-sake-of its potentiality-for-Being, in the sense that it is always concerned with a possible way it may *be*. The different potentialities Dasein has will define its concern, thus allowing for any involvement to take shape.\*

At this point, we can consider once again the passage cited at the beginning of this chapter:

*That wherein Dasein understands itself beforehand in the mode of assigning itself is that for which it has let entities be encountered beforehand. The “wherein” of an act of understanding which assigns or refers itself, is that for which one lets entities be encountered in the kind of Being that belongs to involvements; and this “wherein” is the phenomenon of the world.*<sup>125</sup>

Dasein understands, before any totality of involvements with the ready-to-hand has coalesced, its potentiality-for-Being. It is its specific desire to “be” a certain way that motivates its letting entities be involved. But there is a context or a “wherein” within which Dasein understands its potentiality-for-Being. *This context (“wherein”) in which Dasein locates its potentiality-for-Being is the phenomenon of World.* Hence, before all else, Dasein is already *in* a world. Dasein always already understands itself in a world “with which it is primordially familiar.”<sup>126</sup> This “primordial familiarity” is what constitutes Dasein's understanding of Being.

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<sup>124</sup> *Idem.*

\* This idea will play a central role throughout *Being and Time*, as it can be both “authentic” and “inauthentic” – we can be pursuing a towards-which in both genuine and deficient modes of being. The former would be “authentic” whilst the latter would be “inauthentic”.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.* p. 119

<sup>126</sup> *Idem.*

“World” then is that backdrop upon which Dasein “projects” itself in the possible way it can be when entering practical relations with objects. If we take the example of building shelter that Heidegger uses, that complex of relations and references which builds up is defined by this goal that Dasein has of building itself shelter. It wants to build shelter for-the-sake-of keeping itself dry. However, even this “for-the-sake-of” presupposes World. It requires, before all else, that Dasein already understands (however implicitly and “in the background” that may be) what possibility for itself it is trying to actualise. Thus, the background which Dasein presupposes when it seizes upon this possibility is World. Before we have even started thinking about which tools to use and what shape to make the shelter, we are already ahead of those moments, *in* a World, and everything we encounter as ready-to-hand *presupposes* that we are always already in such a World. “So far as the Dasein *is*, it is in a world. It “is” not in some way without and before its being-in-the-world, because it is just this latter which constitutes its being. *To exist means to be in a world.*”<sup>127</sup>

### 5.5 World and “Subjectivity”

World then, as a background of prior familiarity and contexts, is the “cleared area” in which, according to Heidegger, we not only can, but must, have a meaningful encounter with any and all entities. Even scientific study, which sees itself as getting to the truth of the matter concerning things, will always presuppose World – an ontologico-existential phenomenon. Taken as such, does this mean then that Heidegger's concept of World is radically subjective, such that the world as we know it is founded upon the cognitive acts of the individual self? As such, are we given a conclusion that it is in the end unsatisfactory due to its subjectivism? Here, I will not only lay out Heidegger's case *against* such a possible criticism of World, but also show how Heidegger's response gives us a fresh concept of the subject (or at least an anti-Kantian one). In giving us such a conception, we will then be able to see how

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<sup>127</sup> *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* p. 169 (*Italics* are my own)

Heidegger's notion of World and the kind of "subjectivity" it implies coheres with Hegel's argument regarding knowledge of the thing-in-itself, thus able to combat idealism.

First, we should recall that "World is not something subsequent that we calculate as a result from the sum of all beings. The world comes not afterwards but beforehand, in the strict sense of the word."<sup>128</sup> World comes before all theorising and it comes before all "handiness" – the ready-to-hand itself presupposes World. Hence, beforehand in the normal sense and beforehand in the stricter, Heideggerian sense. "World is that which is already previously unveiled and from which we return to the beings with which we have to do and among which we dwell."<sup>129</sup>

We already have an implicit and basic understanding of World in the context of the in-order-to, or what Heidegger refers to as the "contexture of significance [*Bedeutsankeit*]."<sup>130</sup> Thus the issue of clarifying what World is becomes even more pressing. Heidegger has already ruled out that it is nature. Nor is World the *result of* nature. "...[W]orld is not the sum total of extant entities. It is ... not extant at all. It is a determination of being-in-the-world, a moment in the structure of Dasein's mode of being."<sup>131</sup>

By extension, we can say that world "exists". It is not extant in the same way a pen, a chair or another person is. But by designating it as "a moment in the structure of Dasein's mode of being..."<sup>132</sup> we mean to say it exists insofar as Dasein exists. Heidegger foresees a danger in such an account, and this is the danger mentioned briefly above: If World belongs to Dasein, and everything, like nature and the universe, presuppose World (so are thereby "intraworldly"), then is not everything purely subjective? Do we not just end up putting forth a position which is "of a most extreme subjective idealism[?]"<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.* p. 165

<sup>129</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>130</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.* p. 166

<sup>132</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.* p. 167

However Heidegger opposes such a move. Even if our concept of World did in fact lead to subjective idealism, this is not on its own enough to render the notion untenable. "For to this very day I am unaware of any infallible decision according to which idealism is false, just as little as I am aware of one that makes realism true."<sup>134</sup> Philosophy has not proven *beyond doubt* that idealism is false, but merely declared in one form or another that its conclusion is unsatisfactory – it seems not to give us a "comfortable" epistemological and ontological picture. We should also consider that maybe idealism is just "not tenable in the form in which it has obtained up to now..."<sup>135</sup> This aside, the basic problem which motivated Heidegger's discussion of the world is "... to determine exactly what and how the subject is – what belongs to the subjectivity of the subject."<sup>136</sup>

What a phenomenological analysis of World will give us is a new concept of the subject itself. To charge an account with subjectivism, however acutely it may be argued, will lead us away from the possible solution – such a move will prevent us from opening up the concept of "subject" and re-thinking it. We should not, then, be anxious about idealism, but we must instead hear what it calls for when engaged with properly. If one thinks idealism is untenable, this need not mean that realism is the default alternative, but merely that we may not have an adequate conception of subjectivity. "The world is something which the "subject" "projects outward", as it were, from within itself. But are we permitted to speak here of an inner and an outer? What can this projection mean?"<sup>137</sup>

Heidegger will again at this point tell us what it does not mean. It is not the case that the world is something located in the subject which I actively "throw out" (thus, Heidegger's choice of the term "projection" here can be confusing at first glance). But World is something which is "cast forth" along with Dasein itself. It is not that the subject precedes World, nor that World

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<sup>134</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>135</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>136</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.* p. 168



precedes the subject. "... [T]he Dasein itself is as such already projected."<sup>138</sup> We may be permitted then to think of World as *a priori*. "Two things are to be established: (1) being-in-the-world belongs to the concept of existence; (2) factually existent Dasein ... is always already being-with intraworldly beings."<sup>139</sup>

The point here goes back to the earlier point that the *res cogitans/res extensa* distinction is not adequately captured by the thinking-thing/thing-thought distinction. To think of the "subject" and the extant as inherently separated is an inadequate conception of their relation. Or at the very least, conceiving of the subject and its thoughts as "fenced off" from the world cannot capture the manner in which Dasein "projects". In already being-with the extant, the subject is "in" the world in a stronger sense than traditionally thought. Thinking accordingly takes place always already in the World. "With the projection, with the forth-cast world, that [phenomenon] is unveiled from which alone an intraworldly extant entity is uncoverable."<sup>140</sup>

However, there is still a difference between Being-in-the-world and intraworldliness. For example, Heidegger has already demonstrated that nature is intraworldly. Its appearance presupposes World. "But for all that, intraworldliness does not belong to nature's being."<sup>141</sup> We approach nature as an extant being, as something that has always been there, completely indifferent to our experience of it. "Being within the world *devolves upon* this being, nature, solely when it is uncovered as a being."<sup>142</sup> It is *a* manner in which nature can be apprehended, not *the* manner. In other words it is a possible manner, not a necessary one. Therefore, the intelligibility of nature is not determined exclusively by our discovering it as intraworldly, but it is merely a possible way in which it can be uncovered.

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<sup>138</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>139</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>140</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.* p. 169

<sup>142</sup> *Idem.*

Unlike intraworldliness, with regards nature, "Being-in-the-world is an essential structure of the Dasein's being ..."<sup>143</sup> Insofar as Dasein exists, it already exists *in* the world and insofar as Dasein exists, its existence is determined by Being-in-the-world.

World is only, if, and as long as, a Dasein exists. Nature can also be when no Dasein exists. The structure of being-in-the-world makes manifest the essential peculiarity of the Dasein, that it projects a world for itself [and this] projecting ... belongs to the Dasein's being.<sup>144</sup>

However, in and through "projecting" a world, Dasein is already "beyond itself".<sup>145</sup> The fact that Dasein is *in* the world rules out the possibility of a closed subjective realm of thought. The distinction between "inner" and "outer" is what becomes untenable under this notion of World and not the notion of World itself. Or rather, Heidegger's notion of World is bound to seem untenable if we impose upon it the traditional notion of a "subjective inner sphere".<sup>146</sup> But in that case, it is this notion we should aim to question and if we open the subject up and conceive of it as *in* the world, suddenly the problem disappears, and with it the necessity to explain the apparent "chasm" between subject and object. Thus, once again, we should remind ourselves: "So far as the Dasein *is*, it is in a world. It 'is' not in some way without and before its being-in-the-world, because it is just this latter which constitutes its being. *To exist means to be in a world.*"<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.* p. 170

<sup>145</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>146</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.* p. 169 (*Italics* are my own)

## *Heidegger on Freedom and Disclosure*

### **6.1 Introduction**

Heidegger has provided us with a deep definition of the phenomenon of Worldhood. Thus, from this we can begin to form a “worldly” notion of freedom. But before doing thus, we must understand what Heidegger has to say on the issue of freedom, and for this it is necessary for us to pay close attention to the way he attempts to unify Being-in-the-world in *Being and Time*. He does this by illuminating the primordial phenomenon of Care. What we will see is that Care is closely wrapped up with freedom and choice.

However, at this stage, a simple way to understand the role of freedom in Being-in-the-world is to view it as playing a role of unifying Being and World. For him, to the extent that freedom is that which “moves” Being, “in-the”, and the World, freedom *is* Being-in-the-world.<sup>148</sup> Freedom, in our reading of Heidegger, has two primary features: it is “world-disclosing” and

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<sup>148</sup> Heidegger, M. *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, p. 192

“self-disclosing”. To see this, I propose that Heidegger's notion of disclosure as “uncovered-ness”, or “dis-covered-ness” be examined in its own right. This will also serve to shed light on the advantages of a Heideggerian view over a Kantian one; how Heidegger manages to overcome transcendental idealism, and German Idealism in general.

Whilst we will be focusing largely on the earlier work of Heidegger, it is important to see that this idea of freedom as disclosure even spills over into his later thought, when he eschews traditional philosophy (which he deems to be purely metaphysics) in favour of a more primordial “thinking”. Freedom thus becomes the “clearing”, which allows for the presentation of Beings, in their very Being, to Dasein.

Future thinking is a *course* of thought, on which the hitherto altogether concealed realm of the essential occurrence of beyng\* is traversed and so first cleared and attained in its most proper character as an event.<sup>149</sup>

What must be stressed, at this point, is that whilst freedom plays an important, even fundamental, role in Heidegger's work, both pre and post “turning”, his work is not intended to be a pure exploration of the concept. For Heidegger, freedom merely “shows up” in his attempts to understand the sense-making activity of Dasein. This sets him apart from some of the later philosophers whose work drew upon Heidegger's *corpus*.

Sartre's existentialism, for instance, was largely a phenomenology of freedom and his later theoretical work, *Search for a Method*, and the ambitious *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (to which *Search for a Method* serves as a preface) was a sustained attempt to situate the free individual of existentialism within the Marxist vision of socialism. The puzzle became how we could go about reconciling the radical freedom of individuals to “choose” themselves, with the idea that individuals *belong to* a class, and that only through a collective

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\* “Beyng” here is not being misspelt but is instead an English translation of the term “*Seyn*”, which Heidegger uses in his later works in place of “*Sein*”.

<sup>149</sup> Heidegger, M. *Contributions to Philosophy (of the Event)* p. 5

effort can the subjugated class overcome their subjugators. Sartre became interested in how the radically free individual could take part in a collective struggle, the terms of which were not set by the free individual itself but were part of an historical process. Marxism gave existentialism the opportunity to become engaged with the political in a non-contradictory way, whilst existentialism showed us that a valid account of the individual ought to be richer than what Marx gave us. But underlying all of this was Sartre's concern that Marxism presented itself as an argument against his radical conception of human freedom, one which he actually found challenging.<sup>150</sup>

However, the Heidegger of *Being and Time* had little to say about freedom directly. But something of the sort is present, even if it can only be glimpsed when looking closely at some of the other ideas in *Being and Time*. Despite Heidegger's reluctance to treat freedom directly, what will become clear over the course of this section, is that not only does freedom occupy an important space within the structure of *Being and Time*, but it sits at the very base of it. It is very much there, responsible for the general dynamic of *Being and Time*, though it sits "between the lines".

It is worth considering that Heidegger's notion of "facticity" includes some idea of freedom.

Dasein understands its ownmost Being in the sense of a certain factual 'Being-present-at-hand'. And yet the 'factuality' of the fact of one's own Dasein is at bottom quite different from the factual occurrence of some kind of mineral, for example. Whenever Dasein is, it is as a fact; and the factuality of such a fact is what we shall call Dasein's "*facticity*".<sup>151</sup>

Despite the fact that Dasein never has any choice about its own existence, in terms of the fact that it exists, the whence of its existence, and the manner in which it makes use of all of these facts in order to make sense of the world, Dasein must in some sense be capable of *choosing* for itself once it does exist. Take, for example, one's birth. It is not something that we are ever in a position

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<sup>150</sup> Cf. *Critique of Dialectical Reason and Search for a Method*

<sup>151</sup> Heidegger, M. *Being and Time* p. 82

to choose. As a result, there are a whole host of other facts about ourselves that we are unable to choose: our family, class, society, culture, era and so on. However, we can, in a very meaningful sense, choose certain things about our lives even though we never made that initial choice to live in the first place. To be able to choose amongst a whole array of possibilities, or “potentialities-for-Being”, and to be able to choose amongst these *in spite of* Dasein’s facticity, goes some way towards noticing that there is an idea of freedom at work in *Being and Time*.<sup>152</sup> In fact, what we are about to see is that by bringing to the fore the kind of freedom Heidegger had in mind, one of the central notions of *Being and Time*, being-in-the-world, is in an important sense a genuine account of freedom itself, which is what was alluded to in the opening of this section.

To do this, we can turn to Heidegger’s lecture course on the work of Gottfried Leibniz, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, where Heidegger is much clearer and more explicit with regards to what his thoughts on freedom amount to. As we shall see, Heideggerian freedom hinges on his notion of the purposive “for-the-sake-of”, which also acts as the basis for his investigations into worldhood. It is in noticing the worldly aspect of freedom – which is often overlooked in favour of the subjective aspect – that we can begin to get clear on freedom-in-the-world and the manner in which it can overcome the Kantian difficulties posed at the beginning of this work. I will show that at the heart of Heidegger’s work on the issue, is the foundation for a non-transcendental, yet non-reductive account of freedom.

However, before moving on to the crux of freedom in Heidegger’s thought, it is essential that we get clear on the actual benefits of Heidegger’s thought over Hegel’s when it comes to working through the difficulties which Kant’s distinction between phenomena and noumena may pose. Thus, our first question should be: “How exactly does Heidegger give us access to the thing-in-itself?”

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<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.* p. 119

## 6.2 Heidegger and the Thing-in-itself: "Disclosed-ness" as a Theory of Truth

When we examined Hegel's novel solution to Kant's distinction, we focused on Hegel's idea that this distinction would seem to break down, or become untenable, when we consider phenomena that are unseen, but observable in an indirect way. Forces, for example, are such that their activity can only be observed in their interactions with tangible objects. We then construct laws, which explain the fact that it is not in a single instance that a force acts in such and such a way with objects, but that this is true in all cases. The strength of a law is that it applies universally. But for Hegel, force in-itself will turn out to be nothing other than the activity of consciousness when it attempts to construct laws. When we realise this, these laws will collapse in on themselves, because the laws, in turn, refer to the manner in which consciousness gains access to the phenomena. We end up needing an ever-increasing number of laws to explain each individual observation of one law with the phenomena that a prior law is meant to explain. There is thus a circularity of reference, because forces are constructed to explain certain observations, and laws to explain the relation of forces and their interactions with objects. But both force and law refer to the very thing which was making the observation - consciousness. This whole process of self-reference allows - - if we are to follow Kant's argument through to its terminus -- for the fact that if forces and laws exist in themselves, they contradict one another at the material level, because taken in themselves they lose the reference back to the observing consciousness. Once this reference is lost, the possibility is opened up for one thing to be at the same spatio-temporal moment something else entirely. On Hegel's account, transcendental idealism, when approached dialectically, allows for *A* to be not-*A*. Hence, for Hegel, forces and laws turn out to be *ideal* in nature, lest we make use of them in an inherently contradictory manner.

Heidegger's solution to the Kantian problem is quite similar to Hegel's strategy that we saw earlier. He is still going to hold onto the idea that the

observer is not completely passive. However, the crucial difference is that Heidegger is not an idealist. He wants to avoid attributing *too* much to the observer. Whilst Heidegger does not talk of Forces and laws in any great amount of detail, in those places where he does, he disagrees with Hegel's conclusion, that they are ideal. For Heidegger, these phenomena can, in a very genuine way, be *discovered* in the world. This links to Heidegger's notion that truth is "uncovered-ness".

The entity itself which one has in mind shows itself *just as* it is in itself; that is to say, it shows that it, in its selfsameness, is just as *it* gets pointed out in the assertion as being – just as *it* gets uncovered as being.<sup>153</sup>

The result of this definition of truth is that Heidegger takes himself to be overcoming correspondence theories of truth and representational theories of knowledge.

Representations do not get compared, either among themselves or in *relation* to the Real Thing. What is to be demonstrated is not an agreement of knowing with its object, still less of the psychical thing with the physical; but neither is it an agreement between 'contents of consciousness' among themselves. What is to be demonstrated is the Being-uncovered [Entdeckt-sein] of the entity itself – *that entity* in the "how" of its uncoveredness... [Thus] "*confirmation*" signifies *the entity's showing itself in its selfsameness*.<sup>154</sup>

These two passages offer us the clearest glimpse of how Heidegger might disagree with Hegel with regards Force and the Understanding. Forces and laws, for Heidegger, will not be ideal, because their truth could not be based on the idea that there is some sort of relation between "contents of consciousness". They are *uncovered*. In order for something to be uncovered, it must always already be in the world, available for uncovering and this uncovering, by Dasein, is a revelation of its actual Being in-itself. Heidegger's very use of the term "uncovered" signifies the key feature of his argument. To

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<sup>153</sup> Heidegger, M. *Being and Time*, p. 261

<sup>154</sup> *Idem*.



un-cover, or *dis*-cover (the prefix here playing the same role as it does in “*dis*-robe”) is to reveal something as it actually *is*.

So, unlike Hegel, Heidegger is vindicating the idea of genuine discovery, rather than the idea that discovery turns out to be nothing other than the activity of consciousness coming to a deeper understanding of itself and its own faculties. It is only on the basis of this fundamental uncovering activity of Dasein that anything like correspondence can take place. However, this uncovering activity is still nonetheless an activity of Dasein and as such, the Being of things that is uncovered is part and parcel of Being-in-the-world. Hence: “In so far as Dasein *is* its disclosedness essentially and discloses and uncovers as something disclosed to this extent it is essentially ‘true’. *Dasein is ‘in the truth’.*”<sup>155</sup>

The sense that is to be made of the world and the things in it is always already available for discovery, forming part of Being-in-the-world itself. To be in the world is to be amongst things that are uncovered, wrested from their concealment in obscurity. The truth of a thing does not emerge “on the scene” as Dasein goes about uncovering things, but that truth is always available. But this is not to say that truths exist and are waiting to be dis-covered. Prior to a thing's being dis-covered, any notion of its being “true” or “false” fails to make sense.

We can clarify this by looking at those moments where Heidegger does in fact broach the topic of Forces; albeit in a different context to Hegel. To return to the theme of forces and laws, there is a key passage from *Being and Time* which illuminates for us the moves being made in Heidegger's account of truth:

Before Newton's laws were discovered, they were not ‘true’; it does not follow that they were false, or even that they would become false if ontically no discoveredness were any longer possible. Just as little does this ‘restriction’ imply that the Being-true of ‘truths’ has in any way been diminished.

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<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.* p. 263

To say that before Newton, his laws were neither true nor false, cannot signify that before him there were no such entities as have been uncovered and pointed out by those laws. Through Newton the laws became true; and with them, entities became accessible in themselves to Dasein. Once entities have been uncovered, they show themselves precisely as entities which beforehand already were. Such uncovering is the kind of Being which belongs to 'truth'.<sup>156</sup>

From this, it is clear that for Heidegger, truth's relation to notions more familiar to the Anglo-American tradition, such as logic or propositions is secondary. Dasein *first* uncovers, *then* it comes to form propositions on the basis of the things it has uncovered. On this account, a proposition cannot be true until the things which it describes have already been uncovered by Dasein in a more basic act of the understanding. We should consider the point by thinking about "levels" of understanding. Acting and interacting are primary, at a more basic level and only upon the basis of Dasein's uncovering activity at this level can we then begin to move onto a level where talk of subjects, predicates and propositional truth are useful.

But if this is "true", is Heidegger not still committed to some version of the thing-in-itself? If truth is such that beings can be whether or not Dasein exists (and Heidegger does indeed think this), yet, the *Being* of those beings – that which makes them intelligible – is dependent on Dasein's existence, then the truth of beings would depend on Dasein, but their actual existence would not. To put it more simply (perhaps), if the truth of a thing is dependent on its being uncovered by Dasein, but its existence predates and will persist after all Daseins have perished, is there not then some aspect of things that Dasein has no access to?

It would seem that Dasein cannot have access to those things that it cannot uncover. By definition, Dasein cannot uncover anything at all if it does not exist. However, we know perfectly well that things can and will exist without human beings. And they can and do exist for centuries or millennia

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<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.* p. 269

before they are uncovered. Therefore, things must have some existence in themselves that is independent of their Being for Dasein. It would seem then that Heidegger's thought faces an inevitable collapse into a Kantian distinction into things in themselves and things as they appear to us. This is no maverick argument, for Heidegger does indeed state that "*Because the kind of Being that is essential to truth is of the character of Dasein, all truth is relative to Dasein's Being.*"<sup>157</sup>

But these kinds of criticisms miss the novelty and power of Being-in-the-world. If all humans were wiped out due to their own activity or some natural catastrophe, the earth and all of its fundamental structures would survive intact. Similarly, the earth as a heap of cosmic material, held together by gravity, was inhabited by creatures and entities before there were humans. But for Heidegger, the earth then was not a world, and in the event of some annihilation, it would no longer be the world that it is for us now. In fact, it would not be a world at all. This is because there would be no being of the kind that Dasein is, that is capable of being *in the* world. Nor is Heidegger concerned to prove the existence of the external world because, for him, such deliberations always presuppose that Dasein is *in* a world.

From the quotation above, regarding the relativity of truth to Dasein's kind of Being, we can also alleviate another related concern. If it is not possible to achieve truths that are not relative to Dasein, it follows that it would be meaningless to speculate about the properties of things that predate human existence. However, this move is invalid. All that the relativity of truth to Dasein really restricts us to is understanding that we can only speculate about these things in virtue of their historical relation to Dasein. It is precisely because these things predate *our* existence that we *can* speculate about them. The physical process of a palaeontologist uncovering a fossil from a dig in Mongolia runs in harmony with the ontological process of a Dasein uncovering a truth about some prehistoric organism. Indeed, it seems difficult to imagine a way of speculating about such a fossil and the organism it may

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<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.* p. 270 (*Italics* retained from the original)

have belonged to without these speculations being related *to* Dasein. Once again, criticisms of this nature, whilst certainly important, nonetheless are not sensitive to the strengths of Heidegger's theory of truth.<sup>158</sup> The uncovering of a fossil, and all the properties that are revealed by this uncovering, uncover the fossil in the very way it always has been. "Uncovering" is the removal of obscurity from a thing, and the revelation of the thing as it always was and will be in and of itself, so long as it exists.

When we consider this in relation to Hegel's arguments of force and laws, we can anticipate the moves being made. Hegel conflates the phenomena of force with the activity of uncovering. This is his mistake. He does not see, as Heidegger does, that the descriptions of forces are descriptions of things that were always already active. Hegel takes them to be, at base, descriptions of consciousness becoming more informed about its own interpretative apparatus. Under this picture, forces are ideal in the sense that they are merely constructed to explain interactions between phenomena that are invisible.

For Heidegger, as we see in his discussion of Newton, forces are uncovered. Prior to this uncovering, nothing "true" or "false" can be said of forces prior to their uncovering. The truth of forces *is*, only when Dasein uncovers – or *dis*-covers – them. Prior to this, there is no meaningful way to talk of truth and falsity in relation to forces. From this it does not follow that they only exist *after* they have been discovered. It just means that speculation can only begin after a discovery has been made.

So, with all this having been laid out, how does Heidegger cut through Kant's distinction between phenomena and noumena? It can be expressed in a very simple manner: for Heidegger, the noumena *are* the phenomena. When phenomena are uncovered, when they show themselves to Dasein, they are showing themselves exactly as they are *in themselves*. Hegel was at least aware of this point, when he talks of cognition as dealing with "the ray itself"<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Cf. The arguments of Quentin Meillassoux in *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency*

<sup>159</sup> Hegel, G.W.F. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p.

rather than its refraction. Hegel fails to follow through this view of cognition to its full conclusion, instead relapsing back into a form of idealism.

With all this being said, Heidegger was still sensitive to the virtues of German Idealism, and in particular, he does not ignore the fact that Kant noticed the finitude of human reason.<sup>160</sup> But this finitude comes in the form of Dasein's ability to uncover the very Being of things – the action of revealing things in themselves. The open-ness of Dasein -- that it is the kind of thing that can uncover, comes with certain structures and therefore, restrictions. However, these are not the kind of structural restrictions that prevent Dasein from having access to things as they are in themselves. They are in fact the very conditions which make Dasein the kind of being that it is and allow Dasein to tarry with Being-in-itself.

This may sound like no sort of solution at all. But properly understood, it is a powerful argument. It is, in effect, a radical realism, when we consider the phenomenon of Being-in-the-world. What the "*in-the*" amounts to is the affirmation of Dasein's privileged access to the world. Dasein is not a subject which is consigned to somehow making its representations correspond to objects. It is a thing in itself which is *in* a world of things in themselves, to which it always already has access. This kind of access is the condition for the possibility of any meaningful interaction with entities whatsoever. In being *in* the world, the world has been, and will continue to be, uncovered for Dasein. "Thus we must *keep in mind* that the expression '*phenomenon*' signifies *that which shows itself in itself*, the manifest."<sup>161</sup>

### 6.3 Heidegger's Account of Freedom

Now that we have seen both what Heidegger takes Being-in-the-world to be, and the importance it plays in the way he overcomes the Kantian distinction, we can turn to how freedom emerges from it as a central notion in the whole of Heidegger's philosophy. In *Being and Time*, freedom is contained

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<sup>160</sup> Cf. Heidegger, M. *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*

<sup>161</sup> Heidegger, M. *Being and Time*, p. 51

within other ideas in the work. But in *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, Heidegger explicitly alludes to how freedom functions in the idea of Being-in-the-world. To see this, we should pay attention to a question Heidegger sets himself in the work: "What is the intrinsic connection between Dasein's freedom, Being-in-the-world, and the primary character of the world, the purposive for-the-sake-of?"<sup>162</sup>

It is worth noticing that *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic* contains within it certain clues that will be relevant for this work. It is also one of the works that acts as a transition from the thought of the early Heidegger of *Being and Time* to the later Heidegger. It is useful here to take note of a passage in a later essay by Heidegger; "On the Essence of Truth". Here, Heidegger clarifies his "theory" of truth, building upon what was said in *Being and Time*, and what we have just examined. The passage in question states:

To free oneself for a binding directedness is possible only by *being free* for what is opened up in an open region. Such being free points to the heretofore uncomprehended essence of freedom. The openness of comportment as the inner condition of the possibility of correctness is grounded in freedom. *The essence of truth is freedom.*<sup>163</sup>

The reason I draw attention to this passage is not only formal. True, it does link nicely from the previous section to the analysis coming up. But more importantly, it shows a definite consistency between the early and later work of Heidegger. What we are about to see is that by paying attention to the argument given to us by Heidegger in *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, we can trace more closely how freedom is bound up in *Being and Time*. To then trace this forward into Heidegger's later work is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, by considering the observations in this section, and the importance of freedom in Heidegger's "post-Kehre" work (highlighted in the passage above), we can see that for all the changes in Heidegger's *corpus*, at base freedom was and continued to be of central importance to him. However,

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<sup>162</sup> Heidegger, M. *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, p. 185

<sup>163</sup> Heidegger, M. "On the Essence of Truth" in *Basic Writings*, p. 123

before we move onto this, it is worth pausing to consider just how striking it is that Heidegger barely mentions freedom in 1927's *Being and Time*, but by his work from 1928 onwards (a mere year later), freedom becomes a central concept.

We know from the analysis of Being-in-the-world that the for-the-sake-of in Heidegger's work refers to the fact that any and all projects that Dasein embarks upon are, in an essential way, defined by some future state of Dasein's being. This means that if I were to, say, build a table, it would be *for the sake of* me having something more durable to work on when writing this thesis. However, the for-the-sake-of need not refer to examples of crafting something. Producing a painting, for example, is an act performed for the sake of some future possibility, one in which I can admire for myself, or share with others, a document of a certain aspect of myself or my view of the world. The act of setting my alarm for 7:00am is for the sake of getting up to work. The process of cooking a meal is for the sake of satiating the hunger my family and I are beginning to feel. I sit and play this game for a few hours, for the sake of forgetting my troubles and feeling more relaxed. For Heidegger, any and all acts that one performs conform to this structure. Therefore, Dasein, as a being that acts, acts always in a way that the act it performs aims to bring about a certain state of affairs; whether for itself or its world. Dasein always exists for the sake of some thing or other. The importance of this observation is easy to miss. It is not merely a formal observation; Heidegger thinks we can find content in such a notion, by asking "what is the final purpose for which humans exist?"<sup>164</sup> What basic purpose are we all, universally, as Daseins, working towards?

Such a question is ambiguous, because it gives the impression that its answer will be objective. But Heidegger notes that actually, the only way the question can be meaningfully posed and answered is by Dasein itself. It must be shown "why searching for an objective answer is in itself a, or, *the*

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<sup>164</sup> *Idem*.

misunderstanding of human existence in general."<sup>165</sup> What Heidegger is arguing for here is the idea that there has been an historical confusion surrounding the question of *purpose* itself. He thinks we take for granted the fact that there is some objective purpose towards which we are all directed. However, this does not imply that there is no universal and objective *end* for Dasein. This will become clearer when we consider later the role of death in Heidegger's unique account of freedom. What we can do at this stage, is make a sharp distinction between what a purpose is and what an end is, under this picture.

The most useful way to read Heidegger on this point, is to understand him as arguing for the idea that a purpose is the kind of thing that Dasein can *define*, whilst an end is the sort of thing that will happen inevitably. Therefore, there is only one end towards which all Daseins are headed; that of death. It being the universal conclusion to the existence of all and any Dasein. But, to ask about some objective purpose, towards which all Daseins are directed, is to ask about something towards which all Daseins choose for themselves; this is what we should understand by Heidegger's use of the term "purpose". What is important about this distinction, is that it makes clear – in a way that Heidegger himself regrettably did not – what exactly he is criticising when he claims that the notion of some objective purpose is a major misunderstanding that philosophers have been susceptible to.

Dasein is a being that has the unique position of being able to question. Thus, any question we pose, in this case that of purpose, is intimately bound up with the being that poses the question. But each individual Dasein is bound by its own facticity. Each self has its own unique circumstances. Hence, "truth about what exists is truth for that which exists."<sup>166</sup> Any instance of uncovering is an uncovering-of something *for* Dasein. What this means then, is that to inquire about the end purpose of any and all Daseins is immediately doomed to failure the moment it is posed. This is due to the fact that the terms of the

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<sup>165</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.* p. 185-186



question, and as a result the answer itself, are structured by Dasein. An overarching purpose can only ever be defined and decided by any individual Dasein, through its own unique circumstances.

For Heidegger though, this is not a statement of radical egoism. In essence, the purpose of something is entirely dependent upon the being which determines the purpose. “[I]t deals rather with the ontological-metaphysical description of the egoicity of Dasein as such.”<sup>167</sup> It is concerned with the essence of Dasein’s individuality and this individuality makes intelligible any act of Dasein that runs contrary to its own self. Thus, for Heidegger, it is only in virtue of the fact Dasein exists as a self that it can then interact in an altruistic way with others. Though talk of “altruism” here is superficial, owing to the fact that Dasein exists as an individual self *prior to* any “I-thou” relationship. The claim being made can be broken down as follows:

- (i) Dasein is the kind of being that can put aspects of its own self into question.
- (ii) This questioning necessarily takes the structure of a question that is about *this* Dasein, *for this* Dasein.
- (iii) In virtue of this structure, the answer will inevitably never move beyond Dasein itself.
- (iv) Each Dasein is unique in terms of its circumstances/facticity.
- (v) To act contrary to itself, Dasein must question itself and its actions in accordance with the structure in (i)-(iii).
- (vi) Therefore, in order to make sense of any act that is contrary to its own self, Dasein must be *related to itself* primordially.

This selfhood, however, is [Dasein’s] freedom, and this freedom is identical with egoicity, on the basis of which Dasein can, in the first place, ever be either egoistic or altruistic.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.* p. 187

<sup>168</sup> *Op. Cit.* p. 185

The above quotation is very important. It is far too easy to read Heidegger as espousing some sort of selfish view of freedom, one in which Dasein ought to put itself before anything else. However, there is a much subtler, and I believe correct, reading of Heidegger on this point. For he is not saying that altruism is not possible without egoism, that “kindness” in general is not possible at all without “selfishness”. The argument Heidegger gives us states, in no uncertain terms, as we can see from the quotation above, that notions such as “egoism” and “altruism” would be equally without meaning were it not for the fact that at a prior and more primordial level, Dasein is an individual to which all truths first relate. It is this condition of self-relation, or, the “relativity” of truth to Dasein which was considered earlier, which acts as the basis for the idea of freedom, as far as Heidegger is concerned.

Thus, returning to the idea of the for-the-sake-of, we can say that this is what defines selfhood – that is, existence as a self in general. “To be in the mode of a self means to be fundamentally towards oneself.”<sup>169</sup> For Heidegger, it is a key misunderstanding of Western philosophy that to be “towards oneself” is just one out of many modes of existence. One key exception to this would be Hegel, who, as we have seen, saw the relation between consciousness and reality as necessarily being one of self-knowledge. Despite this, Heidegger will strive to avoid such radical claims, in order to avoid the trap of idealism. For him, a key structural feature of Dasein is not that it *is able to* make an object out of itself as opposed to some other thing in the world. In a simpler way, we can think of Heidegger as denying that Dasein “studies” itself in the same way it does other things. Fundamentally, existence *is* this being-towards-onself primordially. This makes any relation towards another thing or being possible in the first place.

[O]nly because this being is, in its essence, defined by selfhood can it, in each case, as factual, expressly choose itself ... The “can” here includes also its flight from choice. What then is implied by this ... choosing oneself expressly or of fleeing from the choice?<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>169</sup>*Ibid.* p. 189

<sup>170</sup> *Idem.*

We see here a more explicit comment on how freedom and facticity relate to one another; a point which was raised at the beginning of this section. The issue with basic determinism, under a Heideggerian account, is that it takes facticity – the idea that we have no choice in the fact that we exist – as something which makes any notion of meaningful choice untenable. For a determinist, purely because we were never in a position to make the initial choice to be born, means that we cannot have any true say in the features of our existence after our births. If we can have no say in the circumstances into which we are born, it must follow that we can have no say in the way that these circumstances will play themselves out in life.

Heidegger, on the other hand, sees in facticity one of the very conditions of meaningful choice in the first place. The only thing facticity really implies is that we have no say in being a self; the self being the kind of thing that *has* circumstances. However, it is precisely because we are a self that Dasein is faced with the task of having to “expressly choose itself.” We can imagine that Heidegger may accuse a determinist of being someone who tries to vindicate the idea of *fleeing from choice*. To say “there is no point in thinking about choosing oneself because this is not actually possible” would be, for Heidegger, a convoluted way of saying “I do not want to choose”. If a being is factual, then it must choose itself or flee from choice (which is still a choice). This is because factual Dasein is the kind of being that is defined by selfhood and for Heidegger, (and those “existentialists” he inspired) selfhood implies choice or the flight from choice.

At this point, a very important concept emerges from the discussion of choice; that of *possibility*. The idea of choosing oneself would not make sense without understanding that to make a choice is to choose between one possible way of being or another. Or, to put it in the terms of *Being and Time*, to choose between one “potentiality-for-Being” or another. In addition, we know from the discussion of Being-in-the-world that being *in* a world is only possible on the basis of a primordial understanding of Being. This being-in

also acts as the ground for being-*with* others. Knowing this will help to further clarify Heidegger's argument that being an individual self is the foundation for being anything like an egoistic or altruistic self.

We must take care to note that Dasein, as a condition of its facticity, is *always already* in a world. This amounts to saying that before any theorisation about the existence of an external world, or how one should act in the world can take place, Dasein presupposes that it is primordially *in* a world in the first place. All of these further analyses, the kind in which Western philosophy has tended to get caught up, completely overlook this *in*-ness. Dasein is first in a world, then it tries to understand the world. However, as a being "always already" in a world, amongst or alongside others, Dasein's act of choosing its own self is by extension a choosing of its being-with. The choices we make about ourselves will affect others insofar as other people are part of the world in which such choices are made. To choose to be a certain way oneself is to choose to act a certain way towards others. The self is such that the type of person one *is*, is only intelligible as a self-amongst others. For example, how could one be a kind person without other people who benefit from or experience that kindness? "Only because Dasein can expressly choose itself on the basis of its selfhood can it be committed to others ... Only because Dasein ... exists in selfhood ... is anything like human community possible."<sup>171</sup>

The very idea of choosing to be a certain way is bound up with the idea of choosing to be a certain way *amongst and for others*. Thus, choosing oneself is "equiprimordial" - or equally fundamental - with choosing the way one is with and towards other people. This is another, perhaps more critical, reason why Heidegger deems talk of egoism and altruism superficial at best. On the one hand, to choose to be resolute in selfishness is to choose a way of being with others. To be selfish is always already to assume an attitude towards other people, because the notion of "selfishness" itself would make no sense were it to be attributed to a solitary existing individual. Only when an agent puts themselves before *others* is it meaningful to attribute "selfishness" to

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<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.* p. 190

such an agent. Immediately the notion of other people is smuggled into the choice, thus pulling the rug from under the very idea of egoism. On the other hand, to choose to be a kind and altruistic individual, putting the wellbeing of others before one's own, is at the very same time choosing a way to be *as an individual*. It is, at base, considering *oneself* initially. Heidegger is not attempting to de-value kindness and altruism, or even to uphold selfishness and egoism; he is trying to say that at the most basic level, these notions break down.

To summarise, Dasein essentially exists *for-the-sake-of-itself*. This for-the-sake-of is such a basic feature of the structure of Dasein that it is neither selfish nor altruistic; both of these ideas are abstractions from Dasein's fundamental structure.

This for-the-sake-of is only possible if a being is free; only a free agent can exist for-the-sake-of itself. "[N]ot in such a way that there was first freedom and then also the for-the-sake-of. Freedom is, rather, one with the for-the-sake-of."<sup>172</sup> All of this, taken together, *is* freedom. If selfhood is defined as being for-the-sake-of-oneself, then freedom is nothing other than being able to choose potentialities-of-being for-the-sake-of Dasein itself. Freedom makes possible, in the for-the-sake-of, *commitment*. Thus, Dasein is responsible for itself precisely because it exists for-the-sake-of its own being. "Selfhood is free responsibility for and toward itself."<sup>173</sup> I can freely choose for myself and undertake projects for-the-sake-of some result or other, but with this freedom, comes the weight of knowing that my choices will inevitably affect my circumstances, and as such, the future choices I can make. This process of free self-determination will go on and on (as will the responsibility it brings) until it terminates when I eventually pass away. This is essential to selfhood itself. The self, under this account, could be "nothing" other than the result of the choices that have been made and the effects they have had. Reading Heidegger this way enables us to see why his work had such a profound effect

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<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.* p. 191

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.* p. 192

on the structure of radical freedom that Sartre was concerned with, particularly in *Being and Nothingness*.

It is here that we can begin to understand the strength of a Heideggerian account of freedom. Dasein, as we know, is always already in a world. For Heidegger, Dasein “projects” this world, not in an idealist sense, but in the sense that things are disclosed to Dasein, or uncovered by it, in virtue of the kind of self it has chosen to be. When I see a table, for instance, the intricacies of the joints and woodwork are not, in any meaningful sense disclosed to me as they are, because I am not a carpenter. Not being a carpenter is a choice I have made for myself. I must take responsibility for the fact that, if I was asked to build a chair, it would not be fit for purpose, because I have not chosen to acquire the skills necessary to build such a thing. However, I do play instruments. Thus, when I hear music, things about the composition of the song are disclosed to me precisely because I have chosen to acquire certain skills for myself, and these features may not be disclosed to the carpenter. This does not mean that we cannot share in those things we have discovered, but that in the first place, things are disclosed to a Dasein who is, on the basis of certain choices, already *concerned* with the thing in question; or already *opened up* for such disclosure. (An important point which we will return to later).

This account of freedom puts us in touch with reality in such a way that it informs our choices without thereby determining them. This means that rather than being determined by the world the self is in, the self is instead the kind of being that can allow itself to be guided by the world in the choices it makes for itself. This does not amount to determinism of any sort, and instead offers an account of freedom which is not subject to the arguments of the determinist.

The point here is that things in the world are disclosed to Dasein because Dasein has chosen to be a certain way. Therefore, the mode of our being-in is determined by the choices we have made, or those we have fled from, as a result of the structure of our selfhood. This allows Heidegger to conclude that the very fact that Dasein is always already in a world, and

projects itself accordingly, owes itself to the fact that Dasein is, in a very meaningful sense, free to determine itself. As such:

Being-in-the-world is accordingly nothing other than freedom, freedom no longer understood as spontaneity but as defined by the formulation of Dasein's metaphysical essence...<sup>174</sup>

#### 6.4 Freedom in *Being and Time*

We are now in a position to see how freedom emerges in *Being and Time*. All of the concepts discussed thus far are tightly intertwined with a central concept in *Being and Time* and to see this, it is necessary to take notice of the notion of *Sorge* – “Care”. Heidegger turns his attention to Care as a result of his observation that Dasein's Being-in-the-world is “primordially and constantly *whole*.”<sup>175</sup> This is motivated by a similar desire for unity as Kant had, in his attempts to unite the phenomenal self with the noumenal self.

Accordingly Dasein's “average everydayness” can be defined as “*Being-in-the-world which is falling and disclosed, thrown and projecting, and for which its ownmost potentiality-for-Being is an issue, both in its Being alongside the 'world' and in its Being-with Others.*”<sup>176</sup>

With all of these terms and observations seemingly spiralling out of control, Heidegger needs a way to not only rein them in conceptually, but also to make them match up with Dasein's basic experience of itself as being a whole. This is the role that Care occupies. However, Heidegger does not arbitrarily pull this concept out of his sleeve in order to clean up; Care is in fact glanced in Heidegger's discussion of *Anxiety*. Anxiety, for Heidegger, should be considered in itself and is different from fear insofar as there is really *nothing* in the face of which one is anxious. Fear has a very real source. Walking through the park, noticing the German Shepherd coming towards

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<sup>174</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>175</sup> Heidegger, M. *Being and Time*, p. 225

<sup>176</sup> *Idem*. (*Italics* retained from the original)

me, fills me with fear. It triggers my phobia of dogs, and as such, there is definitely something I can point to and say, "I am afraid of that!"

Anxiety differs because:

That in the face of which one has anxiety is characterised by the fact that what threatens is *nowhere*... Therefore that which threatens cannot bring itself close from a definite direction within what is close by; it is already 'there', and yet nowhere; it is so close that it is oppressive and stifles one's breath, and yet it is nowhere"<sup>177</sup>

Precisely because there is nothing in the world which one is anxious in the face of, Heidegger concludes that it is "*Being-in-the-world itself ... in the face of which anxiety is anxious.*"<sup>178</sup> Dasein experiences anxiety because it is in a world and in particular, a world determined by possibilities; possibilities which are nothing until they are actualised. Dasein is anxious in the face of nothing because it is anxious in the face of mere possibilities, between which it must choose. Thus, "Anxiety makes manifest in Dasein its *Being towards* its ownmost potentiality-for-Being – that is, its *Being-free for* the freedom of choosing itself and taking a hold of itself."<sup>179</sup>

We should be careful, as Heidegger certainly is, not to confuse the phenomenon of anxiety as discussed here with that of psychology. For Heidegger, "only because Dasein is anxious in the very depths of its Being, does it become possible for anxiety to be elicited physiologically."<sup>180</sup> Suffering from an anxiety attack is, to be sure, a real phenomenon. But it is grounded in a more basic, ontological angst.

For Heidegger, to experience an incapacitating excess of anxiety is possible only because, at the ontological level, Dasein is constantly trying to evade the experience of not "being at home" in the world.<sup>181</sup> At the most basic level, Dasein has to come to terms with the fact that it must choose. Anxiety

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<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.* p. 231

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.* p. 232

<sup>179</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.* p. 234

<sup>181</sup> *Idem.*



thus ensues. This primordial anxiety is the foundation for the physiological anxiety that comes to mind when one considers anxiety attacks. Heidegger does not wish to downplay physiological anxiety and the cognitive evidence in support of it. But for Heidegger, all psycho-physical conditions have their foundation in more primordial phenomena that issue from Dasein's Being-in-the-world.

Care becomes the basic phenomenon that makes one anxious in the face of having to choose for oneself. It is, by extension that which makes one anxious about having to choose our mode of Being-with, because, as we have seen from the argument in *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, choosing to be a mode of Being-in is on equal footing with choosing our Being-with. This whole phenomenon sets Dasein up in a peculiar way, which Heidegger describes as “Being-ahead-of-itself”.<sup>182</sup>

Dasein is always 'beyond itself' ["über sich hinaus"], not as a way of behaving towards other entities which it is *not*, but as Being towards the potentiality-for-Being which it is itself. This structure of Being, which belongs to the essential 'is an issue', we shall denote as Dasein's "*Being-ahead-of-itself*".<sup>183</sup>

Dasein can preliminarily be defined as ahead of itself because it is always *concerned* (*Fürsorge*) about some possibility of itself and its Being-with. Thus, freedom not only shows itself as world-disclosive, but as *self*-disclosive. The freedom to choose some future potentiality-for Being discloses to Dasein not only what it *can come to be*, but also what it currently is and previously was. Care is what holds these things together in the self-same Being; the Being-in-itself of Dasein is Care. For Heidegger, the only kind of Being that “can Care” is a free one.

This discourse on Care and as such, freedom, also allows Heidegger to illuminate more of the crucial phenomena studied in *Being and Time*: Death;

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<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.* p. 236

<sup>183</sup> *Idem.*

Authenticity; Temporality; and Das Man. Whilst we do not need to dwell for too long on such developments, it is useful to have a brief look at how freedom as Heidegger conceives of it relates to these other phenomena.

Dasein is “free for” its own death. To be free for one's death is, for Heidegger, a refreshing and ultimately *authentic* mode. To realise that the one possibility that will, universally, become actualised is death, is to free oneself for it; to free oneself for the end. As such, choosing other possibilities becomes an activity of choosing with full knowledge of the end of all choice – death. This is what Heidegger means when he says that authenticity involves being *resolute* in the face of death. Whilst Macquarrie and Robinson use this term (“resolute”), they do so as a translation of the German term “*Entschlossenheit*”. The literal translation of this is to be in a state of “unlockedhood” or “unclosed-ness”.

To be resolute, for Heidegger, is to be *opened up, without closure*, to take stock of one's life as a whole – this includes the certainty of one's own death. What is the purpose of mentioning this? So that we can see the significance of resoluteness as being *free*. What we saw when we briefly examined the consistency of freedom between Heidegger's work *after Being and Time*, was that Heidegger conceives of freedom as being world-disclosive. This is fundamentally, for the later Heidegger, an *opening* and this open “clearing” can be defined as Dasein's freedom-for disclosure. Even in *Being and Time* the idea of freedom and “openedness” are intricately connected. To be resolute, to be “un-closed” is to be *open* for one's Being-a-whole; *to be free to choose in the face of one's death*. Freedom is thus very much displayed in *Being and Time*.

What about some of the other key concepts? To start with, “Das Man”, roughly, “the They” is to be thought of as an *inauthentic* mode, whereby Dasein “falls” into merely “doing as they do”, “going about life as one does”. This mode conceals the certainty of death, and blocks Dasein's access to authenticity. It *closes* Dasein off from taking its life as a whole, by dragging Dasein into the fallen mode of “doing as they do” – which is to go on with life in blissful ignorance of death as a determinate feature of human life. The

“They” close Dasein off from achieving authenticity, the *freest* mode. Once again, freedom is present in one of *Being and Time*'s central concepts, purely because this concept, the They, prevents Dasein from being open for its potential for authentic freedom.

We also glimpse freedom in the notion of Time itself. The “Being-ahead” of Dasein is possible only on the basis of the final “towards-which”; this turns out to be death. This process, for Heidegger, is the essence of ontological time, or “Temporality”. Death makes possible, as the end point of human life, our experience of a future, and thus, our ability to be ahead of ourselves in possibility. The very fact that we are “destined” to die means that we can project ourselves forward. Our demise opens up a future for us. What we see here is that, far from being very separate concepts, all of these phenomena are visible only on the basis of the primordial phenomenon of freedom. Therefore, freedom is a central concept throughout *Being and Time*, which is not evident at first glance.

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In essence, what Heidegger is offering us is a conception of freedom that is nothing like a mere freedom from restraint. The conventional debate between proponents of free will and determinists hinges on a conception of freedom as “freedom-from”. The former arguing that fundamentally, the will is free from either all, or, enough restraint that it can meaningfully choose for itself. The latter would argue that ultimately, physical, biological, social restraints, or a combination of them all are such that choice itself turns out to be illusory. Heidegger subverts this entire debate by giving us an account of freedom that sits beneath all of this. He places freedom at the very heart of the structure of the individual, to such an extent that debates regarding free will and determinism, like that of egoism and altruism, turn out to be superficial abstractions from the true meaning of choice and freedom.

The phenomenon of care in its totality is essentially something that cannot be torn asunder; so any attempts to trace it back to special acts or drives like willing and wishing or urge and addiction, or to construct it out of these, will be unsuccessful.<sup>184</sup>

Here Heidegger is saying, quite explicitly, that the phenomenon of care cannot be reduced to any psychological phenomena, such as drives, urges or addictions. Nor can it be reduced to subjective ones, that of will or wishes (desires).

If Dasein, as it were, sinks into an addiction then there is not merely an addiction present-at-hand, but the entire structure of care has been modified. Dasein has become blind, and puts all possibilities into the service of the addiction.<sup>185</sup>

The implication of this is that the phenomenon of Care, as the essence of Dasein and the basis of choice, makes possible in the first place the kinds of notions that are made use of in the conventional debate surrounding free will and determinism. Things such as addiction do not determine choice, or restrict it in some way, but instead Dasein chooses those possibilities that serve and perpetuate the addiction. But overcoming addiction is not some unheard-of event, we know it happens regularly. To choose possibilities that do *not* serve the addiction is testament to the fact that Care, and as such freedom, operate regardless of addiction.

What people who are involved in the debate between free will and determinism miss, under a Heideggerian picture, is that Dasein, “man”, the human being, is first and foremost choice-making beings and only secondarily can anything like a will that is “free” or determined, sober or addicted, make sense at all. The conventional debate thinks of freedom as something that one has. What sets Heidegger's view apart from the conventional one, is that he takes freedom to be the most crucial aspect of the self and thus it becomes

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<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.* 238

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.* 240

absurd to talk about the self as “having” freedom. Without freedom, there is no self, or anything like a “will” at all.

To close, I should like to draw attention back to that important passage in *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, where Heidegger states that “Being-in-the-world is accordingly nothing other than freedom...”<sup>186</sup>

It is here that I locate the point at which we can come to a new understanding of *Being and Time*, one in which freedom plays a central role. But it is also here we can make more sense of Heidegger's project as a whole, from beginning to end.

Firstly, the definition of Being-in-the-world as freedom allows us to see that Heidegger understands freedom to be world-disclosive. Dasein is free insofar as it is open to the disclosure of things in themselves. However, this disclosure owes itself to the fact that Dasein is able to *determine itself*. Freedom is thus both Dasein's being-open for disclosure and the way in which Dasein determines – in its *self-determination* – what “shows up” in this opened-ness.

On the other hand, freedom is at once also self-disclosive. In being able to determine itself, Dasein must always consider itself and those things about which it aims to retain or revise. To do this authentically is to view one's life as a whole, including the certainty of death. Thus, any choice that Dasein embarks upon discloses to Dasein the way that it already is and as such it is always disclosed in this process. When thought about in this way, freedom becomes that which allows “Being”, “in the” and “world” to hang together as they do in *Being and Time*.

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<sup>186</sup> Heidegger, M. *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, p. 192



*Part Three*

Concerning Freedom-in-the-World  
and Facticity

# *Freedom-in-the-World*

## **7.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this thesis is to present an alternative view of freedom, one which is capable of contributing, in a meaningful way, to the problem of freedom and natural necessity: the problem outlined at the beginning of this work. However, so far, time has been spent carefully laying the foundations for this alternative view. So, what are these foundations?

First, I have argued that it is of critical importance that whatever view I propose, this view is able to defend itself against Kant's transcendental ontology. The reason I attach such importance to this, is because it is Kant's ontology that founds his solution to the problem of freedom and natural necessity. To expand, not only does Kant state in a compelling way the tension between freedom and natural necessity, but he is generally held as offering us a rigorous way of opening up space for freedom in a world that is still subject to causality and the laws of nature. When the world is considered as it is in experience, the descriptions of the sciences maintain their validity. However, when the world is considered as it is in itself, we find a space for a rational, and therefore responsible agent, capable of making the kind of decisions necessary for ethical conduct. The problem with this, as we have seen, is it leaves us with the undesirable conclusion that there remains an aspect of the world which is beyond knowledge and sense.

Thus, any foundation that could be laid would have to be ontologically sound, and the hope has been to construct a picture of freedom that is not committed to the same transcendental ontology as Kant. Initially then, I turned to Hegel, as someone who not only held an interesting view of freedom, but who offered the history of philosophy valuable resources in criticising the work of Kant. I analysed the early sections of the *Phenomenology*



of *Spirit*, in order to locate compelling arguments against transcendental idealism. What I found instead was a complex set of closely related arguments, and whilst on the one hand, they made great leaps towards a move beyond Kant, on the other, they were still committed to a version of idealism, one in which the unity of thought and its object is the condition for the possibility of knowledge.

It was because of this commitment to idealism that I turned to the work of Martin Heidegger, the aim being to offer an account of freedom that can exist in the same world as the entities of science, whilst still being irreducible to scientific description. Hegel made moves beyond Kant by showing how ultimately there is nothing about reality that cannot be known, for knowledge itself presupposes that the subject is already intimately related to objects. Heidegger retained this insight of Hegel's, but importantly, through the deployment of his "fundamental-ontological" phenomenology, was able to avoid idealism. A careful reading of Heidegger's notion of Worldhood, and Being-in-the-world, as presented in his *Being and Time*, was carried out, in order to bring to the fore how Heidegger was able to move beyond both Kant and Hegel, by leaving idealism behind altogether.

This close reading of Heidegger's *Being and Time* had another, perhaps more critical purpose. It offered up a new way of thinking about freedom. By showing how a proper understanding of Worldhood subverts the traditional distinction between subject and object, where else could freedom exist if not *in the world itself*? In order to understand this, it was necessary to get clear about the manner in which a being that is in the world essentially, could experience itself as free. This led me to look closely at Heidegger's theory of truth as a (the) form of disclosure. It became apparent for Heidegger as his thought developed, that disclosure is the essential feature of Dasein – the "human" being and "world discloser". But it also became apparent to him that the structure of disclosure, if it is to be consistent with the notion of Worldhood, could not be dependent on subject or object. Freedom thus became the very structure of disclosure, and with this, I was able to note two

important features of an account of freedom which could stand up to both Kant and the determinist: that it is (a) world-disclosive and (b) a fundamental structure of the self.

It is with these two points in mind that we are able to say not only what Freedom-in-the-World is, in the sense in which I envisage it, but also how it can stand up to transcendental accounts of freedom and those accounts that attempt to reduce freedom to some psychological or physical fact of nature, thus rendering it illusory. This will be the goal of the current section.

## 7.2 Why Freedom-in-the-World?

There are two main reasons why I have chosen the term “Freedom-in-the-World”. However, one stylistic benefit of it is that it references the Heideggerian foundations of the account that I aim to present.

The first main reason is that “in-the-World” implies non-transcendence. There is no other “world” or “aspect” in which freedom appears and is justified. On the contrary, it is in the very world that the self inhabits that we can locate freedom. As such, “World” captures in a satisfactory way the non-transcendental account I am offering.

Secondly, it captures the non-reductive nature of the account. By adhering to a Heideggerian notion of World, we are able to not only avoid the transcendentalism of Kant, but also avoid a total collapse in the opposite direction – that all phenomena can be reduced to something purely natural, in which case freedom turns out to be nothing other than some folk misunderstanding of a neural, psychological or physical phenomenon or cluster of phenomena. Whilst this account in no way aims to discredit the findings of modern sciences (this is something I would deem philosophy incapable of achieving in most cases), it does aim to show that determinism, (which is, in the contemporary context, generally based on the scientific mode of thought in its attempts to reduce freedom to some further and underlying mechanical description) is actually indebted to the very phenomenon that it claims to be able to reject.

Thus, at this point, I aim to demonstrate four key features of Freedom-in-the-World:

- (a) The non-transcendality of Freedom-in-the-World
- (b) The irreducibility of Freedom-in-the-World
- (c) Freedom-in-the-World as Disclosure of World
- (d) Freedom-in-the-World as Disclosure of the Self

Once this has been achieved, we can then move on to see how Freedom-in-the-World as a concept can engage with contemporary developments in free will and determinism. I take this opportunity to raise a certain *caveat* about the explanations of the account I am about to lay out. This chapter will make use of situations as examples to explain the features outlined above. This is because I am arguing for an account of freedom which accurately captures the everyday life of any human agent. The explanation of Freedom-in-the-World will go some way towards its application in a non-abstract, less theoretical context. One key strength of this account is that it matches up with the way things are for human agents in the everyday context, something that is often overlooked when the focus is purely theoretical. When we take this point seriously, the move away to the theoretical underpinnings of Freedom-in-the-World, to the notion itself, works this way just because of the very worldliness of the notion. It is worldly, and as such, it is not only able to describe, but also demands it be explicable in, the situations in which an agent *in* the world finds themselves.

### 7.2.1 Non-Transcendality

Given the resources that we have inherited from Heidegger, to answer this question will require us to remind ourselves of what was said in the section where we analysed his notion of Worldhood. The difference this time is that far from offering a careful reading of the relevant sections, we are now in a position to see how Heidegger's notion of Worldhood can ground a non-

transcendental conception of freedom; that we can begin to see how Worldhood operates within the context of the debate that we have been involved in and are attempting to contribute to.

That said, I feel it useful to remind ourselves of a certain passage in *Being and Time* that initially helped us clarify what Worldhood is:

*That wherein Dasein understands itself beforehand in the mode of assigning itself is that for which it has let entities be encountered beforehand. The "wherein" of an act of understanding which assigns or refers itself, is that for which one lets entities be encountered in the kind of Being that belongs to involvements; and this "wherein" is the phenomenon of the world.<sup>187</sup>*

By now this passage has become quite familiar. This is due to its importance for our purposes. What we were able to establish upon the basis of the above piece of text, is that Dasein is fundamentally concerned with its own potential to be a certain way or other. This is also supported by our reading of later sections of *Being and Time* and *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*. However, this primordial concern is not without meaning; it is wrapped up with a whole "matrix" of relations, objects, people and states-of-affairs. What allows my concern with possibilities for myself to be intelligible, is that these possibilities are given to me in such a way that they constantly refer to this complex matrix. We initially termed this phenomenon a "backdrop". Whilst that term sufficed at that point, we now know Worldhood represents something more vital than this. Dasein is not an actor on a stage, performing in front of some lifeless background or green screen. Instead, Dasein is intimately concerned with the World, as it forms the basis of its ability to choose certain things for itself. Dasein is *fundamentally* and *primarily* in the world insofar as it is most immediately an acting being. When I sit in my chair, I do not need to reflect on the nature, essence or properties of a chair in order to do so. I just do it. When philosophers in the past have focused on the properties of a chair, or a table, or any other object, they are abstracting from this fundamental

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<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.* p. 119

familiarity that Dasein has with the world. An example of this kind of abstraction and the issues it leads to can be found in the following passage from David Hume's *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, where he states:

The table, which we see, seems to diminish, as we remove farther from it: But the real table, which exists independent of us, suffers no alteration: It was, therefore, nothing but its image which was present to the mind. These are obvious dictates of reason; and no man, who reflects, ever doubted, that the existences, which we consider, when we say *this house* and *that tree*, are nothing but perceptions in the mind, and fleeting copies or representations of other existences, which remain uniform and independent.<sup>188</sup>

In abstracting from the original context in which he finds himself, Hume is led to the conclusion that the mental life he experiences is nothing more than a set of mere copies of things which exist outside of his mind. But in the case of Heidegger, the crucial meaning of the term "in" testifies to the fact that Dasein is *in* a world and is always acting and operating prior to thinking, reflecting and theorising. Thus, Dasein is an agent before it is an observer. The history of philosophy has played out in a way that misses this crucial preliminary stage of action, or at least attempts to account for it in the terms of observation. For Heidegger, the reverse is in fact a more accurate depiction of the human being. We do, act, cope and perform before we observe, meditate, think and reflect.

For example, there are two distinct possibilities that I could be concerned with in this moment. One is the possibility that I could go on holiday and as such, I can think about all of the potential states-of-affairs that such a realised possibility could lead to. The other possibility is that I can decide instead to spend that money on buying a car and in this "possible world" other states-of-affairs present themselves to me as possibilities. In both of these conceived outcomes, I project my potentiality-for-Being one way or the other only into the circumstances that I can conceive – circumstances that

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<sup>188</sup> Hume, D. *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, p. 111

have been disclosed to me in virtue of prior choices that have been actualised. However, the very idea that my choices can affect my future, and be projected in the manner described above, is the basis for Worldhood. Things in the world present me with possibilities, but those possibilities are tied to a very real, and truly disclosed world, one in which I am forced to act and project.

Another important feature of Worldhood is the idea that one is “always already” *in* the World. What this is amounts to, is the thought that before I could really contemplate the possibilities I can choose between, there are always things which I require to actualise these possibilities. Thus, to complete the doctoral thesis, I need certain things: a computer, books, access to papers and journals, supervisors, an institution to submit to, an examiner and so on. All of these things make it possible for me to choose to complete a thesis, as without them, it would be difficult to see how completion of the thesis would be attainable. However, these things have their own significances and “place” within the World. They are disclosed to me as for-the-sake-of completing a thesis, but this for-the-sake-of does not exhaustively define them. They can all be for-the-sake-of other things, and the manner in which they relate to me goes to form a crucial aspect of my World. As such, even before I am aware of the necessity to choose, I am wrapped up with things in such a way that I am always already “ahead” of the choice, in the World, and this is so of necessity, if the notion of me having to make a choice is to be intelligible.

Thus, the process of making a choice is not something that takes place in an abstract way, but is always “grounded”, insofar as the terms of the choice and the things which make the choice tenable are things that I am always concerned with.

World is thus not something thoroughly subjective, abstract or transcendent. It is that upon which anything is intelligible. We have seen how all modes of understanding, whether practical or theoretical, presuppose World at every instance. But we should also be sensitive to the fact that World, however closely it is tied to the self, is not something that is “overlayed” by the self onto some indifferent backdrop. This gives us a clue when it comes to

our rejection of transcendental idealism: for if the subject is conceived as privileged or private in any way, we are suddenly bogged down with the idea that objects and the world they are in is something passive and meaningless, and it is this very meaninglessness that gives rise to the noumena – that objects have an aspect which is beyond, which transcends, human cognition, in virtue of the subject's structure as a meaning-giver.

The real strength of this notion of World is that it enables one to locate the subject within the world it understands. By paying heed to the way the self goes about its life, developing its projects and not merely encountering objects, but relating to them and interacting with them, we refuse transcendentalism the room it needs to assert itself. Freedom then, as structural (a point we will return to) is also *in* the World, precisely because the self is. The need to make freedom something transcendental becomes less pressing, for it sits at the heart of the self, and the self moves amongst things in the world in virtue of its very structure *as* a self.

Due to freedom occupying a space in the human world, we are able to say that it is non-transcendental. There is no need for us to have recourse to a transcendental realm or aspect in order to explain freedom without conflict with the physical or scientific understanding of reality. This is because the scientific understanding of reality is every bit as much an activity within the world as choosing what one has for breakfast. Both of these activities presuppose the ability of the self to choose certain things, and it could only do this if it were already in a World, a world which is populated with objects which are disclosed to the self in one way or another. Thus, freedom is a phenomenon in the world as much as the boson is.

The key difference is that, whilst a boson, a hammer, a river, a mountain are all disclosed to the self, freedom is the condition of disclosure in the first place. Thus, whilst freedom is in the World, it cannot be reduced or explained in the same way that an object of physics or geography can. This is due to the fact that freedom makes these kinds of study possible.

### 7.2.2 Irreducibility

To imply that scientific theories completely underpin determinism would be misleading. However, I would argue that they best represent the sentiment of determinism in the modern age, not only within, but also *outside of* philosophical discourse on the topic. Thus, it is “reductive determinism” that I wish to test against the notion of freedom-in-the-world. To do this satisfactorily, I will lay out what I take reductive determinism to be.

The theories of modern physics adhere to a key principle: that of explaining phenomena within a closed physical system. As creatures within such a system, the human being itself ought to be explicable in the same fundamental way as the motion of some particle or other; this includes the *actions* of an agent that would appear *prima facie* to be a free agent. Thus, with this motivation towards explanation, it follows that the theories of scientific discourse see human actions as events or phenomena that are necessarily determined by preceding events or phenomena that lie beyond the control of the acting human.

For example, take the statement:

(1) I hit the man who was harassing my partner.

On the face of it, this statement is a rather simple causal explanation of events. A random man was harassing my partner, so my reaction was to hit him. It was in virtue of his actions, we might say, that I *choose* to throw a punch. Now whilst I have no control over the behaviour of the other man, I can, it would seem, choose to hit him or not in response. However, for scientific determinism, this is not really the case. My “choice” to throw a punch is in fact inevitable, when we take into account not only the actions of the other man, but the neurological and psychological set up of my own self. The thought being that the psychological set up was impacted upon by events in my past over which I had no control, and that these in fact reduce to the behaviour of neurons in the brain – over which I also have no control. Further, the



movement of neurons in the brain follow the laws of physics, which are set up to predict the behaviour of any and all physical objects in a closed system. Thus, there is a chain of reduction all the way down to a level of objects and laws, and at no point in this chain can I, or any human agent, have any actual impact.

When expressed in this way, whilst it is clear that it is one amongst a few variations of determinism, reductive determinism represents in a broad way something that all forms of determinism have in common: the fundamental inability of the human agent to author or impact upon events in its life.

With this laid out, we can say how freedom-in-the-world can contribute to such a discussion of reductive determinism, therefore answering the question of how it is non-reductive.

Freedom-in-the-world cannot be reduced to any physical, psychological or biological factor. This is, as we have seen, largely what reductive determinism attempts. Such a move would be valid if freedom were conceived of as the kind of thing one could *have* or *not have*, *feel* or *not feel*. A.J. Ayer expresses it as follows:

... [I]f these philosophers are right in their assumption that a man cannot be acting freely if his action is causally determined, then the fact that someone feels free to do, or not to do a certain action does not prove that he really is so. It may prove that the agent does not himself know what it is that makes him act in one way rather than another: but from the fact that a man is unaware of the causes of his action, it does not follow that no such causes exist.<sup>189</sup>

The point to be taken here is that if an agent “feels” free, it does not follow that the agent is actually free. Put another way, a feeling of freedom does not constitute the knowledge that one is free. This feeling in no way rules out those physical causes that are ultimately responsible for the action, and by extension the feeling of freedom itself. If freedom is conceived of as a feeling

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<sup>189</sup> Ayer, A.J. “Freedom and Necessity” in Watson, G (ed.) *Free Will* p. 16 (pp. 15-23)

that we have, this feeling can be reduced to some phenomenon the kind of which we would have no control over. Let us return to (1) to emphasise this.

In (1), I may have felt at the time that I chose to hit the man. I am likely also to feel other things, such as anger. One might respond by saying that a feeling of freedom is not the same as the experience of a basic emotion. This seems to me to be unreasonable, especially when we take reductive determinism in its strongest form. The determinist can reduce both the anger I experience in (1) and the feeling of choice in exactly the same way. If I am quick to anger, it is because of some psychological fact that was likely caused by events in my early life. This psychological fact reduces further to the behaviour of neurons, which in turn is captured by the same physical laws that govern the movement of electrons. Why would freedom, conceived of as a feeling, not be reducible in the same manner? The feeling that I had of making a choice in (1) looks to be reducible to a psychological fact, in turn a neurological one, and again, in turn, a physical one.

By following the move above, the reductive determinist could show that no-one *has* freedom by showing that what appears to be freedom is just a “folk” misunderstanding or explanation for some complex physical phenomenon. So how can Freedom-in-the-World escape such a reduction?

It lies in the fact that, rather than conceiving of freedom as something felt, and the notion of choice being something we *feel* as though we have, we are instead conceiving of freedom as something that belongs to the very structure of the way we interact with and understand the world within which we find ourselves.

Once we have realised this, we are also able to see that determinism, and in fact all scientific understanding *presupposes* freedom in the first place. In order to do science, things must be *disclosed*, but in order for things to be disclosed, one must be *free*. It is important to see that a critique of science is not the concern when the above point is made. The findings of science are valid, true and left intact by this argument. What is being scrutinised is the conviction that the free will can be reduced to more basic scientific facts. These

attempts become less coherent when it is noticed that such reductions themselves require the action of a will that is free.

### 7.2.3 World Disclosure

In order to give an account of this aspect of Freedom-in-the-World, there is the demand that we pay attention to the phenomenon of disclosure itself; or more accurately – the notion of disclosure as that which allows phenomena to “show up” to the self. Preliminarily, we can state that things are disclosed in such-and-such a way, and the manner and aspect under which things are disclosed is dependent on the kind of self one is. To talk about a “kind of self one is” is to talk about something which is necessarily chosen.

In the previous chapter, a distinction was drawn between a purpose and an end. We claimed that whilst an end is inevitable and unable to be defined by the self, a purpose is something that is, by definition, chosen by it. Recall, then, the role that purposes occupy in the everyday activity of the self. To build a table is an act for the sake of actualising some future state in which the self has a sturdy platform on which to work. However, there is more involved in this process when we pay closer attention to it. The purpose I have defined for myself, that of having something sturdy to work on, has given me the option of building a table for the attainment of this purpose. This requires certain tools and materials. I need wood, nails, saws, hammers and so on. But even more, I need the appropriate tools and materials. I require things that are fit for purpose (in the special sense of the term “purpose” that is being used here). So, I need the right type of nail, the most suitable kind of wood, the correct weight of hammer, the proper rigidity of saw. These things all show up in virtue of the activity that I have chosen to perform. However, they show up *to the exclusion* of other things. Other tools and materials that are not fit for this specific purpose are not disclosed to me.

When we consider this description, we can begin to see how freedom is world-disclosive. The possibilities that the self chooses to actualise for itself, thereby defining purposes, form the basis for the kinds of things that show up

for it, and the aspect under which they show up. By this I mean, if a hammer turns out to be too small for the job, it is only in virtue of the fact that it is not fit for purpose that this property of being too small is actually disclosed to me – but only in the context of this specific purpose.

However, this kind of purpose-disclosure relation does not merely hold for the kinds of examples such as the one above. It holds for *every* human action, insofar as all human actions are driven by purpose, from the most mundane and everyday to the most complex. We can recall from the previous chapter the brief example of setting an alarm in order to get up for work on time. There could be an instance whereby the batteries in the clock run out whilst I sleep, and so my alarm fails to wake me and I end up being late for work. In this context, the property of the batteries being flat is disclosed to me, and in response to this I can act on the need to buy new ones, in order to make sure I get up for work the next day on time. On the contrary, when the batteries work fine, and are therefore fit for purpose, they are not disclosed to me.

When I enter a room, I do not have to think about the properties or status of the door knob, I just turn it, in order to enter the room for whatever purpose I need to be in there. However, if the door knob is broken, it is disclosed to me as being broken, unfit for purpose and I need to begin to consider what I can do to get in the room.

Let us take the process of a scientific experiment. A physicist sets himself or herself a purpose, by having a general hypothesis that they seek to confirm or falsify by conducting a certain set of tests or observations. This defining of an initial purpose throws up all the necessary pieces of technical equipment required to conduct the experiment. The supercomputer, the magnets, the accelerators, the large energy cells, the controls. These things are disclosed to the physicist in virtue of the experiment that he or she wants to conduct. Further, this experiment is designed and conducted in order to prove or disprove the specific hypothesis, which in this case is the purpose. But once the physicist leaves the laboratory for the day, a whole new host of things are disclosed to them, to the general exclusion of the experimental equipment.

Suddenly the physicist finds his or herself back in the world of cars, traffic lights, food, families, television and so on, as they resume those activities which are involved in the purposes of leading a standard domestic life.

After a while and regardless of the experiment and the conclusions that will be drawn from it, it is difficult to see how any of the mundane things in everyday life will suddenly be disclosed to the physicist as particles, quanta, strings and fields. The mug of coffee does not cease to be a mug of coffee even after the physicist has determined that its underlying structure is a bizarre realm of interacting and counteracting bits of matter and waves. This is because the act of drinking a mug of coffee in order to satiate the desire for caffeine in the morning would be made impossible if things were disclosed in the structures of quantum physics. The “string” is not fit for purpose; the handle, meanwhile, is. The only time the structures of quantum physics are fit for purpose are in those actions that require their disclosure for the actualisation of that specific purpose. In other words, the only context in which the structures of quantum physics make sense, is the context in which they serve the purpose chosen by the physicists, which is their study and application. Now, this is not to say that it is only in these contexts that the particles *exist*; they exist exactly how the physicist describes. It is just that they are not disclosed to the self outside of the contexts of the purposes in which they are required.

Furthermore, and related to this, it is difficult to see how a labourer would have all of these pieces of experimental equipment disclosed to him or her in the same way and under the same aspect as the physicist, because the labourer has never set for themselves the purpose of conducting an experiment in particle physics. The labourer is ignorant (not to be taken in a derogatory sense) of the equipment in the laboratory precisely because they have not chosen for themselves the same things as the physicist.

What these examples enable us to see is the impact that the choice of purposes and direction that the self makes for itself directly impact the kind of things in the world which are disclosed to it. In claiming that freedom

encompasses the fundamental choice of the kind of self one is, we have also shown that this choice of self is intimately tied up with the actual disclosure of things in the world. Ultimately, it is in virtue of their choices that the physicist and the labourer experience the world the way they do. It is because they are both free agents that they were able to make these choices of self and purpose, and it is owing to this that freedom itself discloses the world in such-and-such a way to free agents.

#### 7.2.4 Self Disclosure

Insofar as the world is disclosed to the self in virtue of the kind of self one is and the kind of purposes one has defined for themselves, everything that shows up and is disclosed “says something” about the kind of self one has chosen to be. Thus, disclosure not only discloses things as they are, but also things as they are in having been chosen by the self in the actualisation of its purposes.

To see this, we ought to return to some of the examples that have been discussed already. When we consider again the physicist and his or her situation – that of setting up an experiment to test a certain hypothesis – we should be reminded of that equipmental contexture that is disclosed to himself or herself: that context of tools and devices needed in order to conduct the experiment. In that same example, we contrasted the world disclosure of the physicist with that of the labourer. For the physicist, the particle accelerator, magnets, supercomputers and so on are disclosed to them under a certain aspect. This aspect owes itself to the choices this person has made to actually *be* a physicist; to be the kind of agent who pursues their interest in those phenomena and structures which lie at the heart of and are the structure of nature. This carries with it wider implications pertaining to the kind of person the physicist has chosen to be. The physicist may be hostile to philosophy or hold the kind of philosophical positions consistent with the notion that nature and all things in it fundamentally conform to laws – including human beings. They may also reject religion, opposing the idea of faith in favour of reason. I

say “may” so as not to paint a shallow caricature of physicists, but merely to indicate the certain conceivable possibilities that would be available to this kind of agent. The key is to see that the choice to be a physicist is the choice to be a certain kind of self. This kind of self is constantly “fed back” to the self in the form of the things in the world that are disclosed to it. Thus, Freedom-in-the-World discloses a world in relation to the choice of self, but in so doing, it discloses the self and its choices along with every instance of world disclosure. Being is *in* the world insofar as it is in its *own* world, and for this world to be its own, in this case the self must have chosen and actualised one set of possibilities over another.

When the labourer sees the physicists’ laboratory, whilst it is clear that the builder will at least recognise the equipment as being for scientific purposes, they will not experience the same disclosure of these objects as the physicist. The equipmental contexture will not carry the same significance, precisely because the builder has chosen to be a different kind of self. Instead, the builder may have disclosed to them things about built structures in the world that the physicist would not notice: bad brickwork, the onset of subsidence in a house or sound structural practice, the use of certain materials and so on. This is because, in choosing to be a builder, the world is composed of the things that hold the most significance to such an agent. The builder’s world and the physicist’s world differ in these respects, in virtue of their choices to pursue the kind of things necessary to become this kind of person or other. Despite their differences, there are certain key ways in which the two worlds of these two different agents will be similar. Their domestic lives and all the things such a context discloses are likely to share features. So it is not that the world of a builder and the world of a physicist cannot overlap in certain ways. It is more the case that a great deal of their worlds will differ substantially and this is so in virtue of the kind of agent they are, which is something that is necessarily chosen and chosen freely.

What these examples serve to demonstrate is the fundamental, structural freedom at the heart of the self. A human being chooses itself, and

in so doing, it experiences the world as a context disclosed to it in order to actualise possibilities for itself. In choosing itself, its possibilities and therefore the world that is disclosed to it, the self is disclosed along with all the context of things. To borrow a term from Sartre, the self is “reflected”<sup>190</sup> back to itself along with every instance of world disclosure, and this is so in virtue of its free choice of self.

### 7.3 Clarification and the Argument from the Facticity of the Free Self

The position on the free will that has been constructed thus far has, as we have seen, some crucial virtues. Rather than conceiving of it as being a “freedom-from” or a “freedom-to”, what has been established is that freedom is itself that which allows for “meaning” or “sense” to take form; it is a condition of the possibility of intelligibility in general. Therefore, without this fundamental freedom, the space for determinism is not even opened, meaning that it in fact hinges upon freedom in the first place. Our scientific theories, philosophical positions, acts of understanding, practical everyday behaviour and relation to ourselves and to each other depend upon this deep-seated and fundamental freedom. As such, attempts to reduce freedom to some other phenomena fall short of giving a complete account, as they fail to recognise their own debt to freedom – that these very attempts at reduction *require* the activity of a free will.

But this freedom, as the condition of intelligibility, is nowhere outside of the world we inhabit; it is, as has been demonstrated, non-transcendental. Freedom instead makes possible any and all disclosure of things and beings within the world. It is the structure of the context within which things show up for us, without itself being beyond that context. In a sense, it is the space between the subject and the object (in actual fact, this kind of freedom makes such a distinction seem less useful) and is not completely reducible in either direction. In virtue of this, neither is freedom beyond either of these; the self

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<sup>190</sup> Sartre, J.P. *Being and Nothingness*, pp. 276-327



and the world are correlated to the extent that things show up for the free will and *only* for the free will.

It is this point that I think enables us to see how correct Hegel's assessment is when he states:

... [F]reedom is just as much a basic determination of the will as weight is a basic determination of bodies ... Will without freedom is an empty word, just as freedom is actual only as will or as subject<sup>191</sup>

It is a fact of any corporeal body that it has mass. The same point can be made when we consider the relation between the self and its freedom. If a will exists, then it is necessarily free. Wherever there is talk of the will, or the self, it makes no sense to talk of these things as being utterly determined. Or at least, if it does make sense to talk of the determined will, it is only so due to the fact that it is an essentially free will that is making the point.

At this juncture, it is worth considering a potential criticism of what has been argued in the preceding sections. Given the examples used, particularly to describe the situation of world and self-disclosure, it might be argued that this account of Freedom-in-the-World is guilty of conflate the choice of self with the choice of occupation. Or perhaps that the occupation one chooses for oneself is ultimately the most important way in which things are disclosed. I believe this thought arises purely out of the examples I have given thus far, and not, I would argue, out of anything inherently questionable about the account itself.

To see this, we may consider the way in which other people are disclosed to the self. This has little, if anything at all, to do with the work that one does, but still has everything to do with the kind of self one is. What if the physicist from the previous examples also suffered some form of social phobia? Thus, encounters with other people are a challenge to be overcome; others are disclosed to her as threatening, judgemental and untrustworthy. In

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<sup>191</sup> Hegel, G.W.F *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, p. 35

this instance, it makes no sense to say that this has anything to do with the fact that our individual makes a living from studying matter and its conditions. In fact, it is likely the case that such a phobia preceded this occupational choice. However, what can be said is that no sane individual would ever choose to have a social phobia. In what sense then is such an issue related to the choice of self?

It is correct to say such a phobia could not sensibly be chosen. That said, it is part of our physicist's *facticity*. It stems from events in the past in which her experiences of other people were so negative that she now feels as though strangers pose a threat. This is not to say that an aspect of her selfhood has been *determined*, in the sense in which the determinist would want to have it. Instead, what we can say is that the physicist is in the position to redefine this aspect of themselves. Not doing so is a choice the physicist makes for herself, every bit as much as actually seeking treatment for the issue. Whilst the selves we are, are not initially chosen, which forms our facticity, all aspects of the self fall under our power to change or embrace.

The point being espoused here is that things are not primarily disclosed to us in virtue of the occupation we choose. Such a criticism, whilst understandable, misses the subtlety of the point that the showing up of things in the world owes itself to the freedom of the will. Our occupation is just one aspect of the self we have chosen or continue to choose, and it is just one way in which things are disclosed. Those of us who choose *not* to work, for whatever reason, are still subject to the disclosure of things in the world in virtue of their freedom of will.

There is another criticism we may consider, relating somewhat to the discussion of facticity. This criticism I feel is more demanding on this conception of freedom and as such, I will spend considerable time attempting to defend Freedom-in-the-World against it. Whilst I will lay out a set of premises which define this criticism, there are, in fact, two subtly different strands of the criticism, each demanding its own response in turn.

The general theme of the criticism may be expressed as follows: the point that things are fundamentally disclosed to us in virtue of some deep freedom of self can be granted. Its non-transcendentality and non-reductive status may also be granted. However, it must also be granted that the very coming into existence of such a self was not a choice that could be made, but instead determines the kind of choices that we *can* make (we may call this facticity).

But, if both of these things are allowed, and if the choice of self is given its full power as described by Freedom-in-the-World, and if facticity is allowed also (and it seems it must be, for it is empirically and logically true that one does not choose oneself before birth) it follows that the things one chooses for oneself are at the very least influenced, or at most, determined by, the kind of self one *is* as aspects of the self that one could not have had any choice in. Our freedom to choose ourselves would, in the end, have to have been determined by our factual existence, which by definition we did not choose.

This criticism is powerful because it allows Freedom-in-the-World to stay intact. It does not deny its relation to disclosure, its non-transcendentality or its ability to overcome attempts at reduction. What this argument does is expose a point that our account instead has to allow for, that of facticity. This is why I think it appropriate to label this criticism “the argument from the facticity of the free self”. We can formalise it as follows:

- (1) Freedom-in-the-World *is*:
  - a. Non-transcendental
  - b. Non-reductive
  - c. Responsible for the disclosure of things and beings
- (2) Freedom-in-the-World is a feature of our *factual* existence (we never chose to be free)

(3) Therefore, the things we cannot choose for ourselves determine the things we *can* choose for ourselves. In what sense then is the self *actually* free?

(1, a-c) are clauses that have been established so far and are admitted by the critic. (2) is a clause that again, both this account and the critic agree upon. But the critic points out that if (2) is true, it leads to the situation in (3). If Freedom-in-the-World is to maintain its strength as an account of the free will, it must now be able to defend itself against the charge in (3). If it cannot, the critic will be in a position to question at the very least what advances Freedom-in-the-World actually makes over determinism, or at the most, the critic will be in a position to once again find ground to establish a space for determinism in our account.

With that said, it is worth noting two varied ways in which such a criticism may be expressed. The first would be for the determinist to push the concern that the circumstances into which we are born in turn constitute our wants and desires. Thus, it is not enough for the free will to have the power to choose between possibilities; for the will to be free, it must also be in a position to outright *define* these possibilities themselves. In more formal terms: where the wants and desires of an agent determine the things she will choose -- "A chooses action-*x* 'in-order-to' sate desire-*y*" -- if it cannot be shown that *A* also determines *y*, there is no sense to the claim that *A* chooses *x* freely. This variant of the argument from the facticity of the free self I will label "Version 1".

The second, and slightly different way the determinist's concern may be raised is by making reference to the circumstances into which one is born in relation to the very *way* the agent is. So, rather than referring to wants, desires and their impact upon choice, the determinist may argue that merely being a *certain kind of person* is enough to push home the idea that we are not, when all is said and done, in free control of our actions. For if one cannot choose the circumstances of their birth, it seems difficult to argue that choices are made by the agent freely, if the environment into which they are born is

such that it causes them to be a certain way – and thus to want and desire certain things. When expressed in this way, even if we could successfully mount a defence against the first concern, we would still need to accommodate the latter scenario. We may think of individuals with an anti-social personality disorder, whereby abuse or childhood trauma have caused such agents to act in certain ways and make certain choices that we may deem extreme or immoral. However, it is, according to the determinist, not solely the agent's fault, because they did not, after all, choose to be born into an abusive or traumatic environment. In keeping with the labelling outlined above, I will call this concern "Version 2".

Now whilst both of these criticisms express slightly different concerns, and as aforementioned, are demanding of slightly different responses, upon closer examination they both follow the trajectory of the argument from the facticity of the free self, in premises (1-3). Neither argument denies the structure of Freedom-in-the-World in (1, *a-c*); nor does either argument deviate from premise (2). As such, it also follows that neither argument deviates from the conclusion in (3). What I propose to do at this stage is answer both versions of the argument from the facticity of the free self. In the case of Version 1, I believe an answer is already available to us, in the form of Harry G. Frankfurt's argument in "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person". But, to anticipate the moves that will be made somewhat, Version 2 will ultimately fail to find a satisfactory answer in the work of Frankfurt. Version 2 is also usefully discussed by Susan Wolf in her work on sanity and responsibility. At this stage, then, we will turn to the work of Frankfurt.

#### **7.4 First and Second-Order Desires; Second-order Volitions**

We have, in the previous section, laid out "Version 1" of the argument from the facticity of the free self. One way to think of this potential criticism, is in terms of "levels" of choice or decision making. On one level we may choose to satiate certain desires or wants, but the determinist may still argue that in order to be free, there is the second demand that we ourselves are the

*sources* of such desires or wants. If we cannot in any meaningful sense decide what we want, rather than wanting things for reasons beyond our control, how can we be truly free? The determinists' concern is thus pushed to a level of decision making that is, upon first examination, difficult to accommodate within the project of Freedom-in-the-World.

However, it is debatable as to whether this kind of freedom is even something we would want or is even intelligible. What may be more useful in response to this concern is to maintain that the only kind of freedom we could want is the freedom to *have* this second level of decision making in the first place, even if it turns out that such a second level is not authorship, but just another kind of decision, want or desire.

Let us take an example, from the aforementioned "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person" by Harry G. Frankfurt. He states that humans seem to be unique in their ability to not only want and desire certain things, but also to be able to form desires about the very kind of desires they want to have and are motivated by.<sup>192</sup>

Frankfurt gives us the example of someone who wants to be the kind of person who is moved to act by "the desire to concentrate on [their] work."<sup>193</sup> From this it follows that the person in question already has the desire to concentrate on their work. Thus, this first-order desire "A wants to concentrate on their work" is necessarily one of A's desires. However, Frankfurt points out that "the question of whether or not his second order desire is fulfilled does not turn merely on whether the desire he wants is one of his desires. It turns on whether this desire is, as he wants it to be, his effective desire or will."<sup>194</sup> So, if it turns out that what moves A to act is his or her desire to concentrate on their work, then at the time of action, A does in fact want "what he wants to want."<sup>195</sup> However, we can imagine a situation where A wants to concentrate on his or her work, but rather than that desire being the driving

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<sup>192</sup> Frankfurt, H.G. "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person" in *Free Will* (ed). Watson, G. pp. 82-83

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.* p. 86

<sup>194</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>195</sup> *Idem.*

force of his or her actions, it is instead some time constraint which is pushing A to act. In this instance, even though that important first-order desire is still very much one of A's desires, it cannot be said in such a case that A wants what they want to want. This is because what A wants is to be motivated to action by their first-order desire for concentration alone. Frankfurt's point here is that someone like A, or human beings in general, want certain desires to "be [his or her] will."<sup>196</sup> Wanting certain desires to be one's will is subtly different from merely wanting certain desires.

Take, for example, a therapist, whose job it is to offer treatment to drug addicts. The therapist decides that in order to be in a better position to help his patients, he ought to understand what is like to be an addict; he wants to know what it is like to want to take drugs. Thus, unlike addicts, who are motivated to take drugs purely for the sensation they experience when they are under the influence of such a substance, the therapist could be "moved all the way" to act by his second order desire to want to have the first order desire to take drugs.<sup>197</sup> As such, it is not the case that the therapist merely wants to take drugs, but he has a deeper desire also – he *wants to want* to take drugs; he has a second order desire to want an addiction. But despite having all the requisite desires in place, this does not mean that the therapist will *actually take drugs*. It is sufficient for him that he is able to relate to his patients' first-order desires to want drugs. Thus, "[w]hile he wants to want to take the drug, he may have *no* desire to take it; it may be that *all* he wants is to taste the desire for it."<sup>198</sup> In this case, the therapist clearly wants to have a certain desire (the desire to take drugs) but he does not want this desire to be his will – he does not want this desire to motivate him to act.

In order to clearly distinguish between these cases, Frankfurt labels instances where one wants a certain desire to be their will, "second-order volitions".<sup>199</sup> It is, in Frankfurt's view, definitive of a person that they exhibit

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<sup>196</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 84-85

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.* p. 85

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.* p. 86

second-order volitions; as such, a second-order volition is a sufficient condition for personhood.<sup>200</sup> “It is logically possible, however unlikely, that there should be an agent with second-order desires but with no volitions of the second order. Such a creature, in my view, would not be a person.”<sup>201</sup>

In such cases, creatures (which Frankfurt calls “wantons”<sup>202</sup>) would have first-order desires and may even have second-order desires (that they want to want certain things), but do not have a preference as to whether or not they want a particular desire to be their will – to motivate them to act. Frankfurt includes in this category of creatures higher animals and children. It may even include adult human beings who have certain illnesses or disabilities. For our purposes, it suffices to see that Frankfurt makes such a distinction, but we need not dwell on whether or not he is correct in his assertion that personhood consists in the ability to have second-order volitions.\* What I think is worth noting here is Frankfurt’s later claim, that the “concept of a person is not only, then, the concept of a type of entity that has both first-order desires and volitions of the second order. It can also be construed as the concept of a type of entity *for whom the freedom of its will may be a problem.*”<sup>203</sup>

Thus, when we talk of freedom of the will, as has become clear throughout the course of this project, we are not talking about a creature who can “do what they want”. Instead, we are talking of a creature who is able to, on some level, evaluate their wants or desires. As Frankfurt says, “a person enjoys freedom of the will [if]... he is free to want what he wants to want.”<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>201</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>202</sup> *Idem.*

\* In fact, Frankfurt states: “I am far from suggesting that a creature without reason may be a person. For it is only in virtue of his rational capacities that a person is capable of becoming critically aware of his own will and of forming volitions of the second order. The structure of a person’s will presupposes, accordingly, that he is a rational being.” [*Ibid.* p. 87] However, from what I have tried to establish regarding Freedom-in-the-World, such a statement (that the structure of a person’s will presupposes reason) is not something that is so clear. The phenomenon of disclosure points towards the idea that reason itself presupposes freedom of the will. Thus it seems that we can have perfectly rational beings that are not free, but we can never have a truly free being which is not by extension also rational. So whilst the human being is certainly a rational animal, its essence consists more in the freedom of its will than its reason. However, this does not extend the range of things that can be considered a “person”.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.* p. 89 – *Italics* are my own

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.* p. 90



So, whereas freedom of action may consist in being free to act on one's desires, having freedom of the will turns out to consist in being able to have concern, in the requisite way, for our desires themselves; being able to evaluate which desires motivate our actions; being able to be an issue for ourselves.<sup>205</sup>

It is in securing the conformity of his will to his second-order volitions, then, that a person exercises freedom of the will. And it is in the discrepancy between his will and his second-order volitions, or in his awareness that their coincidence is not his own doing but only a happy chance, that a person who does not have this freedom feels its lack.<sup>206</sup>

From what Frankfurt is saying at this point, it is the case that freedom of the will is something that is not only the capacity to have second-order volitions, which in turn affect our desires and our motives for action. It also turns out that this capacity is completely contingent -- it is a matter of luck that we are able to have our will and our wants coincide. Rather than take this as a negative, this in fact is an assurance of freedom, for it seems that nothing could be as free as a will which is lucky to be free and is utterly aware of its luck in this regard. Then suppose that there is someone who "enjoys both freedom of action and freedom of the will. Then not only is he free to do what he wants to do, but free to want what he wants to want. It seems to me that he has, in that case, all the freedom it is possible to desire or to conceive."<sup>207</sup>

At this point then, let us return to our initial concerns, those which motivated the introduction of Frankfurt's account of second-order volitions. There was space for the determinist to raise the worry that if we are to be truly free, then we cannot be satisfied with only freedom of choice. What is also required is that we are ultimately the author of the possibilities we have to choose between. By thinking about this concern in terms of levels of choice, we are able to change the terms of the argument to read as follows:

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<sup>205</sup> Heidegger, M. *Being and Time*, p. 32

<sup>206</sup> *Op. Cit.* p. 91

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 92-93

- (1) The will that is free is free to choose how to act.
  - (2) But the will that is free ought also to be free to choose the choices it has available to it.
  - (3) People are not free to choose the choices available to them.
- Therefore:
- (4) People do not have freedom of the will.

With this in mind, the determinist is concerned to show that as a result of the birth of the self, there are circumstances into which all people are born which cannot be chosen. As a result, it follows that the choices a person can choose throughout the course of their life are determined by the circumstances of their birth. The determinist then, can argue that freedom of the will is only allowed in cases where a being is able to choose the circumstances of its birth. However, this is never the case and therefore, human beings do not have meaningful freedom of the will.

But Frankfurt's distinction between first and second-order desires and second-order volitions changes the scope of freedom of the will. Essentially, the determinist is asking for too much with the argument above. He or she is demanding a concept of the freedom of the will which would not be intelligible. To be sure, we cannot choose the circumstances of our birth. However, what we can choose, according to Frankfurt, is which of our desires turn out to be the ones which motivate us to act. Thus, we are the kind of beings which are not only able to choose certain things for ourselves, but we are the kind of beings who can, at the very least, determine what it is that *motivates us to choose certain things for ourselves*. In this context, this is the only kind of freedom we could hope for, but it is the only kind of freedom worth wanting. For the kind of freedom that the determinist seems to think is necessary for freedom to actually exist is utterly unreasonable. A defensible and intelligible conception of the freedom of the will ought to be able to accommodate the fact that we cannot choose to be born; what the determinist

is guilty of overstating the importance of such a fact, at least in a certain context.

The determinist can, when all is said and done, press the issue of our lack of choice in being born, by insisting that it is not merely the case that this lack of choice determines the appearance of future choices: that in fact, it determines the kind of being we actually *are*. If this is true, then it will turn out that our lack of choice in our births in turn determines the kind of things that we want to want – in other words, what it is that we want to motivate our actions is a desire that is determined by the kind of being that we are; which we have no primary say in. Thus, we can move to Version 2 of the argument from the facticity of the free self.

The argument from the facticity of the free self on its own is powerful. However, I feel that by referring to the work of Frankfurt, we have been able to show that at least one version of the argument is weakened.

However, Frankfurt does not present us with an argument proper against facticity. Indeed, Version 2 of the argument is still a major concern, and it is one that any account of the freedom of the will should be able to accommodate. What Frankfurt does allow us is a platform from which we can introduce other work, the challenges and worries of which can furnish us with the necessary tools and context to overcome the challenges posed by Version 2 of the argument from the facticity of the free self.

Not, simply, for the sake of argument, but also when we consider what we as a society have taken ourselves to have learnt about the nature of the human psyche and its response to environmental trauma. As such, Version 2 is deserving of a thorough examination. I propose to do this by turning to a contemporary debate in free will and determinism; the debate between Susan Wolf and those philosophers she deems as being proponents of a “deep self view”. One of these thinkers she targets is Frankfurt himself. That said, in particular, I will also focus on Wolf’s criticisms of the work of Charles Taylor, as he has the most obviously Heideggerian notion of a “deep self” and makes

use of many of the same resources from Heidegger as our account of Freedom-in-the-World.

# *Sanity and Freedom*

## **8.1 Sanity and Insanity of the Self as Facticity**

The most obvious outcome of freedom-in-the-world is that questions of freedom and responsibility for ones' choice of self are intimately tied up with practicality and action. The only sphere within which choosing oneself at a deep level makes sense is the sphere within which the self acts. To choose to be a certain kind of agent plays itself out in the world. What we noted in the previous section was a potential drawback of such an account, which I termed "the argument from the facticity of the free self". Susan Wolf, in her paper "Sanity and the Metaphysics of Responsibility", I think perfectly exemplifies the motivation which leads to the argument from facticity.

Now, whilst I have said that Wolf presents us with a paradigmatic example of Version 2 of the argument from the facticity of the free self, it is important to point out that she is not espousing a form of determinism. Instead, Wolf provides us with a substantive account of freedom, one in which there is a prerequisite that we are in touch with reality in such a way that reality informs our choices rather than determines them (see p.86). This differs from Frankfurt's procedural account, in which freedom has little, if anything, to do with the manner in which the self is in touch with the world it finds itself in.

Wolf wants to draw our attention to the fact that circumstances beyond our choice our control, that in turn effect the kind of person we will become, present limits to our freedom. These limits lead to the conclusion that the kind of freedom that has previously been espoused (say, by the likes of Taylor) is unnecessary for us to be satisfied with the selfhood that we do, as a matter of empirical and practical fact, possess.

Wolf also uses the example of lawyers who may need, for reasons of legality in a court of law, to ask questions about freedom and responsibility.

In this way, her argument exemplifies that worldly dimension within which we need to demonstrate the validity of Freedom-in-the-World as a useful concept. For Wolf then, the legal ramifications are important to consider, for:

Their questions are questions of specification: Does this or that particular person meet this or that particular condition? Is he mature enough, or informed enough, or sane enough to be responsible [for his actions]?<sup>208</sup>

In other words, if one were to worry about the metaphysical essence or conditions of freedom, one ought to worry about the manner in which these worries translate in the everyday, non-metaphysical sphere. “Once the significance of sanity is fully appreciated, at least some of the apparently inescapable metaphysical aspects of the problem of responsibility will dissolve.”<sup>209</sup> Wolf intends to demonstrate that self-revision is only a tenable condition of freedom when the more mundane requirement that the agent be sane is also met. But this sanity, in an important sense, is not the kind of thing that can be chosen by the agent. Thus, Wolf takes issue with a few philosophers whose views she labels “Deep Self Views”, though for the purpose of this work, I will stick to the implications of Wolf’s argument for Charles Taylor. This is because Taylor argues from Heideggerian premises, the likes of which we have made use of in our account of Freedom-in-the-World. Wolf identifies a central claim that all Deep Self Views share: an agent is free if, and only if, the agent is self-determined in a deep sense.

Before we take a closer look at Wolf’s argument, it is necessary to see what Taylor’s account actually commits itself to, and in what sense it is related to Heidegger. In “Responsibility for Self”, Taylor wants to understand whether or not there is a conception of responsibility which is essential to the structure of the self. We may think of such a point as wanting to attempt to answer the question:

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<sup>208</sup> Wolf, S. “Sanity and the Metaphysics of Responsibility” p. 46 in Schoeman, F. (ed.) *Responsibility, Character and the Emotions: New Essays in Moral Psychology* (pp. 46-62)

<sup>209</sup> *Idem*.

*Does being a self, in some deep sense, consist in being responsible (at least in part) for the kind of agent we are or desire to become?*

To tackle this, Taylor invokes Heidegger's definition of "Dasein" in *Being and Time*: "The being of any such entity is in each case *mine* ... [A]s entities with such Being ... its *Being* is that which is an issue."<sup>210</sup> The point for Heidegger, as for Taylor, is that we are the kind of agents for which the fact that we are, and the way that we are, are things we have the capacity to scrutinise: we are the kind of agents whose very agency itself can be "an issue". So it is not merely that we can evaluate things, but we can analyse these evaluations themselves and check whether or not they are the kind of evaluations we *want* to have. For example, if I want to be the kind of agent that others take seriously, I can assess those evaluations I have which lead me to avoid conflict of all kinds. However, to have others take me seriously, I must sometimes enter into a conflict with another, and so I find that the desire to avoid conflict is not the kind of desire that the kind of agent I wish to become will have. This puts me in a position to change accordingly. Thus, by taking Heidegger's definition of Dasein as his lead, Taylor constructs a view which fits into Wolf's categorisation of a Deep Self View: a truly free and responsible agent is one who has the ability to revise and evaluate their actions, and the desires that lead to these actions. Putting this ability to use, the agent can revise themselves in a deep sense.<sup>211</sup>

One of the key things Taylor inherits from Heidegger is his commitment to the idea that the self is always already wrapped up in its commitments, states-of-affairs, concerns and meaningful encounters. In such a way, the human being is in a crucial sense defined by all of these things, but at the same time is free to *redefine* them in accordance with new commitments,

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<sup>210</sup> Heidegger, M. *Being and Time* p. 67

<sup>211</sup> Taylor, C. "Responsibility for Self" in Watson, G. (ed.), *Free Will* pp. 111-126

states-of-affairs, concerns and meaningful encounters, as they occur in the life of man.

[W]e have to think of man as a self-interpreting animal. He is necessarily so, for there is no such thing as the structure of meanings for him independently of his interpretation of them; for one is woven into the other. But then the text of our interpretation is not that heterogeneous from what is interpreted; for what is interpreted is itself an interpretation; a self-interpretation of experiential meaning which contributes to the constitution of meaning. Or to put it another way: that of which we are trying to find the coherence is itself partly constituted by self-interpretation.<sup>212</sup>

The above passage is directly inspired by Heidegger's notion of Dasein, a term that has become a major part of understanding Heidegger's work within this thesis as well. The fact that Dasein is, on Heidegger's account, the kind of being which is concerned with itself, is emphasised here by Taylor. To be concerned with oneself, as a human being, is to be concerned with all of those features which go towards making us specifically human. Now whilst these can come under the category of commitments, states-of-affairs, concerns and meaningful encounters, one thing is always evident about all of the above: that they are *intelligible* to Dasein/the Self, and as such, have *meaning*. However, this meaning is, as admitted by Taylor, at least to some extent constituted by us, or those processes by which we come to understand and interpret ourselves. If Dasein is the kind of being that can question itself, it follows, from what is being said, that this kind of self-questioning, or self-interpretation, actively goes towards making the Self what it is.

This is in fact consistent with Heidegger's entire philosophical development, whereby human experience is only intelligible in virtue of Being but Being owes itself to the existence of the human being. As we have seen, the two are correlated; they are not completely distinct, but neither is one absolutely dependent upon the other. To put it in a clearer fashion, the meaningful terms which Dasein/the Self uses to apprehend its experiences

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<sup>212</sup> Taylor, C. "Interpretation and the Sciences of Man", p. 55



("intentional" terms; 'fearful', 'anxious', 'pleasant', 'content') are unintelligible without the reference to the worldly state-of-affairs that are tied to the experience. For example, to say "There is a moth in the room and I am afraid" not only captures the basic fact of there being a moth present, nor the experience that wells up within me when I see it. It also captures, in an important sense, the actions that I perform in response to it. I may shuffle out of the room, plead with my housemate to get rid of it, have a facial expression of panic. However, these reactions are such that they only make real sense as forming an account of my experience of fear. They could never adequately occur during my experience of being happy. These reactions are in an important way, intimately bound up with my experience, though part of understanding my experience is a recognition that my reactions are themselves part of that very experience. It is difficult to understand how an agent could properly recognise their experience of fear if the vocabulary that captures such an experience were unavailable to them.

Ultimately, what this means is that the vocabulary I use to capture my experiences goes some way towards my actual *meaningful* apprehension of those very experiences themselves. For Taylor, recognition of this is critical to understanding the process of self-interpretation and re-interpretation.<sup>213</sup> For the vocabulary that the self makes use of in order to categorise and apprehend its experiences makes sense precisely because of the role these elements of vocabulary play in a wider set of semantic contexts. For example, 'panic', 'presentiment', 'afraid' capture what they do in virtue of the role they play in descriptions of the experience of fear. The implication of this for Taylor is that this vocabulary can be more and more accurate; it can encompass more expressions and become more refined. As selves, we can *refine* the range of our intentional language.

If we become more adept at the adoption of intentional language, we are able to apprehend our experiences in ever sharper ways. Therefore, we are

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<sup>213</sup> *Idem.*

able to utilise terms that are more and more appropriate for our experiential content.

What this means then, is that those commitments, states-of-affairs, concerns and encounters that the self is wrapped up with, derive at least part of their significance from the range of intentional vocabulary available to the self. This does not mean that without an intentional vocabulary one is unable to feel, say, brute fear. It would be unreasonable to claim that a cat cannot experience fear of a wolf. What Taylor is really trying to get us to see, is that in such a situation, a cat's experience of its own fear is not intelligible to it, precisely because it lacks the intentional vocabulary necessary to capture the things it is experiencing. What is unique for the human self, is that its experiences can become more significant in relation to the range of language available to it. The intelligibility of ones' experiences depends upon the depth of one's intentional vocabulary.

We can highlight this by imagining a case where someone suffering from a mental illness is attending a counselling session with a therapist. The more accurately the patient is able to report his or her experiences, the more accurate in turn the diagnoses of the therapist will become. A patient with a limited vocabulary will be less able to articulate their fears, anxieties and other emotional states. It then becomes difficult to see in what sense such a patient would be able respond to these emotional states in the requisite way, where, by "requisite way", we mean a manner in which the patient can work towards a resolution of his or her psychological issues. Thus, the inner mental life of the self is bound up with the range of intentional vocabulary the self has available to it. This leads to the possibility of being able to improve one's vocabulary and as such, improve the ability to apprehend one's experiential content. The deeper the apprehension, the more profound the revision of self can be.

Wolf does in fact see a major benefit in the kind of view Taylor puts forward: Deep Self Views tend to cohere with our everyday understanding of

what it is to be responsible for our actions. An agent who commits a crime as the result of brainwashing cannot be said to be responsible for his or her actions on the basis of the fact that in a deep sense, his or her *self* was not the absolute author of the criminal act—the “brainwasher” is ultimately culpable.

In cases of people in these special categories, the connection between the agent’s deep selves and their wills is dramatically severed – their wills are governed, not by their deep selves, but by forces external to and independent from them.<sup>214</sup>

The Deep Self View also enables us, in a crucial way, to differentiate between humans and animals. As far as we know, it is not that animals lack this connection between deep selves and their wills, but that they possess no deep selves at all. They are the vehicles of forces which impel them to act, but also, lacking a deep self, are (presumably) oblivious to this fact. In a sense then, we might say that self-awareness is a necessary, though not a sufficient condition for freedom. An organism can be self-aware whilst still lacking the capacity to recognise that their selves can be corrected – that they can transcend the given conditions that manipulate their selves and be the absolute author of their own acts. In other words, an organism can be self-aware and *not* free, but an organism *cannot* be free and *not* self-aware.

Wolf notes also that there is a theoretical sense in which the Deep Self View is fruitful – “[i]t responds to at least one way in which the fear of determinism presents itself.”<sup>215</sup> The prevalent position of modern non-philosophical thought is that we, as part of a causally determined universe, are bound by physical events that extend far beyond our births. Therefore, facts of our agency are merely psychological facts and so our selfhood is essentially beyond our control, ultimately reducible to events and constraints that we in no way authored. Freedom, under this view, is an illusion. We have seen in the previous section how Freedom-in-the-World can overcome such

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<sup>214</sup> Wolf, S. “Sanity and the Metaphysics of Responsibility” p. 49

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.* p. 50

an account, and the Deep Self View of someone such as Taylor adopts a similar strategy.

The plausibility of determinism affirms that whilst our behaviour is determined by our desires, these desires are, in turn, determined by external factors. Our desires are *ours* in a merely *prima facie* sense. We saw the discussion of desires come up, and a way to incorporate them into an account of freedom, in our discussion of Frankfurt. But another useful example of this “desire-determinism” in action is in economics, where Version 1 of the argument from the facticity of the free self might be expressed in the following way: One can deem the success or failure of an economic system to be demonstrated by the ability that individuals within the system have to satisfy their own preferences. A good (or at least functional) economic system is one in which individuals are free to follow and satiate their desires. However, these desires will usually have been pre-determined by factors external to the individual. I can go to a supermarket and choose from a wide array of deodorants, in order to make myself smell better. The current economic system allows me to do just that: I have a desire to smell pleasant, and that desire can be satisfied. But there seems to have been no point in my life where I *chose* the initial desire to smell pleasant. This desire was forced upon me by advertising and other people in the same system. I have been conned; coerced into spending money on a product to satisfy a desire that I am not even the origin of. Thus, desire-determinism is this very notion: that I am free to satisfy my desires, but these desires are the kind of things I have no real say in – they have been determined by external factors.

The Deep Self View enables us to clearly differentiate between kinds of desires which are externally determined, and kinds which are genuinely authored by an agent. “Determinism implies that the desires that govern our actions are in turn governed by something else, but that something else will, in the fortunate cases, be our own deeper selves.”<sup>216</sup> The determinist can still maintain that something must be responsible for this “deeper self” and in

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<sup>216</sup> *Idem*.

order to avoid the inconvenience of an infinite regression of deep selves, this “something” must be an external force. Wolf says that for Taylor, there is the possibility that the agent performing the initial evaluation can in turn be evaluated by a still deeper self. This type of move, as far as Wolf is concerned, serves only to “[push] the problem further back.”<sup>217</sup> However, Taylor’s point is more that this initial deep self can become more “articulate” about its desires: it can acquire a better or more in depth vocabulary of “strong evaluation” and so, the argument goes, the more robust the evaluative vocabulary, the deeper the self-evaluation will be.<sup>218</sup> From what we have said about this kind of vocabulary, it becomes apparent that a Deep Self View of this sort does not push the problem deeper and deeper, but merely that the one Deep Self can become more adept in its self-evaluations.

That said, let us assume that determinism is *false*. In this case, I may well be equipped to explain my behaviour in terms of my desires and my desires in terms of my deep self. However, I still had no say whatsoever in the brute existence of my deep self. Heidegger deems this phenomenon “Being-thrown” or “thrownness”: the uncomfortable, dizzying realisation that our actual existence is not something we desired, asked for, or chose. The basic facts of our selves are ultimately dependent upon our family, society and culture and this cluster of influences and dependencies are facts we can take no deep responsibility for. Thus, we are “thrown” into the world.<sup>219</sup> At first, the acceptance of thrownness and facticity seems to give us a useful way to incorporate the determinist concerns within a system of deeper freedom. But what it seems to do, upon closer examination, is leave the account wide upon to yet more concerns.

So, the Deep Self View cannot settle the worries raised by determinism, because even if determinism were shown to be false, the worry of our Being-thrown would not be overcome. However, Wolf wants to argue that as long as we are free to revise and *re-create* this deep self, at least in terms of the order

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<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.* p. 51

<sup>218</sup> Taylor, C. “Responsibility for Self” pp. 116-117

<sup>219</sup> Heidegger, M. *Being and Time*, pp. 219-224

of its desires, we can be satisfied, that this capacity, at least initially, offers us all the freedom we could hope for.

If you are free to control your actions by your desires, and free to control your desires by your deeper desires, and free to control those desires by still deeper desires, what further kind of freedom can you want?<sup>220</sup>

At this stage, Wolf is not satisfied with the rhetorical question she poses. There is, in her view, a deeper freedom we could want, and this deeper freedom is the real foundation of responsibility. The Deep Self View, that is, cannot offer us a complete picture of what it is to be a responsible agent. She constructs a useful and troublesome counter-example for proponents of the Deep Self View.

She takes as her example a fictional dictator, who is of the brutal and psychotic kind, called Jo. Jo has a favourite son, JoJo, who is given privileged access to his father's daily routine of torture, murder, imprisonment and generally inhuman acts. When JoJo grows up, he indulges in the same kind of acts as his father before him. JoJo is not in any way manipulated into these actions; they very much stem from his own desires. Importantly, these desires are the desires that JoJo, in his capacity for free agency, *chooses* to have. "When he steps back and asks "Do I really want to be this sort of person?" his answer is resoundingly Yes, for this way of life expresses a crazy sort of power that forms part of his deepest ideal."<sup>221</sup>

In other words, JoJo meets all the conditions laid out by the Deep Self View, but his deep self is essentially corrupt. So, in Heidegger's sense, JoJo has been thrown into a culture of inhumanity and brutality, and as an adult, his actions are authored by desires that his deep self fully endorses. In what sense then is JoJo responsible for his actions? Given his upbringing, it seems unlikely that JoJo's deep self would have developed in any other way than the way that it in fact has. JoJo has grown to become exactly the kind of monster we would

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<sup>220</sup> Wolf, S. "Sanity and the Metaphysics of Responsibility" p. 52

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.* p. 53

expect of anyone thrown into the situation JoJo is in. On a smaller scale, we can also imagine a child born to an abusive family. Were the child to grow up to have psychological difficulties that affect the desires this individual has and were these desires to lead to bizarre or unethical actions, we would not blame them *entirely* for this behaviour (though legally speaking we often do, an issue beyond the scope of this piece).

The Deep Self View, whilst enabling us to distinguish normal deep selves from manipulated deep selves (*i.e.* victims of brainwashing), provides no basis for distinguishing between a *sane* deep self and an *insane* deep self. “[W]e cannot say of JoJo that his self, *qua* agent, is not the kind of self he wants it to be. It *is* the self he wants it to be. From the inside, he feels as integrated, free and responsible as we do.”<sup>222</sup> In order for JoJo to be responsible for his deep self, he would quite literally have had to have *created* himself and this is, of course, impossible; not merely for JoJo but for any of us. The crux of Wolf’s argument on this point is that it is a mistake to think of responsibility as requiring “literal self-creation.”<sup>223</sup>

Not all the things necessary for freedom and responsibility must be types of power and control. We may need simply to *be* a certain way, even though it is not within our power to determine whether we are that way or not.<sup>224</sup>

*Sanity* is thus not a type of power or control, but it is a way in which our self *is*. We *are* sane (or insane), rather than having the power to be sane, or the power to determine our sanity (or insanity).

The desire to be sane is thus not a desire for another form of control. It is rather a desire that one’s self be connected to the world in a certain way – we could even say it is a desire that one’s self be *controlled by* the world in certain ways and not in others.<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.* p. 54

<sup>224</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>225</sup> *Idem.*

Legally speaking, the McNaughten Rule states that a person is sane if (1) he/she knows what he/she is doing and (2) he/she knows that what he/she is doing is, as the case may be, right or wrong. Thus, (1) implies the cognitive capacity to comprehend one's actions and (2) implies the capacity to situate one's actions within a normative framework. To be sane, then, is the "minimally sufficient ability to cognitively and normatively recognize and appreciate the world for what it is."<sup>226</sup> We can be in control of our desires, but we must also be subservient to the kind of desires one should have in the "real world" – sanity is the desire to actually be controlled by the real world in the right way.<sup>227</sup> Thus, the Deep Self View, taken in conjunction with the condition of sanity as laid out by Wolf, can overcome the metaphysical problems that can arise in discussions of responsible agency.

The "Sane Deep Self View" provides us with the basis to distinguish between our own cases and the cases of individuals like JoJo. JoJo is not responsible for his actions because although the link between his desires and his deep self remains intact, the deep self that his desires are linked to is *insane*. JoJo meets condition (1) because he is cognitively able to comprehend his actions. However, he fails to meet condition (2), for his comprehension of the "rightness" or "wrongness" of his actions is evidently not in line with the way the world in fact is. He lacks the ability to place his actions in their proper normative framework.

But Wolf is not satisfied just to match up the condition of sanity with our pre-theoretical intuitions. These intuitions themselves require defending in light of yet more worries. Firstly, issues of freedom and responsible agency cannot be alleviated by the view that JoJo's mistaken normative self-evaluation is completely beyond his control. It is this very issue of the unavoidability of his erroneous valuations that needs to be overcome. "If JoJo's values are unavoidably mistaken, our values, even if not mistaken, appear to be just as unavoidable."<sup>228</sup> (Again, Heidegger's notion of "Being-

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<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.* p. 55

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.* p. 54

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.* p. 57



thrown” rears its head here). It should be noted though, and Wolf does just this, that in the case of anyone with a sane deep self, if we turn out to be a bad or immoral agent, it does not follow that we turned out this way *of necessity*. In the case of JoJo, his turning out to be immoral is the result of an insane deep self, which he could not help but develop. But in the case of a sane agent, in order to *be* sane, the agent must have the moral resources to comprehend the wrongness of their actions. What this means is that, our lack of literal self-creation at the deepest level should not be a worry. “Whereas JoJo is unable to control the fact that, at the deepest level, he is not fully sane, we are not responsible for the fact that, at the deepest level, we are.”<sup>229</sup> It is then, largely a matter of chance, a condition of our Being-thrown, whether or not we develop a sane or an insane deep self. But if we are lucky enough to be sane at the deepest level, then we are, by extension, lucky enough to have the capacity to revise or re-invent ourselves. However, seeing as we are sane, we are *morally* responsible for those aspects of ourselves we revise or re-create, should the actions that stem from them turn out to be wrong.

Wolf’s argument so far has shown that self-creation, aside from being empirically impossible, is in fact not even that desirable an ability.

What we do have reason to want, then, is something more than the ability to revise ourselves, but less than the ability to create ourselves. Implicit in the Sane Deep Self View is the idea that what is needed is the ability to *correct* (or approve) ourselves.<sup>230</sup>

At this point, Wolf anticipates two objections to the Sane Deep Self View:

- (1) [H]ow, in light of my specialized use of the term “sanity”, [can we be] so sure that “we” are any saner than the non-responsible individuals?<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.* p. 59

<sup>231</sup> *Idem*.

- (2) One may be worried that my view too closely connects sanity with being right about the world and fear that my view implies that anyone who acts wrongly or has false beliefs about the world is therefore insane and so not responsible for his actions.<sup>232</sup>

When it comes to (2), Wolf admits that her definition of sanity is normative. In this case, we might be justified in questioning why Wolf only cites the vilest of crimes. If insanity is the absence of a recognition of the rightness or wrongness of an action, which is what the M'Naughton Rule implies, then *any* action which falls outside sound practice can be deemed insane. We can think of a whole host of real examples, from the actions of lone serial killers to the mass killings of dictators.

The stronger criticism is (1), and Wolf's response is unconvincing. She merely cites the notion of "widespread intersubjective agreement"<sup>233</sup> regarding the normative framework which enables us to operate in the world. This response seems to reveal pragmatism at the core of Wolf's position. Simply put, the majority of people share the same values with regards to actions and so if someone consistently and unrepentantly acts contrary to these values, we are justified in questioning their sanity. Wolf agrees that one day, in response to the changing nature of the world, our normative framework may need revising accordingly. However, at least, as sane selves, we have the capacity to carry out such a revision.

This response does not seem to answer the first worry, but merely reassures us that what we are doing now, what we have reached "widespread intersubjective agreement" on, is working for us as long as we are sane. Some other framework may work better for us in the future, but only a sane self can bring about the necessary changes to this framework.

That said, one may simply need to re-word (1) in response to Wolf: how can we be so sure that this "widespread intersubjective agreement" has been reached between *sane* selves? Also, would the revisions Wolf talks about necessarily be carried out by sane selves, or would it in fact take an *insane* self

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<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.* p. 60

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.* p. 59

to recognise the eventual dysfunction of the things we have reached intersubjective agreement on? Or put more clearly, would it not be the case that a self who recognised our normative framework is no longer working for us, be deemed “insane” at the start? Asking these questions, we can be led to think of a situation whereby an individual has a sane deep self but is not, in the empirical and metaphysical sense, *free*.

## 8.2 Implications for Freedom-in-the-World

Before we can consider in detail how we may defend Freedom-in-the-World against the argument from the facticity of the free self, we ought to see exactly how Wolf’s account affects the one I have laid out thus far. I have said that we can consider Wolf’s position as fitting the criteria of the argument from the facticity of the free self. It must be made clear how this is so. Let us remind ourselves of the premises of such an argument:

- (1) Freedom-in-the-World *is*:
  - a. Non-transcendental
  - b. Non-reductive
  - c. Responsible for the disclosure of things and beings
- (2) Freedom-in-the-World is a feature of our *factual* existence (we never chose to be free)
- (3) Therefore, the things we cannot choose for ourselves determine the things we *can* choose for ourselves. In what sense then is the self *actually* free?

It is clear enough that Wolf is not concerned to argue against Freedom-in-the-World, but instead against the idea that the self is fundamentally free at some deep level without also being sane. However, this is what Freedom-in-the-World claims; that as selves, we are free to re-determine ourselves as we see fit, which directly impacts the manner in which things in the world are disclosed.

That said, as a factual feature of our existence, we have no choice in the fact that we are free in this way: the very notion of freedom itself would be unintelligible were it not for the Worldly Freedom we experience. What goes along with this is a whole myriad of other features of our selfhood that we cannot choose: our body, race, family, class, environment, society and so on. These things constitute the boundaries within which we can choose certain things for ourselves. Thus, it follows that if things we cannot choose go towards making possible the things we can choose, then there is no real sense to the idea that we are fundamentally free at a basic level. Instead, we are merely free at a superficial level, which owes itself to the underlying processes of our structure as beings which conform to the laws of nature.

How does this fit in with Wolf's argument? (2) and (3) can be adequately captured within Wolf's example of JoJo, the dictator's son. Crucially, JoJo did not choose the environment into which he was born. As such, he could not have had any authorship in the kind of self he was to become. In being exposed to the brutality of his father's regime, he became exactly the kind of agent one would have expected him to become; one which is completely disconnected from the suffering of others. And yet, as a result of this fundamental *lack* of choice, JoJo does not even *wish* to be any other way than the way he in fact is.

We can say then, that the environment into which JoJo was born constitutes his facticity. He had no choice in any of these things. However, in virtue of this lack of choice, he became the kind of self that chose the same things for himself as his father before him; what is more, he would not choose to be any other way. Under our account, his Worldly Freedom is such that things in the world, including other people, are disclosed to him as things over which he has dominion. He thus chooses for himself according to this disclosure, but we must bear in mind that such disclosure occurs in virtue of the kind of self JoJo fundamentally is. What Wolf's account seems to expose is that JoJo could not possibly have chosen this fundamental or "Deep" Self, and

as such, the things that are within his power to choose are exactly the sort of thing JoJo would inevitably choose, in virtue of the facticity of his Deep Self.

What is an even more pressing issue for Wolf is whether or not JoJo's Deep Self, and by extension any of our Deep Selves, is sane or insane. This is a – if not *the* – most crucial feature of our facticity. A sane or insane agent chooses things in virtue of this condition, and on our account, it would also be fair to say that things are disclosed to the agent in virtue of this condition. However, empirically, our sanity is not the kind of thing we can choose. As aforementioned, it is a feature of our facticity.

What all of this means for our account of Freedom-in-the-World is that at the most primordial level of selfhood, we are determined by the world around us. But this determination in turn determines the kind of self we will become, and thus the manner in which things are disclosed and the choices we will make for ourselves. As a result, in light of premise (3), which states that if the things we cannot choose determine the things we can choose, then there is no meaningful sense in which we can say an agent is fundamentally free. It would seem that instead, an agent is fundamentally determined, and the only thing we have by way of freedom is the ability to respond and be responsible for the way these determinations shape the rest of our lives.

## 8.3 In Defence of Freedom-in-the-World

### 8.3.1 Revisiting Heidegger: “Thrownness” and Facticity

It seems undeniable that there are features of our selfhood which cannot be chosen. One of these features is our sanity (or insanity) which we acquire through our experience of life from within our own horizon – a horizon which also cannot be, at least when considered empirically, within the ability of the agent to author.

With this in mind though, we should not be led to think that such arguments undermine the account of Freedom-in-the-World that has been developed throughout this work. In keeping with the Heideggerian foundations examined in Chapter 4, we ought to remind ourselves that facticity, far from denying the possibility of the freedom of the will, in fact opens up the space for it, by constituting the structure of the potentialities-for-Being that are Worldhood. For a Heideggerian account of the freedom of the self, facticity is accommodated and included along with Being-in-the-World, and this is where we can begin to see how facticity need not concern us as much as may seem at first glance:

... Being-in-the-World has the function of a rigid framework, within which Dasein’s possible ways of comporting itself towards its world run their course without touching the ‘framework’ itself as regards its Being. But this supposed ‘framework’ itself helps make up the kind of Being which is Dasein’s... Dasein’s facticity is such that *as long as* it is what it is, Dasein remains in the throw, and is sucked into the turbulence of the “they’s” inauthenticity. Thrownness, in which facticity lets itself be seen phenomenally, belongs to Dasein, for which, in its very Being, that Being is an issue. Dasein exists factically.<sup>234</sup>

Here, Heidegger is describing, firstly the fact that Being-in-the-World acts as a “framework”, a set of conditions within which the Self is disclosed and within which also things are disclosed to it. The self, as Dasein, cannot fundamentally break with or alter this basic “framework” which is the World; it cannot “touch” the framework. However, as we have seen, through the

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<sup>234</sup> Heidegger, M. *Being and Time*, pp. 221-223

phenomenon of disclosure, this framework, whilst belonging to each individual self, also helps to constitute the self. What this amounts to then, is the idea that the World into which we are “thrown”, is not within our power to fundamentally choose. This is precisely what Heidegger means when he uses the term “thrown” – Dasein, the self, finds itself in a time and a place that were not of its initial choosing, and these things form facticity, which itself creates the World that belongs to each self. It is this “movement” that Heidegger describes as “thrownness” that allows us to formulate in the first place what facticity is and the effects it has on our selfhood. However, for Heidegger, this thrownness “belongs” to each self individually. We are all thrown uniquely into the World. As such, it is our own thrownness – our own facticity. As selves, our situations are unique to each one of us, and each form a framework which allows us to determine ourselves in the World.

However, this should not lead us to think that because the self must exist within boundaries, or a “framework” it did not initially choose, that it is fundamentally determined. For,

... [F]alling into the world would be phenomenal ‘evidence’ *against* the existentiality of Dasein only if Dasein were regarded as an isolated “I” or subject, as a self-point from which it moves away. In that case, the world would be an Object... If, however, we keep in mind that Dasein’s Being is in the state of *Being-in-the-World*, as we have already pointed out, then it becomes manifest that falling, as a *kind of Being of this Being in*, affords us rather the most elemental evidence *for* Dasein’s existentiality. In falling, nothing other than our potentiality-for-Being-in-the-World is the issue...<sup>235</sup>

The confusion regarding whether or not this factual existence of the self constitutes a fundamental determinism, only arises when one takes the self to be something like the traditional concept of a “closed off subject”. The very reason I have drawn upon Heideggerian resources in constructing this account is because of the manner in which it avoids having recourse to such a

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<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 223-224

traditional conception. This is precisely what the analysis of Heidegger in earlier chapters aimed to demonstrate.

When we consider that the self is always already *in* the world, the issue of its factual existence becomes less pressing for an account of the free will. To see this in a clearer way, we should look at premise (3) of the argument from the facticity of the free self. It states that our factual existence determines the choices we can make. But when we consider properly the structure of Being-in-the-World, and the fact that the self is always already in a world, this premise does not stand. For all that facticity really determines is the “framework”, and this means that it in fact only determines the *range of possibilities* that the self can navigate. This does not inhibit one’s ability to choose between those possibilities. It only inhibits the self in the sense that one *has to choose* or *not choose* between possibilities. Therefore, the only thing facticity really determines is possibility itself. Or otherwise put, facticity constitutes possibility, but *not* the choices one actually makes in situation. Thus, we are “thrown” into possibilities, but this does not prevent us from choosing between them; it does not prevent us from choosing one set of possibilities over another. Nor does it restrict us from abstaining from the choice completely. The facticity of the free self then, does not amount to a deeper determinism, but merely the necessity for the self to operate through and within various potentialities. The only thing the self is “determined” to do is choose, but the choices that it can make are still entirely free and authored.

There is also something else that should be noted from this return to Heidegger, and it is to do with the notion of facticity itself as it has been understood. Let us look again at Heidegger’s definition of facticity in *Being and Time*:

Dasein understands its ownmost Being in the sense of a certain factual ‘Being-present-at-hand’. And yet the ‘factuality’ of the fact of one’s own Dasein is at bottom quite different from



the factual occurrence of some kind of mineral, for example. Whenever Dasein is, it is as a fact; and the factuality of such a fact is what we shall call Dasein's "facticity".<sup>236</sup>

As we discussed earlier, in the definition above, Heidegger is alluding to the fact that Dasein has a factual existence; as does "some kind of mineral". However, what is different about the factuality of Dasein's existence from that of a mineral lies in Dasein's ability to understand, evaluate and interpret its own factuality. Thus,

The concept of "facticity" implies that an entity 'within-the-world' has Being-in-the-world in such a way that it can understand itself as bound up in its 'destiny' with the Being of those entities which it encounters within its own world.<sup>237</sup>

It is crucial to understand that whilst facticity *does* affirm the fact of our existence -- and as such, our thrownness -- it also attests to the idea that in recognising its own facticity, the only place in which the actions of the self have any meaning, and as such, where our freedom is intelligible, is *in the world, which includes the factual existence of objects within it*. Thus, properly understood, facticity is not a determinist concern to be accommodated or overcome, but it is actually part of the structure of Freedom-in-the-World itself. Freedom is only intelligible within a world and facticity is Dasein's peculiar ability to take up the fact of its existence within itself and be the judge of its own life.

### 8.3.2 Freedom-in-the-World and the Sanity of the Self

At this stage, one may not be completely satisfied with the response to Wolf that was laid out. The concern can be raised that by re-situating the debate upon the basis of our findings in the work of Heidegger, we could be seen as setting up Wolf against an interlocutor she has no intention of responding to. However, what the previous portion allowed us to see was

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<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.* p. 82

<sup>237</sup> *Idem.*

how Heidegger's notion of Being-in-the-World, which we drew upon for our account of freedom, can ultimately ground a defence of the concept against the argument for the facticity of the free self, in the form of Wolf's argument regarding the Sane Deep Self. Also, in criticising Taylor, who espouses a broadly Heideggerian position, it seems fitting for us to go back to the primary source himself (Heidegger) in order to find clues and insights which have perhaps been missed by his interpreters.

With this done, I now intend to formalise a response to Wolf by working purely within the confines of the notion of Freedom-in-the-World, with a view to demonstrating that when the will is considered free in the manner I have argued it should be, sanity becomes an unsatisfactory foundation for free responsibility.

The argument above attempted to establish that far from allowing the determinist to press home their criticism based on events beyond our choosing, facticity is itself the very ground of possibility.

Wolf is correct in her assertion that we should not look for "literal self creation". She is also correct when she states that to be free may only need to consist in being a certain way, rather than being conceived of as a type of power or control.<sup>238</sup> But Freedom-in-the-World is not espousing a conception of the self as a literal self-creator. The very fact that the freedom we do have is conceived of as "worldly" attests to this. We cannot create ourselves "from scratch", but we must learn to cope with the range of possibilities that are available to us as factually existing selves. Freedom-in-the-World is precisely the way that we, as selves, *are*. Freedom does consist in being a certain way. Now, whilst the range of possibilities, or boundaries, or "framework" are indeed factual, this does not imply that the determinist is correct. The argument from the facticity of the free self overlooks a certain fact regarding the account of freedom as Worldly. Freedom-in-the-World accommodates the facticity of the free self by asserting that one's factual existence is the basis only of possibility and there is a sharp distinction to be made between

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<sup>238</sup> Wolf, S. "Sanity and the Metaphysics of Responsibility" pp. 53-54

possibility and choice. For example, there may be three possibilities for me today: I may work; abandon my work and go out with friends, or; work for a bit longer and then go out with friends. These are what I can *choose* between. The facticity of my situation does not imply that my choice is already made. It only constitutes the form of the possibilities themselves, insofar as these possibilities are structured by things and entities within the world that I find myself in. Determinism conflates the brute fact that there is a world around the agent, with the inability of the agent to act freely within such a world. It does so because it does not recognise the manner in which the agent, or the self, is actually *in* the world, amongst things, entities and possible ways to choose to interact with these things and entities. Thus, as Wolf rightly argues, to be free consists in merely *being* a certain way. However, where Wolf will go on to talk of sanity as being that way of being, Freedom-in-the-World gives us a way of saying that we only need to *be in a world*.

Thus, facticity does not determine choice; merely possibility. We are still free, insofar as we are free to choose which possibilities we want to actualise for ourselves. This is, as Heidegger would put it, our “mode of Being”. In virtue of the fact we are in a world, we are in and amongst things and possibilities.

As Wolf herself admits with reference to her fictional dictator JoJo, “from the inside, he feels as integrated, free and responsible as we do.”<sup>239</sup> So *from within*, the “insane” self interprets themselves as being every bit as free as the “sane” self. In fact, in JoJo’s and similar cases, it may also be the case that they recognise themselves as having the very same kind of sanity as the other members of society, even if it is difficult to see how such a belief could be justified.

In virtue of our Freedom-in-the-World, we always feel perfectly sane, precisely because we are always choosing from possibilities that are part of our “Being-in”. It is difficult, though not impossible, to imagine what it would be like to be disclosed to oneself as insane, for it would imply that whatever

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<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.* p. 53

we choose for ourselves could never be justified even to ourselves. This is evidently *not* what it feels like for any of us to choose between possibilities.<sup>240</sup>

As when, in the previous chapter, I argued that determinism is unintelligible without the activity of a free will, the same goes for notions of “sanity” and “insanity”. This is because these notions are constructed in the world, along with all others. What underpins the ability for individuals to form notions in the first place is that we are free and in the world primordially.

That said, it makes sense to talk of sanity and insanity when it comes to responsibility – on this point, I agree with Wolf. It does seem that the most sensible way to think of ourselves as being responsible for our choices requires that those choices be made by a sane agent. Also, from what has already been established, it is also sensible to think of the determination of someone’s insanity as falling within the remit of the wider society, where a code of laws and acceptable practice have been laid out. However, these codes, laws and acceptable practices must have been formed by agents whose freedom is in the world and if the determination of responsibility is to fall on intersubjective agreement, it seems that this agreement is based on a prior freedom, which is Freedom-in-the-World. Such a worldly freedom is that mode of being that we all are “in”, and things like determinism, sanity, insanity and responsibility are only intelligible in virtue of this mode of being.

Ultimately, the phenomenon of disclosure, both of the agents that we are and the world we are in, can still be argued as opening up the space for freedom that has been laid out in the preceding chapters. Facticity, which can now include Wolf’s version of sanity, does not pose a problem for this account of freedom. This is because our “thrownness”, the very fact that we are in a world, does not deny us freedom, but, on the contrary, gives us a truly meaningful and intelligible freedom. We cannot help but be free agents and this is because we cannot help but be *in* a world.

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<sup>240</sup> Cf. Ayer, A.J. “Freedom and Necessity” in Watson, G (ed.) *Free Will* (pp. 15-23)

### 8.3.3 Intelligible Freedom

Interpreting facticity as something which opens up this account of freedom to determinist concerns misses what is crucial about the structure of freedom as it has been formulated here. On this point, Wolf actually helps, rather than hinders the project. For she notices that if freedom is going to make sense anywhere, it is going to have to be within the realms of action, responsibility and practice. However, Wolf's point of contention with freedom of the will as conceived in the work of Taylor and Frankfurt is not "where" freedom makes the most sense, but that it is sometimes the case that individuals are *not* free. But by establishing that freedom is something which is equiprimordial with our being in a world, we are able to argue that the only condition that would make an agent not free is *not* being in a world. However, this would mean being non-human or being deceased. In other words, to be consistent with the notion of freedom-in-the-world that has been developed here, we ought to see that if one is *in* a world, one is by extension also free. If the determinist wishes to argue that there are clear cases where an agent is not free, these cases must demonstrate agency without worldhood, and this is unintelligible.

Wolf is merely able to demonstrate cases of agency without *responsibility* (as in her example of JoJo). Someone like JoJo is still entirely capable of choosing for himself or herself and is thus free to that extent. However, JoJo is not sane therefore not responsible, and this lack of responsibility prevents JoJo from understanding his freedom properly. JoJo is unable to take his facticity up within himself like a responsible agent can. His freedom, whilst he has it, is *unintelligible to himself*, for his connection to the world he is thrown into is dramatically severed by the circumstances in which he was raised.

What does this mean for Freedom-in-the-World then? It means that because the structure of this freedom includes within it facticity, properly understood, it is the only sense in which freedom can truly be deemed intelligible. The goal of an account of freedom should not be to outright

disprove determinism, but to show that determinist concerns rest upon freedom itself, or that freedom can be extended to include those concerns without conflict.

Freedom-in-the-World is the kind of account that takes worries regarding the factual nature of the world and ourselves and makes these facts part of its own structure. It does so by noting how the very disclosure of facts is something that rests upon a will which is free. But now we come to see that also, there is no other space for freedom to be considered intelligible at all except for in a world. This may seem like an underwhelming point at first glance, but its strength lies in its subtlety. For what is implied by such a point is that a transcendental account of freedom is not necessary, but also that it is often the case that determinist concerns interpret the world as something which contains no space for an account of freedom. What I have been able to show through Freedom-in-the-World is that, on the contrary, the world is *the only place where freedom can be intelligible*. Freedom-in-the-World is thus *comprehensible freedom*, and both versions of the argument from the facticity of the free self overlook a crucial feature of facticity, or at least misinterpret it. Facticity does not just point to the immutable fact of our existence, but also to our ability, as free agents, to make this fact into a problem and to evaluate and change ourselves in response.

#### **8.4 Closing Remarks**

What has been attempted above is not a rejection of Wolf's position, given that we can agree with and accommodate the vast majority of her insight within the scope of the vision of freedom that I have constructed. Instead, it has been established exactly what Freedom-in-the-World is and a potential criticism was raised. This criticism I termed the "argument from the facticity of the free self", owing to the empirical observation that we are not the kind of agents that can create ourselves from the ground up. The argument from the facticity of the free self aimed to demonstrate that because we are born into a set of circumstances we had no choice in, anything we choose for ourselves

is not a free choice; it is a choice based upon those prior and pre-determined circumstances.

I referred to Wolf because I feel her depiction of an insane dictator, and his lack of choice in his being an insane “Deep Self”, illuminates and supplements the argument from the facticity of the free self in a clear and relatable format. Through considering Wolf’s argument we were able to see an example of how Freedom-in-the-World might run into problems, as a concept, when trying to account for the facticity of the self. In doing this, I have been able to demonstrate that the conclusion of the argument from the facticity of the free self is unable to establish determinism in a form that undermines Freedom-in-the-World. This is because when the determinist makes such an argument, they take facticity to be the kind of thing that literally *determines* the choices we make. We have seen though, that an important feature of the definition of facticity is our ability to have our factual existence disclosed to us and to interpret ourselves in relation to this disclosure. As such, all facticity really does is allow space for possibility, and as agents that are always already in the world, we are free to choose between possibilities, and as such, to choose the kind of self we want to be. Beyond this, the kind of selves we are and desire to become disclose the world and things in it to us in such a way that it is a “framework” within which we can actualise the possibilities available to us.

With all these things considered, facticity, far from being a danger to any notion of the free will, is in fact constituted by freedom-in-the-world. The phenomenon of being “always already in” a world amounts to facticity itself; we have no choice but to be and act in the world. We are “thrown” into the world – as Heidegger terms it. But as agents in a world, our facticity, rather than implying that we are determined, is something that can be taken up by the agent and acted upon. Facticity facilitates possibility, and possibility allows an agent to choose.

As we have seen, this does not imply fundamental determinism. Instead, the very intelligibility of determinism implies freedom. This is because determinism, as something that can be understood, requires

disclosure to make sense. But we have established that disclosure requires the freedom of the agent. Thus, when Heidegger claims that our potentiality-for-Being is an issue for us, we can see that this kind of insight is only available to an agent who is free in some deep sense. On this point, Taylor tells us that,

... [B]eyond the *de facto* characterisation of the subject by his goals, desires and purposes, a person is a subject who can pose the *de jure* question: is this the kind of being I ought to be, or really want to be?<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> Taylor, C. "Responsibility for Self" p. 111



## *Conclusion*

Throughout the history of Philosophy, the issue between whether or not the Will is free has been a topic of extensive debate. Traditionally, a conflict arises between those who hold to the idea that the human agent has a will, and as such, is capable of making choices for and about itself; and those who believe that the very notion of choice itself is false. Those in the former camp tend to argue that the will is free because it has the ability to choose; an agent can and, indeed does, (so the argument goes) choose, from the mundane choices of food or leisure, all the way up to choices regarding the kind of action one chooses and the kind of life one wishes to have. For all this, though, members of the former class cite the “mechanical” nature of the universe we inhabit and seek, in ever more compelling ways, to subsume the human being itself into the makeup of such a model of reality. In so doing, the members of the latter camp aim to show that our experience of making decisions, whether it be about the food we eat or the person we are, come out looking illusory. That in fact, what we ought to see is though we *seem* to choose, this seeming can be reduced and explained in terms of things about ourselves that are beyond our power to choose: our body (including, and for some, most importantly, our brain), the time into which we are born, our family, culture and so on. All of these things, taken together, form a set of conditions, which we did not choose, that precede and in fact determine the “choices” we make.

When we consider such an argument in its fullest, we are led to conclude that we cannot help but “choose” the things that we do, even though it seems as though we have control over our actions. “Choice” becomes a facile notion, one which is nothing other than our simplistic way of interpreting the very complex activities of the brain and its prior conditioning by the things to which it is exposed.

What has been attempted in the preceding work was a resituating of the debate between these two camps. We introduced the problem in a general way and suggested that a compromise may be found in the work of Kant, whose transcendental idealism is capable of retaining the legitimacy of scientific discourse and the essence of the human being as a free and responsible agent.

However, certain difficulties arose when considering transcendental idealism, in particular, that things as they are in themselves are unknowable and as such, conclusions about the actual nature of reality cannot be made. We then turned to the work of Hegel, whose early sections of his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, in particular his dialectic on force, can be accurately read as a criticism of Kantian epistemology. That said, Hegel still could not prevent relapsing back into a form of idealism himself, and also developed, as a result, a rather conservative notion of freedom.

At that point, it became apparent that a satisfactory view of freedom could not be based on idealist premises, as it meant that any notion of freedom would be committed to placing freedom “outside” the world in which the human being acts. It became necessary to understand, in more detail, what exactly “world” or “worldhood” amounted to; the thought being that in doing so, we would find a way to incorporate freedom within the world.

To this end, we turned to the work of Heidegger, whose analyses of Worldhood put us in a position to understand how we may construct a non-reductive, non-transcendental freedom. We found that far from being something “added on” to human beings as a sort of power or property, freedom was fundamental to our interpretation of the things around us. It allows relations and contexts to form, for things to be significant in one way or another, in the form of *disclosure*. Therefore, we take freedom as being that which allows of the possibility of the world to be disclosed to us in the first place; it defines the manner in which things and people are disclosed to us, and as such, allows us to *be*.

With freedom thus occupying such a fundamental role, we were able to understand that determinist arguments themselves were dependent upon the freedom of the agent; such arguments are only intelligible upon the basis of a free will which structures and utters the arguments.

What this work developed aside from a worldly notion of freedom but the idea that such a notion can help to dissolve traditional arguments between proponents of the free will and determinists. The work attempts to offer, in a careful way, a picture of a free agent which is also at the same time in a world; that the freedom of the agent and the world it acts within are correlated. It does not propose a “phenomenology” of freedom but instead, uses the insight of previous phenomenological investigations (in particular those of Heidegger) as a starting point for a further discussion regarding the worldly nature of freedom itself.

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