

THE HERMENEUTICS OF THE MODERN SUBJECT

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Statement

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ABSTRACT

The Hermeneutics of the Modern Subject

Martin Heidegger was the first modern European philosopher to alert mankind to the dangers of modern technology. He argued that technology is an enframing or a limiting perspective of the possibilities for human existence. The philosopher Michel Foucault investigated the genealogy of the way that the 'care of the self' became superseded by the prevailing cultural imperative to 'have knowledge of the self'. This change began in the seventeenth century and this thesis addresses the idea that the 'Homelessness of Being' which Heidegger associated with modern technology, has been brought about, or exacerbated, by the gradual abandonment of practices associated with the 'care of the self'. This thesis also examines the way that poetic language and modes of thinking can lead to a 'way of life' which is not enframed within a technological matrix.

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The Hermeneutics of the Modern Subject

Introduction

The French philosopher Michael Foucault (1926-1984) claimed that a significant change in our 'way of life' occurred in the seventeenth century. He claimed that the primacy of the 'care of the self' had been supplanted by the imperative to 'know thyself'. He termed this transitional period 'The Cartesian Moment' (Foucault, 2005, p 14). This transition appears to correspond very well with Heidegger's assertion that the danger from technology had arisen since the Enlightenment. This thesis will explore some of the themes and the work of both Foucault and Heidegger which naturally arose from the idea that the primacy of the 'care of the self' had been supplanted by the imperative to 'know thyself'. Both Heidegger's and Foucault's concerns about the perceived dangers from technology are explored, particularly with the idea that empirical knowledge and actions based on claims related to rationality have become all important.

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) was the first modern European philosopher to attempt to alert mankind to the dangers inherent in the uncritical way in which technology was being developed. (Heidegger, 1977a, pp 3-35) Heidegger made a series of important claims about the danger from *modern* technology which this study will investigate. He argued that human beings are not in control of technology, in contrast to ancient times. Instead, whether mankind wills it or not, technology has become established to be, in effect, in control of our lives. He claimed that: "Everywhere we remain unfree,

and chained to technology whether we passionately affirm or deny it.” (Heidegger, 1977a, p 4)¹

This concern of Heidegger’s should not be confused simply with fears about the destructive power of the atomic age, ecological damage and so on.² For Heidegger the power which holds us captive is: “- -the technological revolution in the atomic age could so captivate, bewitch, dazzle and beguile man that calculative thinking may sometimes come to be accepted and practiced as the only way of thinking.”

(Heidegger, 1969, p 56)

Human beings, in order to dominate nature, necessarily become reduced merely to an object such as any other found in nature. Perhaps, even more importantly, Man is today treated as a resource, as is the whole of nature. (Heidegger, 1977a, p 24) This relationship to the world in which we live, was for Heidegger, the denial of what it is to be a human being. (Heidegger, 1969, p 50) In the ‘Age of the World Picture’, Heidegger claimed that the picture which holds us captive, is that technology enables man to posture as Lord of the earth. (Heidegger, 1977c, pp 115-54) This picture is resonant of the Wittgenstein of the *Philosophical Investigations*: “A picture held us captive. And we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably.” (Wittgenstein, 1967, p48, para.115)

¹ Since Rousseau’s work on the social contract in the eighteenth century the political and philosophical thinking in Western Europe has become associated with the idea that power should not be solely exercised by an omnipotent sovereign or ruling elite. (Rousseau, 1987, pp1-24)

² A consensus definition of modern technology is that it is: ‘The application of scientific or other knowledge to practical tasks by ordered systems that involve people and organizations, productive skills, living things and machines.’ (Dusek, 2006, p 35) This definition includes social organization and value systems, as advocated by John Kenneth Galbraith (1909 – 2004), the political economist. However, the German philosopher, Martin Heidegger, argued that this is a limited perspective, because ‘technology is not technological’. (Heidegger, 1977a, p 4)

The problem that concerned Heidegger is that technology has become so all encompassing, that all other modes of human living and ways of life have become concealed. In the 'Question concerning Technology', Heidegger argued that today technology has come to be accepted as revealing the only kind of truth. (Heidegger, 1977a, pp 3-35) Mankind nowadays could not envisage life without modern technology, hence he is a slave to it; technology is all pervasive. (Krell, 1993, pp 308 - 10)

The technological world view that pervades the whole of society today cannot imagine any other way of 'being'. The prevailing modern technological world view he termed *Machenschaft*. Babette Babich described this phenomenon in terms of Nietzsche's 'will to power'. (Babich, 2003, pp 327-357) Heidegger's constant pre-occupation in the *Beitrage*, a compilation of hitherto unpublished work, was concern about technological institutions, reflecting technological world domination of mankind, under any type of political regime. (Heidegger, 1999) The important point to make here is that Heidegger maintained his views about the danger from modern technology to the end of his life. This interest of Heidegger's in technology was present in his work for his *magnus opus*, *Being and Time*, first published in German in 1927. (Heidegger, 1962)

Being

Being is the permanent ground for existence, it is not an object or a set of objects, but central to everything that man experiences as a being in the world. (Heidegger, 1962, p 23) Heidegger's philosophy was principally focussed upon man's lack of concern and awareness of Being. He termed this lack of concern "the oblivion of Being", with the

result that man exists in a state of “Homelessness”. (Heidegger, 1993c, p 241) In the ‘Letter on Humanism’, Heidegger wrote that: “Homelessness is the symptom of Being. Because of it the truth of Being remains unthought.” (Heidegger, 1993c, p 242)

This homelessness represents the real danger from the essence of modern technology. This concept of Being has been criticized as being rather obscure. However, in his ‘Letter on Humanism’, Heidegger described Being in a way which is very pertinent to the way by which technology stultifies the possibilities for what could be a better way of life: “But how – provided we really ought to ask the question at all, how does Being relate to ek–sistence? Being itself is the relation to the extent that it, as the location of truth of Beings amid beings, gathers to itself and embraces ek–sistence in its existential, that is, ecstatic, essence.” (Heidegger, 1993c, p 235)

Heidegger believed that man should attempt to live an authentic way of life, which he argued was thwarted by modern technology. Steven Hicks explained this point of view: “Heidegger aims at a recovery of the sense of mystery of Being, which at the very least means a sense of power that cannot be brought under the control and mastery of technological humanity.” (Hicks, 2003, p 93)

Man as a being in the world, Heidegger termed Dasein, as a device to subvert all the previous philosophical and cultural beliefs as to what constitutes ‘man’. (Heidegger, 1962, pp 52-53) How can one attend to the possibility of living well – a better, a more authentic, ‘way of life’? One possibility was language, according to Heidegger. (Heidegger, 1993b, p 424) Some kind of transformation, mediated by language

(*poiesis*) is required for man to enter into a truer relationship to Being.³ This kind of transformation was termed by Heidegger in his essay 'The Turning' as *Ereignis* which is an event linked to a disclosure of some aspect of Being. (Heidegger, 1977b, p45)

In the 'Question Concerning Technology', first published in 1954, Heidegger claimed that technology is a certain mode of revealing. "Bringing-forth brings hither out of concealment into unconcealment." (Heidegger, 1977a, p 11)

Heidegger considered truth as being related to disclosedness. "Considered with respect to truth as disclosedness, concealment is then undisclosedness and accordingly the untruth that is most proper to the essence of truth." (Heidegger, 1993b, p 130)

Thus for Heidegger, technology is a way of revealing something which otherwise would have remained hidden, or have been revealed in a different way. In our modern world, Heidegger claimed that 'truth' can only be revealed by technology. In 1949 Heidegger

³ However, the exact meaning of Being, as used by Heidegger is obscure, and has been the subject of much debate. For example, Herman Philipse in his book on Heidegger's Philosophy of Being, discusses some of the interpretations of Being. (Philipse, 1998, pp 31-44) He describes many of these as unitarian, where the commentator develops one theory about Being, which Heidegger is supposed to have maintained throughout his life. An example given of this approach is that of Dreyfus. This author interpreted Heidegger's Being as the "intelligibility of our everyday background practices". (Philipse, 1988, p 69) An alternative view is what Philipse termed a 'patchwork' interpretation. On this reading, Being, as discussed by Heidegger, can be criticized as being either an empty concept, or one that is to be found in so many different ways in the many works of Heidegger, that it is effectively meaningless. (Philipse, 1988, p 71) Philipse disagreed with both these interpretations, and instead put forward five leitmotifs which are inter-related and play a part in the various expositions about Being which Heidegger made throughout his vast corpus. These themes are based on Aristotle's ideas about Being, Phenomenology, the transcendental theme, the neo- Hegelian theme and the post monotheist theme. (Philipse, 1998, p 75-76) These leitmotifs are to be found in Heidegger's investigation of Being. (Philipse, 1988, p 76) What science has neglected to do, is to commit any thought into these themes. (Heidegger, 1993a, p 94)

gave a lecture in Bremen entitled 'Das Gestell' or 'The Enframing'. It was on this lecture that his paper on the 'Question Concerning Technology' was based.

(Heidegger, 2012) In this paper, Heidegger introduces the relationship of human existence to technology. Heidegger believed that *poiesis* is very important in the process of bringing something into existence. (Heidegger, 1977a, pp 29-30) For example, this process could be a craft, or a poem. *Poiesis* is a kind of revealing, linked to the pre-Socratic concept of *alētheia* which was considered to be a form of truth. (Heidegger, 2002) The poet Rainer Rilke was one of the poets who were admired by Heidegger. The poet is someone who can liberate man from 'homelessness' because: "--what is said [in poetry] thinks the whole of beings by way of Being." (Heidegger, 1971a, p 134)

Rainer Rilke's Angel in the poem *Duino Elegies*, is a being who can assist in opening up a type of reality which is normally inaccessible to man. Heidegger claimed in his essay 'What are Poets For?' that "--Rilke's Angel, despite all difference in content, is *metaphysically the same* as the figure of Nietzsche's Zarathustra." (Heidegger, 1971a, p 134)

Physis is also a bringing forth of something into existence, for example a bud bursting into flower. This example was considered by Heidegger to be *poiesis* 'of the highest sense.' (Heidegger, 1977a, p 10) Heidegger argued that the revealing brought about as a consequence of *modern* technology, is quite distinct from the bringing forth or revealing associated with *poiesis*.

The essence of modern technology is an enframing, or a limiting perspective of the possibilities of man's existence. As a philosopher, Heidegger was concerned with the

'essence' of technology, not this or that technical process. In the above example, human beings are simply treated as a resource to be used, like any other raw material found in nature. As a result of becoming enmeshed in a technological framework, mankind loses his freedom; the only form of 'truth' becomes that revealed by technological applications. It was this 'enframing' that Heidegger saw as the danger to mankind, he was not opposed to technical devices being used by man for his own appropriate use: "It would be foolish to attack technology blindly. It would be shortsighted to condemn it as the work of the devil." (Heidegger, 1960, p 53)

The danger to mankind does not come from the tools and apparatus of technology. Instead, it is the use of man himself as a slave to technological processes, blinding him to the possibility of living in any other way. This 'enframing' is most dangerous when unperceived, when mankind enters into this 'enframing' as a mere raw material for a technological process. Because of the effect of Gestell, or enframing, man is not free in the modern world. For Heidegger, freedom is a concept intimately associated with truth. (Heidegger, 1993b, pp 115-138)

The 'Essence' of Technology

In his essays on the nature of truth, Heidegger developed the theme that there are two aspects of truth, using the ideas from Plato's *Republic*, that truth may be hidden or undisclosed. (Heidegger, 2002, pp 17-63) The phenomenon of revealing of what is hidden is *alētheia*. Instead of the essence of something being associated with a permanent important feature of its existence, Heidegger's concept of 'essence' is linked to the philosophical need to have a complete understanding of what we believe to be true. However, the idea of truth which dominates the present age is the

correspondence theory of truth which accords perfectly with the belief that science has the key to the understanding of the world in which we live. In *The Basic Questions of Philosophy*, Heidegger criticized Nietzsche, for accepting the current convention of linking truth solely with reason. (Heidegger, 1994, p 90)

In the 'Question Concerning Technology', Heidegger contended that *technē* should not be used to denote technology, but rather a form of revealing the truth, the true essence of something. (Heidegger, 1977a, p 34) In his *Introduction to Metaphysics*, Heidegger defined *technē* as a true understanding of what is directly observed or only superficially understood. (Heidegger, 2014, pp 177-178) The important point here is that Heidegger claimed that 'technology is not technological' because man - made objects disclose only a very limited aspect of the truth about technology. (Heidegger, 1977a, p 4)

Heidegger argued in 'The Question Concerning Technology' that technology is a mode of revealing which presupposes that everything in nature, and man himself, is a 'standing reserve' (*Bestand*) to be ordered by some form of power. As a result, we have unknowingly embraced a 'way of life' which has a very limited horizon of the different ways by which we might choose to live. As Iain Thomson has claimed, the greatest danger from technology is that we are: "--resources to be optimized, ordered and enframed with maximum efficiency". (Thomson, 2000a, p 207) The 'essence' of technology – the truth about technology, is a mode of revealing.

In his essay 'On the Essence of Truth', Heidegger developed a series of arguments to show that the essence of truth is linked to freedom. (Heidegger, 1993b, pp115-142)

Our loss of freedom in the modern world is due to the 'enframing' which is the cardinal

feature of modern technology. (Heidegger, 1977a, p 29) Technology limits our freedom because its mode of revealing is carried out by a limited and distorted relationship to the world where 'enframing' is the essence of technology. (Heidegger, 1977a, p 29) The real danger from modern technology is that: "- - nowhere does man today encounter himself, his essence." (Heidegger, 1977a, p 27)

Essentialism

In his book *Questioning Technology*, Andrew Feenberg criticised Heidegger on the grounds that he was an 'essentialist'. This is because Heidegger regarded the time of Modernity as one where the over-arching power of technology rules our 'way of life'. Feenberg argued that: "There are both theoretical and practical reasons to doubt such blanket distinctions between eras and types of society." (Feenberg, 2008, p 15)

In early societies man had utilised and developed technological objects such as the wheel and weapons, materials for building and so on. In a paper which discussed Heidegger's 'essentialism', Thomson pointed out that the problem with technology 'is not technological', a point which Heidegger had stressed in 'The Question Concerning Technology'. (Thomson, 2000a, pp 207-208) According to Thomson, Feenberg had misconstrued Heidegger's most fundamental point about the danger from technology today. (Thompson, 2000b, pp429-444) However, Feenberg had a further criticism of Heidegger because his philosophy of Being has "such a high level of abstraction", that it is irrelevant in any meaningful discussion about technology. (Feenberg, 2003, pp 661-662) This thesis will set out to address problems with respect to our 'way of life' and hence demonstrate that Heidegger's concerns about *modern* technology are substantive.

Foucault on Technology

In the *Question Concerning Technology*, Heidegger argued that the rise of the problem of modern technology arose around the seventeenth-century. (Heidegger, 1977a, p 22) However he did not provide supporting evidence. This evidence is needed to refute Feenberg's charge of 'essentialism' against Heidegger. Can evidence be found for the growth of scientism –the notion that only the principles and beliefs of science to the exclusion of any consideration of Being? How has it come about that the modern state has become all powerful, utilizing technology to its maximum effect? Why has knowledge become all encompassing? Is this development linked to scientism? Are there any possible ways by which modern man can overcome the all encompassing scope of modern technology – a 'saving power' which Heidegger claimed could be found by *poiesis*?

I believe that an important factor in answering these questions is the argument of the French philosopher, Michel Foucault (1926 – 1984) that there was a substantive change in the seventeenth century in man's relationship to the world which shaped his existence – his *essence*.⁴ This change has been the abandonment of the ancient practice to 'take care of yourself', the *epimeleia heautou*, by the modern emphasis on the need to 'know yourself', the *gnōthi seaton*. I intend to argue that this 'Cartesian Moment' was related to Heidegger's concern about modern man's estrangement from Being.

Foucault's approach was to investigate how technology is deployed in forms of power which are exercised on the body. By studying how power has been exercised in the

⁴ The book *Foucault and Heidegger: Critical Encounters*, (2003) edited by Milchman and Rosenberg, is an anthology of some essays by a number of philosophers who have ideas related to Heidegger's influence on Foucault.

past, Foucault thought that we could better understand the 'history of the present'. (Foucault, 1991, p 31) Foucault also shared Heidegger's concerns that nearly everyone accepts the validity of technology determining the way that we should live. It is to the transformation of the 'self' that Foucault, devoted an entire Lecture Course in 1981 – 1982, at the Collège de France on *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*. (Foucault, 2005) The relevance of Foucault's work on *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* is that it was all: "--reflected on from the side of Heidegger and starting with Heidegger." (Foucault, 2005, p 189) This thesis will explore this work of Foucault in terms of addressing Heidegger's concerns about modern technology.⁵

As a result of his work on the increasing power of technology, Foucault stated that: "--the West lost touch with Being". (Foucault, 2007c, p 152) He argued that this perspective limited a better understanding of the philosophy of technology. Foucault wrote in his essay 'Subjectivity and Truth':

Let's turn the question round and ask which techniques and practices constitute the Western concept of the subject, giving it its characteristic split of truth and error, freedom and constraint. I think that it is here that we will find the real possibility of constructing a history both of what we have done, and at the same time a diagnosis of what we are, -- in sum it is a question of searching for another kind of critical philosophy. Foucault, 2007c, p 152)

Foucault claimed that there are four aspects to the philosophy of technology. The first three include technologies of production, power relationships, and sign systems and symbols. The fourth aspect is a new one introduced by Foucault: "technologies of the self". (Foucault, 1988b) Most modern theories about the philosophy of technology

⁵ Hubert Dreyfus has argued in 'Being and Power' that "The heart of Heidegger's thought is the notion of Being, and the same could be said of the works of Foucault. Foucault analyzes several regimes of power, culminating in Bio – power, to help us free ourselves from understanding ourselves as autonomous subjects and disciplined bodies." (Dreyfus, 2003, p 30)

had only concentrated on the first three major types of technique. Foucault developed the idea that what is lacking in the modern theories about the philosophy of technology are concepts related to 'techniques of the self'. I intend to investigate the proposition that these "techniques of the self" concern factors which are related to Heidegger's belief that man's existence is shaped and moulded by his relationship to technology.

Foucault defined these "techniques of the self" as: "Reflected and voluntary practices by which men not only fix rules of conduct for themselves, but seek to transform themselves, to change themselves in their particular being, and to make their life an oeuvre." (Foucault, 2005, p 61)

These practices associated with the care of the self, which could lead to some kind of transformation were termed *askēsis*. They were connected to the notion that the need to be concerned with the care of the self (*epimeleia heautou*) was of primary importance. As Foucault argued in *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, the 'care of the self' is related to both political and ethical questions: "--power relations, governmentality, the government of the self and others, and the relationship of the self to the self constitute a chain, a thread, and I think it is around these notions that we should be able to connect together the question of politics and the question of ethics." (Foucault, 2005, p. 252)

This thesis sets out to examine the profound change in 'our way of life' which has been brought about the modern emphasis and credence given to the *gnōthi seauton*. I intend to show that Foucault's work on the formation of the modern subject has led modern man to adopt a 'way of life' which is very different from that of the past. The

work of Foucault addressed some of the concerns of Heidegger's about abandonment of any thought about Being by man today. Heidegger's work on poetics in the final chapter addresses the question of how man's estrangement from Being can be overcome.

The Mapping of the Thesis

Introduction

Chapter 1 Heidegger's and his Essays on the Danger from Technology

Chapter 2 Foucault and Technology

Chapter 3 Foucault's *Hermeneutics of the Subject*

Chapter 4 Governmentality, Politics and Power

Chapter 5 Descartes and the Development of Cartesianism

Chapter 6 Heidegger, Science and Philosophy

Chapter 7 Foucault, Science and Philosophy

Chapter 8 Biopolitics

Chapter 9 Heidegger's Poetics and the Hermeneutics of the Subject

References

Outline of the Thesis

In chapter 1

A brief survey is given of Heidegger's philosophy, particularly with respect to technology, including *poiesis* as a possible way of man overcoming way of reaching a way of life which brings man closer to Being.

In chapter 2

An account is given of Foucault's work on the hermeneutics of the subject of technology; an account which provides some evidence that his philosophical work had been driven by 'confronting' Heidegger's philosophical ideas.

In chapter 3

This thesis sets out to investigate the possibility that the almost complete abandonment of the practice of *epimeleia heautou* is a major factor for the estrangement of Being brought about from modern technology, as described by Heidegger. Heidegger claimed in 'The Question Concerning Technology' that the essence of modern technology developed at a time which was historically earlier than the 18th century. (Heidegger, 1977a, p 22) Could this historical period in the development of modern technology correspond to Foucault's 'Cartesian moment' when the practice of *epimeleia heautou* became discarded? Related to this enquiry, is the investigation into the possibility that the *epimeleia heautou* represented a practice whereby man had a closer relationship to Being – a concept which Heidegger's critics such as Feenberg have claimed to be too abstract to be of any value in the philosophy of technology? Spinoza (1632-1677) claimed in his *Treatise on the Improvement of*

Understanding, that various practices concerned with the spiritual life of the self were related to freedom. As part of this investigation into this area of study of the *epimeleia heautou* it will be relevant to determine to what extent these practices are now obsolete, and could help explain the homelessness of Being.

In chapter 4

A study will be made of Foucault's genealogy of the changing practices of Salvation since the 'Cartesian Moment'. A key concept of the ancient principle 'to take care of oneself' was to seek Salvation – a personal journey. This journey was initiated by oneself, and the responsibility for this journey was not shared with others, although other people could assist the process. Salvation now has become accepted as a way of life to simply follow technological imperatives. Today, both the state and various religions require abdication of one's dominion over oneself in order to obey juridical edicts. How are the modern practices associated with Salvation related to Heidegger's notions of freedom? The practice of confession was an important example of a 'technology of the self.'

In chapter 5

According to both Heidegger and Foucault, Descartes was a pivotal figure in the development of what today is known as 'Cartesianism'. This has been instrumental in the ascendancy of the *gnōthi seauton* (know oneself) over the *epimeleia heautou* (care of the self).

In chapter 6

Heidegger's criticisms of modern science and its link to the oblivion of Being are discussed in the context that science has a limited understanding of what is truly important to man's existence.

In chapter 7

Foucault's critique of science is discussed in terms of the primary importance given to the *gnōthi seauton* today and the impact on our modern 'way of life'.

In chapter 8

Foucault's work on Governmentality and what he termed 'Biopolitics' will be discussed and both the material and spiritual aspects of government actions examined. Because modern technology governs our 'way of life', it is in a real sense a source of power which shapes human existence. I intend to examine Foucault's work on Governmentality and power relations with respect to modern political and ethical imperatives for our modern 'way of life'. These 'form a chain', which may explain to some extent, how we have become, in Heidegger's opinion, 'enframed' by technology, as a result of the demise of the practices associated with the *epimeleia heautou*.

In chapter 9

This concluding chapter discusses Foucault's work on the hermeneutics of the subject in terms of Heidegger's poetics. This discussion is linked to the central arguments and concepts which were examined in the earlier chapters. The chapter is arranged as follows:

Introduction

Part one - Heidegger's Poetics

Part two - Man's state of homelessness

Part three - Homecoming

Part four - The Importance of the Cartesian Moment

Part five - Care of the Self and the Oblivion of Being

CHAPTER 1

Heidegger and his Essays on the Danger from Technology

Introduction

There are a number of key features about Martin Heidegger's philosophy of technology expressed in his essays: 'The Question Concerning Technology,' (Heidegger, 1977a), 'The Turning' (Heidegger, 1977b) and the 'Letter on Humanism.' (Heidegger, 1993c) First of all, Heidegger rejected the anthropocentric views which had dominated philosophy in the Christian era, and even in the more recent humanistic age since the 'Enlightenment'.⁶ Instead, Heidegger developed ideas related to man's existence in the world (Dasein). Existence was related to a relationship with Being, which is a changing pattern of existence, rather than a thing. An early account of Heidegger's thoughts can be found in his masterpiece, *Being and Time*. (Heidegger, 1962)

Secondly, Heidegger challenged the view that truth was only granted by reason. He claimed that this was a legacy from the time of Plato, and was accepted by Kant. (Heidegger, 1962, p 16) The over-emphasis on reason had obscured the importance of the pre-Socratic ideas on truth, concepts related to disclosure and revealing. (Heidegger, 1962, p 173) These disclosures are related to notions of freedom and Heidegger felt that freedom and truth are intimately bound up together. Central to his philosophy is the idea that freedom is the essence of truth itself. (Heidegger, 1993, p 123)

⁶ The French Philosopher, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712 – 78) had similar concerns to Heidegger about the supposed beneficial results of Enlightenment thinking. In his 'Essay on the Sciences and the Arts', he developed the theme that mankind had become corrupted since the Enlightenment. (Rousseau, 1987)

Thirdly, Heidegger developed Nietzsche's ideas on approaches to history. He claimed that the investigation of truth, requires an historical confrontation (*geschichtlich*), rather than an historiographical, (*historisch*) account of the past. (1994, p 12) This type of questioning, Heidegger thought, was important in order to understand where we are and how we should seek to address the future.

Fourthly, in his confrontation with modern technology, Heidegger introduced new terms into philosophical discourse. Gestell, or en-framing, is the essence of modern technology, where Being reveals itself as a 'standing reserve'. (Heidegger, 1977a, p 17) This enframing' encompasses both nature as a standing reserve, and of man himself. In 'The Question Concerning Technology', Heidegger argued that the modern practice of building Hydro – Electric Dams, had traduced the landscape, whereas the bridges built over the river Rhine had produced minimal impact on the river. (Heidegger, 1977a, p 16) The danger that Heidegger perceived with modern technology is that technology has the power to transform human beings to the status of a 'thing', to be used and transformed like any other object found in nature. As part of this world transforming process, language loses its poetic and imaginative character, as all oral and written disclosure becomes information to be used in a 'rational' world.

The New Danger from *Modern* Technology

Although Heidegger had criticized *modern* technology for reducing man to an object for control, in his later work he said that the danger from modern technology represented a new phenomenon. In 'The Question Concerning Technology', Heidegger described the disappearance of the object into: "--the objectionless of the standing reserve." (Heidegger, 1977a, p 19) Albert Borgmann is a philosopher who has written

about this development. In the age of computer technology natural objects disappear into a virtual world which superficially appears to be under the total control of the subject. (Borgmann, 2003, pp 571-577) The subject may have total control over the information held in a computer system, yet the object of control has no physical reality in the sense that man has been accustomed. The software in a computer is a good example of *modern* technology's operation of Heidegger's 'standing reserve'. The formal subject-object relationship of Cartesianism is disappearing from many aspects of modern life. As a result, we are in the process of losing any concept of what it is that shapes our existence. This perspective of Heidegger's also counters Feenberg's charge of essentialism, which he levelled against Heidegger – what confronts man today is something quite new.

In the 'Letter on Humanism', Heidegger explored the idea that the fundamental orientation of a human being is not simply to everyday mundane concerns, but also towards the possibilities of existence which are only open to a human being. He wrote: "But man is not only a living creature who possesses language – language is the house of Being." (Heidegger, 1993c, p 237)

For Heidegger the forgetting of Being, is the supreme danger for mankind. Towards the end of the 'Letter on Humanism', Heidegger again attacked the belief that logic alone should be considered to be the only way of discovering truth: "The fittingness of the saving of Being, as the destiny of truth, is the first law of thinking—not the rules of logic, which can become rules only on the basis of the law of Being." (Heidegger, 1993c, p 264)

The question posed by Heidegger in his essay *What is a thing?* is a way of confronting the question 'What is a man?' (Heidegger, 1968) Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* puts man as the foundation of all truth and freedom – not Being, as Heidegger maintained throughout his life. (Kant, 1993a) Thus Heidegger's philosophy is firmly opposed to Kant's anthropocentric project which he followed in 'The Critiques', and the whole belief that Modernity represents progress. Heidegger had serious reservations about the whole Modernity project initiated by Kant, and wanted philosophers to repudiate the concept that empirical data and reason should be the only way of revealing the truth. It has been claimed that Heidegger viewed the whole of Western philosophy as a commitment to the 'oblivion of Being' (*Seinsvergessenheit*). (Engelland, 2008, pp 17-41)

Michael Zimmerman has written an extensive account of Heidegger's confrontation with Modernity. (Zimmerman, 1990) He argued that Heidegger considered Modernity to be the final stage in the decline of Western Civilization due to the technological nihilism of the twentieth century. However, Zimmerman pointed out that Heidegger saw the possibility of hope for the future. Zimmerman wrote: "If we could take a 'step back' from the constant purposiveness demanded by modern technology, we could suddenly encounter the purposelessness of it- -Heidegger owed this insight, at least in part to Jüngen, as well as to Nietzsche and Hölderlin." (Zimmerman, 1990, p 235)

Heidegger's concern about technology has led to a vast literature about the domination of mankind by technology. Jacques Ellul, a pupil of Heidegger's, believed that there is a single core property unique to modern technology, which is the notion that it has become autonomous – outside human control. (Ellul, 2003, pp 386-397) Technology has, in effect, moved beyond systems and technical objects, but has

become an ideology, a theme which has been pursued by the modern German philosopher, Jürgen Habermas.⁷ (Habermas, 2003, pp 530-535) Scientism has been defined as follows “The view that the characteristic inductive methods of the natural scientist are the only source of genuine factual knowledge, and in particular, that they alone can yield true knowledge about man and society.” (Bullock and Trombley, 1999, p 775)

Many modern accounts about technology therefore proceed from the perspective of scientists, technologists, politicians and the debates are conducted within a social science and political framework. This limited perspective perhaps, one could argue, is a type of en-framing.

The English philosopher Mary Midgley has argued that many philosophers now agree science, so that this whole question of the roles and value of science, technology and philosophy is the matter of some continuing debate. (Midgley, 1985) Heidegger’s concern about technology was that it renounced mankind’s attention and relationship to Being. Both Midgley’s and Habermas’ views are consistent with Heidegger’s claim that the philosophy of technology is associated with scientism. As well as the question of scientism which he linked to the development of Cartesianism, later chapters will discuss Heidegger’s concept of an authentic mode of human existence.

⁷ In an elaboration of the ‘technology is an ideology’ critique, pupils of Heidegger such as Adorno and Horkheimer and, connected the problems which they associated with technology to Modernity i.e. aspects of modern social and economic organization; capitalism, liberalism, communism etc. (Adorno and Horkheimer, 2008) Although they had differences in their approach and ideas about technology, many of their views gained a wide audience when they were forcibly put forward by Herbert Marcuse, in his famous book *One Dimensional Man*. (Marcuse, 2002) Essentially, these theories incorporate the idea that technology is deterministic and/or autonomous. Technology which is autonomous is outside the control of any human agency. (Dusek, 2006, pp 84-111) Technological determinism is the theory that technology causes or determines the nature of society and its culture. Autonomous technology is usually associated with the notion of technological determinism. (Dusek, 2006, p 84)

Man's Estrangement from Being

The problems for a displaced population are not simply associated with people losing their homes and lands; their culture and relationship to the earth is irrevocably disrupted. However, Heidegger went further in his philosophy to argue that all mankind lives in a state of 'Homelessness', because of man's estrangement from Being. In his essay 'Building, Dwelling, Thinking', Heidegger claimed that for man to dwell properly on earth he has to live in "- -the *basic character* of Being in keeping with which mortals exist." (Heidegger, 1971b, p 160)

To live properly man should live at peace with nature rather than to simply regard it as a resource to be used as directed by the framework of technology. The fundamental relationship which man should have with nature is one of sparing and preserving. (Heidegger, 1971b, p 149) Real life examples of this "sparing and preserving" are preserving a natural forest as a National Park, or seeking to protect animals or plants threatened with extinction. (Young, 2002, p 106)

In the 'Question Concerning Technology', Heidegger was not discussing social science, he was posing fundamental questions about the metaphysics of Being. He does end on a positive note by providing some hope that man could break free from the 'enframing' of technology. He quoted the German poet Friedrich Hölderlin as an artist whose work could help re-connect man with Being. (Heidegger, 1977a, p 34) Artists such as the poets can break out of the enframing of technology by *poiesis* – the revealing due to artistic creativity and imagination, unshackled from the restraints of imperatives determined solely by the invocation of the power of 'reason'. Only by *poiesis* can man break free.

In 'The Turning', Heidegger claimed that in order to live in a manner rather closer to Being, to 'dwell' properly, one would need to live within a 'fourfold' mode of existence. (Heidegger, 1977b, p 49) The fourfold encompasses the earth, the sky, mortals and the divine. Although we live within a world 'enframed' by technology, Heidegger thought that poetry allows us to imagine a way of 'dwelling' properly because it opens up the possibility of overcoming man's oblivion of Being. (Heidegger, 1971a, pp 91-142)

Also, in 'The Turning', Heidegger described the process called *Ereignis*. (Heidegger, 1977b, p 45) It has been translated as appropriation, emergence, or an event. In the proper state of Dasein's relationship to Being, *Ereignis* could be interpreted as the power to dwell at the centre of the fourfold. As a result of Gestell, man does not have the ability to dwell in a proper relationship to the world; man therefore dwells in a state of homelessness. An important feature of Heidegger's concept of the fourfold is that man is displaced as the fundamental single focus of philosophical investigation.

'Poetically Man Dwells', a quotation from a poem by the German poet Hölderlin, is the title of an essay by Heidegger on the ability of Poetry to lift man out of his existence as a mere 'standing reserve'; to become aware of other modes of existence. (Heidegger, 1971b, pp 213-229) The 'enframing' produced by the effect of modern technology, is not an inevitable condition for our 'way of life'.

The value of poetry, language and thought, was of course an important historical feature of the practices associated with the 'care of the self' – the *epimeleia heautou*. The final chapter of this thesis sets out to demonstrate that Heidegger's claims about

the possibility of poetic thinking to completely change the nature of our existence and relationship to Being, is important.

CHAPTER 2

Foucault and Technology

Foucault's Encounter with Heidegger's Philosophy

The French philosopher, Michel Foucault (1926-1984) declared in an interview 'Truth, Power and Self' that his whole philosophical development had been moulded by his reading of Heidegger. (Foucault, 1988a, pp 12-13) According to Samuel Ijssling, Foucault's principal engagement with Heidegger's philosophy was with the essay 'The Age of the World Picture,' which of course was a description of a world which is 'enframed' by technology. (Ijssling, 1986, p 416)

It is conceivable that this interest was concerned with Heidegger's philosophy of Being. Jean Zoungara wrote that Heidegger's influence on Foucault was profound, not simply as a pupil or disciple, but as an inspiration to take his philosophy forward: "--an invitation to think with Heidegger, but beyond Heidegger." (Zoungara, 1994, p 290) Foucault made little direct reference to Heidegger in his work. This seems surprising, as usually philosophers make it clear about whom they are writing, and also their influences. However, by seeking to avoid entering into existing debates, Foucault was free to adopt a unique approach in order to address issues about philosophy which had been raised by Heidegger. Issues about power and domination Foucault thought, could be more fully explained by investigations into the nature of 'self'.

Foucault's Approach to Philosophy

Foucault developed three modes of objectification of human beings in order to study the human subject. The first mode is what he termed archaeology, which he described in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, shows how the human sciences see man as an object, simply a thing, to study. (Foucault, 2002, pp 44 - 54) He defined this approach as follows: “- - -the discovery of truth is really a certain modality of the production of truth; putting what is given as the truth of observation or demonstration back on the practice of rituals, of the qualification of the knowing individual, of the truth–event system, this is what I would call the archaeology of knowledge.” (Foucault, 2006, p 238)

The second part of Foucault's work he called 'genealogy'. This method of study describes historical social practices and forms of life that locate and shape the human subject. An example of this kind of approach is his book *Discipline and Punish* which described the development of the prison system in detail. (Foucault, 1991) Foucault regarded this kind of historical approach as a method of finding out where mankind places himself in the world in order that we can seek to shape the future. Rather like Heidegger, Foucault regarded genealogy as an historical confrontation with the past. It is an examination of how various power relationships have come to establish what we accept to be 'true', in all our aspects of life including science, economics, and political systems. Foucault described genealogy as an approach to uncovering truth:

- - -in the course of our history, of our civilization, and in an increasingly accelerated way since the Renaissance, truth knowledge assumed its present, familiar dimensions; to show how it colonized and took over the truth – event and ended up exercising a relationship of power over this truth - - -We could call this the genealogy of knowledge, the indispensable historical side to the archaeology of knowledge. (Foucault, 2006, p 238-239)

Beatrice Han has characterized both archaeology and genealogy, as practiced by Foucault, as complementary techniques which seek to determine “the conditions of the acceptability of truth”. (Han, 1998, p 103)

Much of Foucault’s early work was on the theme of power relations, so much so, that he became known as ‘the philosopher of power’. At an interview in 1984 ‘The Ethics of Care of the Self as a Practice of Freedom’ he said that: “I do not believe that there can be a society without relations of power - - -”. (Foucault, 1988c, p 18)

However, as a result of his well known works on technological systems and apparatus used at prisons and hospitals, Foucault became aware that the previous approaches to his studies were deficient because they had not paid sufficient attention to the ability of human beings to transform themselves. These studies had been prompted and directed by Heidegger’s influence on Foucault. We know from Heidegger’s work that he was concerned with concepts relating to the self, power and domination, truth, and the dangers of technology to mankind. Studies on his work on power are given in later chapters of this thesis.

The third phase of Foucault’s work was when he studied the ways of life by which a human being transforms or is transformed into a subject—“technologies of the self”. A detailed and comprehensive study of the subject from the time of the ancient Greeks to the 18C was published posthumously in English in 2005 as *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*. (Foucault, 2005) This book is based on a series of Lectures presented at the Collège de France between 1981 -1982. During the course of his series of lectures on the *Hermeneutics of the Subject* Foucault claimed that his work on the self had been

initiated by Heidegger: “- - -I have tried to reflect on all this from the side of Heidegger and starting from Heidegger.” (Foucault, 2005, p 189)

In an essay ‘The Subject and Power’ the ‘self’ is according to Foucault, an invention.

(Foucault, 2000c, pp 326-348) The modern subject is, according to Foucault, a relatively recent construct, whose existence as a being in the world is subject to various regimes of power which conduct ‘games of truth’. (Foucault, 1988c, p 16)

Martin Saar has encapsulated Foucault’s critical philosophy with regard to the subject:

“ It was Foucault’s spectacular (and possibly, Heideggerian) thesis in *The Order of Things* that this constitution is a rather recent phenomenon and that man is a rather recent invention.” (Saar, 2002, p 234)

As Alan Milchman and Alan Rosenberg have pointed out, Foucault shifted the focus away from Heidegger’s work of the way by which nature and man relate to one another, but to the way in which the subject is constituted and ‘technologies of the self’. (Milchman, and Rosenberg, (2003, p 15)

Nietzsche’s Influence on Foucault

Nietzsche had a profound influence on both Heidegger and Foucault. (Megill, 1987, pp 339-352) Foucault in an interview ‘Return of Morality’ claimed that “- - -I try as far as possible, on a certain number of issues, to see with the help of Nietzsche’s texts – but also with anti-Nietzschean theses (which are nevertheless Nietzschean) - what can be done in this or that domain.” (Foucault, 1996, p 471)

Babette Babich has argued that the influence on Foucault from Nietzsche was rather complex, and that the relationship was rather more than merely one of adapting

Nietzsche's approach to genealogy. (Babich, 2009, p 19) According to Babich, Foucault used some of Nietzsche's ideas when he was attempting to answer some of the questions which Heidegger had posed, particularly in respect of technology. (Babich, 2009, p 28) In *The Order of Things*, Foucault discussed Nietzsche's concept of the eternal return, in the context of Heidegger and the poet Hölderlin. (Foucault, 1994c, p 384) The origin of man is at the same time near and far away related to finitude.

In the *Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche developed the concept that mankind is subject to two related aspects of human existence, the Apollonian and the Dionysian. (Nietzsche, 2003) The Apollonian influence is related to reason, logic and self control; the Dionysian influence is related to imagination, originality and *poiesis*. Nietzsche challenged the idea that the Apollonian concentration on reason and science was the only sure means to the truth. (Nietzsche, 2003, p 4) In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche pointed out the danger of reason being the only foundation for a particular way of life. (Nietzsche, 1990, p 114) Both Foucault and Heidegger shared Nietzsche's concerns that reason alone should not dominate man's existence. Allan Megill has argued that the terms 'Apollonian' and 'Dionysian', are symbolic in nature rather than specific concepts. (Megill, 1987, p 38) However, he argued that the Apollonian/Dionysian opposition is a useful one in terms of aesthetic considerations. (Megill, 1987, p 42) Surely, one can link this concept to Heidegger's promotion of poetry to reveal a new kind of truth, and Foucault's idea of reviving the ancient practice of *askēsis* to constitute a new relationship to oneself and the world. The history of these former practices as conducted by Foucault is a version of history called genealogy which Martin Saar termed " - - a different and radicalized historicism of the self". (Saar, 2002, p 234) In the *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche proposed that there

should be a “re-evaluation of all values”. (Nietzsche, 2008b, p 81) I would claim that Foucault’s project on the Hermeneutics of the Subject was to embark on this task.

Foucault’s thesis in *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, was that the ancient philosophy of ‘take care of yourself’, has become in the modern age obscured and forgotten by the prevailing cultural imperatives to ‘know yourself’. (Davidson, 2005, pp 1-19) This injunction to ‘know yourself’, was famously pronounced by the priests at the ancient Delphic Oracle. In our modern age, Foucault’s work embraced Nietzsche’s wish for more emphasis to be given to the Dionysian aspect of our existence. In this context, one can perhaps understand how Foucault came to call his work ‘fiction’. Foucault explained that his work was not an invented version of history, but set out to disrupt an Apollonian ‘world picture’ or in Heidegger’s view a world dominated by technology. In ‘Interview with Michel Foucault’ he explained his position: “But my problem is not to satisfy professional historians; my problem is to construct myself, and to invite others to share an experience of what we are, not only in the past, but in the present, an experience of our modernity in such a way that we might come out of it transformed.” (Foucault, 2000b, p 242) A Dionysian project in terms of Nietzsche’s philosophy is an “affirmation of life” (Megill, 1987, p 46). Foucault’s work on the hermeneutics of the subject is surely a Dionysian project, as Megill has claimed. (Megill, 1987, p 231)

The Primacy of the *gnōthi seauton* and its Overcoming

The kind of knowledge gained by science and applied in technology has become the goal of not only science, but society and philosophy as well. As Heidegger complained in *The Question Concerning Technology*, man can only conceive of living in thrall to technology. The theme that Heidegger pursued in respect of the problems of

technology, was that fundamentally, man had lost contact with his Being. Foucault posited a similar idea, that by abdicating a search to 'take care of oneself', one denied oneself the opportunity to discover the truth. He wrote: "We will call 'philosophy' the form of thought that enables the subject to have access to the truth, - - -we will call 'spirituality', then the set of practices, and experience through which the subject carries out the necessary transformations on himself in order to have access to the truth." (Foucault, 2005, p 15)

Foucault did not mean that we should accept truth as an objective set of immutable 'facts' in the scientific meaning of the term. In an interview he said that: "Truth is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements. "Truth is linked in a circular relation with systems of power that produce and sustain it." (Foucault, 2000a, p 132)

For Foucault, the truth is only found if the subject's 'being' is sought by a series of practices which he denoted as being spiritual in nature as opposed to a simple act of knowledge (*connaissance*). This 'being' should not be thought of as a term used to denote Heidegger's 'Being', but both thought that man's spiritual nature had become lost or abandoned in modern times; we have already found that Foucault was profoundly influenced by Heidegger.

Man's spirituality, according to Foucault, has three features. First, spirituality infers that access to the truth is never given to a subject by right. The second feature therefore, is that in order for the truth to be given to a subject there must be some kind of transformation of the subject. The two major ways by which this transformation can occur are by love, and by undertaking some kind of work, or

practice such as meditation. Thirdly, access to the truth gives the subject some kind of fulfilment. (Foucault, 2005, p 15)

The idea that access to the truth is only possible by virtue of knowledge alone, resonates with scientism, and Heidegger's concerns with the widespread belief that only science and technology can reveal the truth. Heidegger claimed in *The Question Concerning Technology* that technology is not merely fabrication: "Technology is therefore no mere means. Technology is a way of revealing. If we give heed to this then another whole realm for the essence of technology will open up to us. It is the realm of revealing, i.e. of truth." (Heidegger, 1977a, p 12)

It is important to consider if Heidegger's concerns about modern technology are related to the current emphasis on 'know yourself' that has become all important, and 'take care of yourself' has become forgotten as an important method of revealing the truth. Foucault gave several reasons why this has happened. Today, we are more inclined to see taking care of oneself as immoral; instead, we should follow the rules which have been laid down by religious authorities, and/or the legal apparatus of the modern state. In contrast to the early days of Christianity, the modern Church hierarchy requires that self-renunciation must be carried out as a necessary step on the way to Salvation. To 'know oneself', is the path to self-renunciation, today following the precepts of the Church or State is the only route to Salvation. As well as these religious pressures which have led to the renunciation of 'care of the self', modern philosophy from Descartes to Husserl has given primary importance to the thinking subject, promoting the cultural belief that to 'know thyself' is the important first step in the theory of knowledge. In time, gnosis became the only route to knowledge, and to some extent became conflated with scientism. As a result,

Foucault claimed that in modern times there has been a complete inversion between the two principles of knowledge, a re-evaluation of values.

What did this 'care of the self' entail, the practice termed *epimeleia heautou*?

Foucault described three main features, related to these practices. These included concepts related to personal relationships; secondly, thinking for oneself rather than blindly accepting the predominant mores of society; and thirdly carrying out spiritual exercises such as meditation. Foucault explained the three elements of the *epimeleia heautou* as follows:

First, the theme of a general stand point, of a certain way of considering things, of behaving in the world, undertaking actions, and having relations with other people. The *epimeleia heautou* is an attitude towards the self, others, and the world. Second, the *epimeleia heautou* is also a certain form of attention, of looking. Being concerned about oneself implies that we look away from outside to - - - - I was going to say "inside". The care of the self implies a certain way of attending to what we think and what takes place in our thought. The word *epimelaiais* related to *melete*, which means both exercise and meditation. Third, the notion of *epimeleia* also always designates a number of actions exercised on the self, actions by which one takes responsibility for oneself, and by which one changes, purifies and transfigures oneself. It involves a series of practices most of which are exercised that will have a very long destiny in the history of Western culture, philosophy, morality and spirituality. These are, for example, techniques of meditation, or memorization of the past, of examination of conscience, of checking representations which appear in the mind and so on. (Foucault, 2005, pp 10-11)

It is intriguing to consider the possibility that the renunciation of these kinds of cultural practice is linked in some way to the perceived dangers of modern technology. In many of his studies, on prisons, hospital asylums and psychiatry, Foucault studied how man has become an object, like any other found in nature, to be used in modern industrial processes as an appendage to the machine in modern technology as Marx described in the nineteenth century.

This chapter has established the relationship between Foucault's ideas on "the technologies of the self" and Heidegger's concerns about technology. Both philosophers explored the idea that the danger from technology is associated with Being and Homelessness. A fuller account of Foucault's work on the aetiology of the *epimeleia heautou* (care of the self) is given in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

Foucault's Hermeneutics of the Subject - the genealogy of the *epimeleia*

heautou.

Introduction

In this chapter we will investigate the various practices of the *epimeleia heautou*.

Foucault argued that not only have they been lost to human conduct, but they also not been accorded a proper place in the historical record. (Foucault, 2005, p 3) In his lecture course at the Collège de France in 1982, Foucault described a series of ancient practices which were termed the *epimeleia heautou*⁸. His thesis in the *Hermeneutics of the Subject* was that the ancient practice of 'to take care of oneself,' had been obscured and displaced by the prevailing cultural imperative to 'know yourself'. (Foucault, 2005, p 2)

Heidegger believed that the history of mankind since the time of Plato had been an inglorious descent towards nihilism. He felt that in the modern age we have become subject to technology controlling all aspects of our existence, including ethics.

I believe that by placing such great emphasis on the abandonment of the *epimeleia heautou* after the Cartesian Moment around the time of Descartes, Foucault wanted to uncover how some of the early involvement with the spiritual aspects of life had

⁸ It may be helpful to note here the definition of the *epimeleia heautou*. Foucault defined these 'techniques of the self' as: 'Reflected and voluntary practices by which men not only fix rules of conduct for themselves, but seek to transform themselves in their particular being, and to make their life an oeuvre.' (Foucault, 2005, p 61)

become lost. Foucault wanted to construct a genealogy of the subject so that we can ascertain how this had come about.⁹

By doing this, Foucault hoped to construct a new critical philosophy, a philosophy which included 'techniques of the self'. This 'technique of the self' would be added to the accepted techniques of production, signification and techniques of domination. The stakes for Foucault were high. If this approach bore fruit, then Foucault would at the very least have found a basis for developing an explanation of how technology and empiricism have come to dominate all our lives.

The *gnōthi seauton* (know yourself) was found by Foucault to be only one aspect of those ancient practices contained within the general framework of the *epimeleia heautou*. He claimed that the *gnōthi seauton*, has only recently acquired the overriding importance which it has today. The primary goal in ancient times was to utilise and develop spiritual qualities in order to have access to the truth. This culture of the self included a set of practices generally denoted by the term, *askēsis*. In his lecture course at the Collège de France, Foucault claimed that the *gnōthi seauton* has reached such a privileged status that the practice of *askēsis* has been forgotten. The movement towards the art of knowledge (*connaissance*) being granted sovereignty over the practice of *askēsis* in gaining access to the truth, came about according to Foucault in the seventeenth century. (Foucault, 2005, p 17) Let us therefore review the earlier practices associated with *epimeleia heautou* as set out by Foucault.

⁹ In 'Subjectivity and Truth' Foucault wrote: "In sum the aim of my project is to construct a genealogy of the subject- -For Heidegger, it was through an increasing obsession with *technē* as the only way to arrive at an understanding of objects, that the West lost touch with Being. Let's turn the question round and ask which techniques and practices constitute the Western constitution of the subject, giving it its characteristic split of truth and error, freedom and constraint. I think that it is here that we will find the real possibility of constructing a history of what we have done, and at the same time, a diagnosis of what we are." (Foucault, 2007c, p 152)

Foucault's Hermeneutics of the Subject

Foucault's aim in his work on the hermeneutics of the subject was to construct a genealogy. This subject, concerned with 'care of the self', had become lost to history. Throughout antiquity, the Pythagoreans, Plato, the Stoics, Cynics, and the Epicureans had all followed the same philosophical theme, access to the truth. For these differing groups, the question of spirituality in relation to a transformation of the being of the subject was never separate from the quest for truth.

The culture of care of the self included a set of practices designated by the term *askēsis*. In its original Greek form, *askēsis* denoted a set of exercises, perfecting oneself; becoming who one is by a process of self-transformation mediated by thought. As Christianity developed, *askēsis* came to be regarded as a form of self renunciation. Originally, the practice of care for the self was, Foucault argued, a response to the problems associated with the proper running of the Greek city-state. The principle to 'care for oneself' became so widespread that it became a universal phenomenon in Hellenistic and Roman society. However, these practices were followed by only a relatively small elite, and of course women and slaves were excluded from this particular 'way of life'.

Foucault argued that the early formulations of *epimeleia heautou* were started in the fifth century B.C. and continued for a thousand years, when Christianity came to the fore. During the next thousand years the practices associated with *epimeleia heautou* were either discarded or transformed in order to meet the requirements of the new religion.

The Time of the Pre-Socratics

Foucault gave two examples of what he termed 'technologies of the self' associated with Pythagoreanism. (Foucault, 2005, pp 48-49) The first example which Foucault gave was the state of dreaming. For the Pythagoreans, in order to prepare oneself for the divine world, one had to prepare oneself for the dream. These preparations included listening to music, inhalation of perfumes and the examination of conscience. The principal function of the examination of conscience was the purification of thought before sleep. It was not done in the modern sense of determining if one should enter a state of remorse. It was carried out in order to purify thought before sleep. This examination of conscience was carried out twice a day, a morning examination of conscience, and an evening examination. (Foucault, 2005, p 480)

The important point which Foucault wanted to make was that many of the practices which were written about by Plato, had been well established years before. A fundamental theme of Platonism and Pythagoreanism was associated with the question: "What work must I carry out on myself, what fashioning of myself, must I undertake, what modifications of being must I carry out to be able to have access to the truth?" (Foucault, 2005, pp 47-48)

Without purification there could not be access to the truth possessed by gods. This theme of purification was well known throughout ancient Greece and the Roman Empire. The second technique was the search for methods to purify the soul. The soul needed to be guarded from danger or dispersal, so that the soul would endure at the point of death.

Another technique was the technique of withdrawal, *anakhōrōsis*. This practice was such that one had to disengage from the external world, so that all sensation is lost. A fourth example, linked to the concentration of the soul, and withdrawal into oneself, is the practice of endurance e.g. of extremes of cold, or some kind of resistance to temptation. According to Foucault, all these practices were, to some degree, in place before Plato's time, although there is no contemporaneous written record of their work by the philosophers of the school of Pythagoras.

James Luchte has made an interesting claim about the teachings of Pythagoras in respect of their spiritual practices searching for a path to the divine transmigration. He linked this practice to Heidegger's concept of man searching for a place to 'dwell'. (Luchte, 2009, p 14) The search for 'homecoming', while existing in a state of homelessness and the search for a proper place to dwell, were all leitmotifs in Heidegger's later writings. (Mugerauer, 2008, pp 3-5) Heidegger's principal objection to modern technology was his belief that it has brought about the 'Homelessness of Being'. (Heidegger, 1977b, pp 36-49) Another important theme for Heidegger and 'Homecoming' is that of remembrance, which had played a major feature in the philosophy of Pythagoras. Heidegger called upon us to listen to poets such as Hölderlin and Rilke to help to overcome our homelessness, and facilitate 'remembrance'. (Heidegger, 1949, p 282) For Heidegger, to 'dwell poetically' meant to stand in the presence of the divine and to be involved in the essence of all things. It is obvious that poetry is written to be spoken aloud, which is in the tradition of the Pythagoreans. Heidegger, by invoking the poets, was in actual fact recalling an ancient philosophical tradition. One can now more clearly understand Foucault's interest in the *epimeleia heautou* as an attempt to remember ancient practices concerned with 'homecoming' in a Heideggerian sense. His work on the 'Hermeneutics of the Subject'

was, after all, inspired by Heidegger. Using this perspective of 'homecoming', 'remembrance' and 'self –transformation' as leitmotifs throughout a changing pattern of spiritual exercises in ancient philosophy, we can continue to explore Foucault's work on *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*.

The text which Foucault referred to in order to discuss the time of Plato was the *Alcibiades*. Foucault felt that this work was important, because it was the first account of the practice of the *epimeleia heautou*.

Alcibiades

In the *Apology*, Socrates appears as a person who encourages others to care for themselves and put other people's interests before his own. (Foucault, 2005, p 37)

Socrates regarded his role in the practice of *epimeleia heautou* as fundamentally to act as a person who awakens others to the need to seek the truth by undergoing a transformation of the self. Care of the self was clearly important to Plato, and Foucault argued that in the *Alcibiades*, Plato explored the link between *epimeleia heautou* and potential action. One should not govern, however powerful, knowledgeable or privileged one might be, if one does not practice *epimeleia heautou*. In the dialogue between Alcibiades and Socrates, it is pointed out that Alcibiades does not yet have the ability, a *technē* to govern the city state well. Socrates points out that although privileged, Alcibiades has to remedy his educational deficiencies in order to promote action which is both sensible and just. (Foucault, 2005, pp 43-60) The necessary education must be sought whilst Alcibiades is still young. Later on, in both Epicurean and Stoic philosophy, the care of the self becomes a life-long obligation both to oneself, and to the community.

The education which Alcibiades lacks is two-fold. First of all Alcibiades does not know what would constitute good government, and secondly, Alcibiades does not know how to 'take care of himself'. Alcibiades must therefore attend to a set of practices to transform his mode of being. What is this '*heauton*'? Foucault answers this question as "*psukhēs epimelēton*" (one must take care of one's soul). (Foucault, 2005, p 53)

This is found in many of Plato's texts e.g. The *Apology*, and the *Phaedo*, and even earlier, in fragments of the philosophy of the pre- Socratic philosopher, Heraclitus.

There is now such an important claim made by Foucault that it is probably worth quoting:

- - -when Plato (or Socrates) employs this notion of *khresthai/khresis* in order to identify what this *heauton* is (and what is subject to it) in the expression "taking care of oneself" in actual fact he does not want to designate an instrumental relationship of the soul to the body , but rather the subject's singular transcendental position, as it were, with regard to what surrounds him, to the objects available to him, but also to other people, to his body itself, and finally to himself. (Foucault, 2005, pp 56-57)

Foucault wanted to emphasize the point that when Plato refers to this notion of

khresis, it is not a material substance under discussion, but rather the soul-subject.

This notion of *khresis* is important as it was a key feature of the care of the self, even as it changed over the centuries; it was an important concept to both the Stoics and to the Epicureans. For Foucault, the important feature of this practice was that the responsibility for *khresis* lay upon oneself alone. It was not something that could be accomplished by simply following some rule of law or juridical precepts.

Another example of ancient spiritual practices discussed by Foucault was the oral

practice called *parrhesia*. (Foucault, 2005, pp 366-368) This was the art of spiritual

direction of a pupil, towards the truth, by a master or spiritual guide. It involved

frankness and truth-telling from the guide, and silence and concentration by the pupil.

The aptitude for spiritual development which someone had developed for this art of *parrhēsia*, distinguished one individual from another in terms of their ability to discern truth. (McGushin, 2007, p 166) This aspect of the ‘care of the self’ involved the care of others.¹⁰ Heidegger made continual references to listen to poetic guides such as Hölderlin and Rilke. Could this exhortation to listen to the poets, to be silent and become receptive to truth, be regarded as a modern possible form of *parrhēsia*?

The Golden Age of the *Epimeleia Heautou*

The practice of care of the self flourished in the period of Roman Stoicism until the rise of Christianity. (Foucault, 2005, p 81) Foucault stressed the important changes which took place in the practice of *epimeleia heautou* from the time of the ancient Greeks to the time of first and second centuries A.D. The care of others as the primary aim of *epimeleia heautou* as described by Plato in the *Apology*, became less important. A practice developed of one’s own self becoming the focus of ethical concern. From the post Socratics to the Stoics the art of living well became to be regarded as: “How must I transform myself so as to have access to the truth?” Plutarch, Epictetus, Seneca and Marcus Aurelius, taught and practiced the idea of “turning your gaze upon yourself”. (Foucault, 2005, p 218) This activity was a very different approach from the time of Socrates. This inward gaze incorporated three areas of activity, studying nature, reading history and enjoying nature. Plutarch recommended *euthumia*, tranquillity of the soul, by walking without taking an interest in the surroundings and suppressing any impulse to be curious. One’s attention should be focussed solely on oneself. (Foucault, 2005, p 362) However, this practice was quite different from the modern practice of regarding the self as an object for analysis or study.

¹⁰ Foucault’s work on sexuality is an aspect of the ‘care of the self’ which could be a topic for further study. (Foucault, 1988d)

The Stoics developed three techniques for looking after oneself, letters to friends, examination of oneself and conscience and the practice of *askēsis*. (Foucault, 2005, p 34) The practice of *askēsis* was a process of seeking to recover the truth, a kind of remembering. The Stoic practice of *askēsis* meant the development of mastery of oneself, by the acquisition and understanding of truth. (Foucault, 2005, p 34) The ancient Greek word for this is *paraskeuē*, a form of preparation. (Foucault, 2005, pp 320-327) Only as a result of *askēsis* can one find the truth which guides action. As Foucault argued, *alētheia*, a hidden aspect of truth in Heidegger's philosophy, became to be revealed by actions performed in the practice of *askesis*.

The whole subject of care of the self for the Stoics was to prepare and be capable of sound action, rather than for the self being examined as an object of knowledge. For *askēsis* to be practiced two poles of existence were present. The first pole is one of meditation, one judge's how one should act in an hypothetical situation. Foucault claimed that the Stoics developed different types of meditations about the possibility of future mishaps. These meditations were called *praemeditatio malorum* (premeditations of misfortunes and evils).

The *praemeditatio malorum* was an exercise to help equip somebody to cope with unexpected and unwelcome events. (Foucault, 2005, pp 468-472) The first aspect of the exercise was to assume that if anything unfortunate could occur, then it will. Secondly, one should not think in terms of probabilities, or assess possible degrees of risk. The object of the exercise was just to consider an adverse event happening in the future as a matter of fact. Finally, one should not think of these adverse events happening at some far off time in the future, rather, one anticipated that these events would occur without delay. Foucault argued that the *praemeditatio malorum* was not

a training or exercise to prepare one for the future. Instead, the effect was to seal off the future, a nullification of the future. The *praemeditatio malorum* was a form of *paraskeuē*, by robbing the future of any fear that it might hold for us, its uncertainty becomes nullified, and one is in a better condition to cope with whatever fate might befall one.¹¹

For the Stoics, the opposite pole to the *meditation* the *gymnasia* was an exercise in a real life situation. (Foucault, 2005, p 37) This kind of training might involve sexual abstinence, physical hardships, and other rituals of purification. Between the poles of *melete* and *gymnasia* were a whole series of other exercises practiced by the Stoics. Epictetus provided two examples. He employed the metaphor of the night watchmen over one's own thinking, and the metaphor of the money changer, who verifies the authenticity of thought. One would have to evaluate the rules of the age in which one lived and conform to cultural norms. For the Stoics, the money changer metaphor meant something quite different from the Epicureans. The evaluation in terms of finance meant that one try to ensure that one did not have a base motive when evaluating one's thinking before making decisions and embarking on some kind of action.

In addition to letter writing to friends, examination of oneself and *askēsis*, we must add a fourth. This was the interpretation of dreams. We have seen that dreams were very important to the Pythagoreans. The dream was the test for a soul's purity. The state of dreaming was a separation of the soul from the body. An example of the way by which dreams were interpreted is Cicero's 'Dream of Scipio'.

¹¹ Interestingly, Foucault described the value of the *praemeditatio malorum* as follows: "I think the objective of the *praemeditatio malorum* is to seal off the future through the simulation of actuality, to reduce its reality by stripping it down in imagination." (Foucault, 2005, p473)

This evolution in the practice of care of the self by the Stoics, resulted in a number of features in place at the time of Alcibiades had disappeared, or had been relegated to being of minor importance. At the time of Alcibiades, those concerned with the practice of *epimeleia heautou* were young aristocrats, destined to assume power. The real focus of concern had been the maintenance of a successful city-state.

At the time of the Stoics, being concerned about the self had become a general principle. It was not confined to those of high status. After the second century A.D., the practice of turning the gaze upon oneself involved spiritual exercises, with the subject looking inwardly to search for the truth. This shift in the subject's position gave the possibility of finding the value and true reality of nature and the world. The goal was for spiritual knowledge being developed so that the subject could be able to see himself clearly in this reality. Finally, the effect of this knowledge was to find freedom, and to find a mode of existence, or 'way of life', which is one of happiness and personal fulfilment. Foucault's thesis was that in the sixteenth-century and the seventeenth-century, this desire for spiritual knowledge (*le savoir de spiritualite*), became supplanted by an aspiration for intellectual knowledge (*le savoir de connaissance*), so that consequently new techniques were promoted and praised in order to reach new goals.

What if one did not practice *epimeleia heautou*? Seneca described such a person as a "stultus". (Foucault, 2005, p 131) Such a person would not attempt to instil a sense of unity in his life, to direct it and to take responsibility for it. The "stultus" type of person is open to all the vicissitudes of life, instead of trying to predict and prepare for

events or trying to will how one could live. The development of the ability to will properly is the important feature of *epimeleia heautou*.

The genealogical approach of Foucault did not strive for a scholarly historical account of the past, which the great French authority on ancient philosophy, Pierre Hadot, had done. Foucault had taken Pierre Hadot's work as his inspiration for his work on the *epimeleia heautou*. The feature of Hadot's work which Foucault pursued in his lecture course on the *Hermeneutics of the Subject* was Hadot's characterisation of philosophy as a 'way of life' (Hadot, 1995). Hadot's interest was, in many ways similar to that of Foucault, to develop a concern for establishing a richer spiritual aspect of life for man in the modern age. As Hadot was the acknowledged expert in France on ancient philosophy, it is relevant to investigate how his views might differ from those of Foucault.

Hadot's work on 'Philosophy as a Way Of Life'

Arnold Davidson pointed out that Foucault owed a large debt to Hadot, because he had appropriated his framework of methodology when he prepared for the lecture course *Hermeneutics of the Subject*. (Davidson, 2005, pxxix, note 21) It was Foucault's encounter with Hadot's work which led to Foucault embarking on a major project on the 'care of the self'. Hadot's interpretation of much of the ancient world's practices could be viewed as a kind of spiritual activity. The practice of *askēsis* during the Roman era, corresponded to the time when the spiritual elements of life were foremost.

For Hadot, in ancient times there were two main poles of existence. These were joy and conscience. The pull of conscience is a pole of existence which drives one toward some kind of action, whilst joy is an embrace of life. 'Techniques of the self' were directed towards enhancing both of these poles, so that one could function as a citizen in a particular form of life. For Hadot, these two poles were present in many of the ancient 'ways of life', but one pole would be emphasised in some at the expense of the other e.g. The Stoics emphasised conscience and fortitude rather than pleasure and joy. Hadot wanted to re – connect with the need for a Divine or Universal to help to direct the life of an individual and place it in a proper context.

For Foucault, studies of the past could help with the process of self – transformation, which was one of the recurrent themes in Heidegger's philosophy. Hadot was rather scathing about Foucault's attempt to establish a new spiritual aspect to existence - a new aesthetic. He termed Foucault's efforts as a "new kind of Dandyism – twentieth century style." (Hadot, 1995, p 211) However, in spite of these types of comments, both Hadot and Foucault were concerned about the neglect of the spiritual side of man's nature in modern forms of life. Hadot argued that philosophers in earlier times had practiced philosophy as a way of life; today it is a theoretical activity, practiced within universities. (Hadot, 1995, p 271) Foucault instead concentrated on the notion that codes of behaviour have become methods of denoting a particular form of subject, required by those in power. His interest in this process has led many to accuse him of only being concerned with power relationships, whereas in fact the pressures, histories, power relationships and what he termed "truth games " coloured his work throughout his life. The Cartesian moment for him, represented the time when the imperative to 'look after yourself' became eclipsed by the imperative to 'know yourself'. (Foucault, 2005, p 14)

However, Hadot argued that Foucault was too concerned with aspects related to pleasure and introspection in his readings of ancient philosophy. Edward McGushin pointed out that Hadot's criticism was based on early works by Foucault such as *The Use of Pleasure*. (McGushin, 2007, p 104) Foucault effectively answered Hadot's criticisms, in his lecture course on the *Hermeneutics of the Subject*. In this work he showed that the care of the self in ancient philosophy did not mean pre-occupation with oneself. The practice of the *epimeieia heautou* invoked care of others, concern and respect for nature and was a prelude to action.

Hadot had devoted a chapter in his book, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, on the methods of cultivation of the self discussed by Foucault. (Hadot, 1995, pp 206 - 213) Hadot emphasized the importance that spiritual exercises had been in the past to one's relationship to the community, nature, or the Divine. The emphasis which Foucault placed on the self, Hadot felt was too narcissistic. Secondly, Hadot queried the importance allocated by Foucault to the searching of memory, and analysis of past events. In his view, the ancient ways of life were very much concerned with the present, and not so much worried about dwelling on past events. However, Hadot in his book, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, had not discussed the era of Pythagoras. Luchte has made the point that remembrance was an important part of the philosophy of the Pythagoreans. (Luchte, 2009, p 176) Thirdly, Hadot argued that Foucault was wrong to develop the notion that a spiritual identity was developed by writing e. g. the *Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*, but instead the 'techniques of the self' were fundamentally concerned about changing oneself in order to be a proper and ethical citizen in one's own social group who had developed a particular way of life.

Nevertheless, Hadot agreed with much of Foucault's work that ancient practices were concerned very much with techniques of self-transformation, for which one took sole responsibility. This ethical duty could not be set aside for others or the state to direct or impose. The aim was to become an appropriate being in the world, acknowledging one's place in nature with reason playing an important part in the processes of self – transformation. Hadot wrote: "Thus all spiritual exercises are, fundamentally, a return to the self, in which the self is liberated from the state of alienation into which has been plunged by worries, passions, and desires. The "self" liberated in this way is no longer our egoistic, passionate individuality, it is our *moral* person, open to universality and objectivity, and participating in universal nature or thought." (Hadot, 1995, p103)

This view surely is very much in the tenor of Foucault's thinking and conclusions in *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*. The aim of the spiritual exercises, were to connect with, and accept, the mystery and wonder on the universe. Hadot therefore traced the spiritual exercises as methods to help to bring about within a person a sense of the universal.

Because Hadot was the accepted authority in France on the ancient world and its philosophical practices, it is important to draw to a conclusion what he felt about Foucault's approach in *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* Hadot wrote: "What Foucault calls "practices" of the self do indeed correspond, for the Platonists as well as for the Stoics, to a movement of conversion toward the self. One seeks to be one's own master, to possess oneself and find one's happiness and freedom and inner independence. I concur on all these points." (Hadot, 1995, p 211)

Hadot did express surprise, however, that Foucault had concentrated far more attention on the Stoics than the Epicureans. The interest of the Stoics for Foucault, rather than that of the Epicureans, may have been because with the emergence of Christianity in the third and fourth centuries. This new religion assimilated or modified many of the Stoic practices into Christian asceticism. Foucault considered that this incorporation of the *epimeleia heautou* into the practice of Christianity was important and is the subject of chapter Four in this thesis.

Stoics, Rules and Moral Behaviour

Foucault stressed in his work on the *epimeleia heautou* the responsibility each person had to care for himself. If in fact the Stoics followed inflexible rules of conduct and ethical judgement, then does not Foucault's argument that the *epimeleia heautou* represented a completely different way of life from today, fall apart? We need to examine if the reliance on rules guided decisions far too much for a claim to be sustained that the Stoics practiced techniques of the self which enjoyed independent rights to decide on what was the correct action to follow. Brad Inwood has reviewed the whole topic of rules and moral behaviour in the Stoic society. (Inwood, 1999, pp 95-127) Some modern philosophers have argued that the *praecepta* should be understood as rules and were meant to be interpreted for action by means of reason alone. The issue to explore is, were these rules applied rigidly? Inwood argued that The Stoic model of moral reasoning was dissimilar from what he termed: "rule based deduction". (Inwood, 1999, p 97)

Inwood argued that the Stoics had a flexible practice of moral reasoning. The Stoics distinguished between the wise man, and the ordinary individual. The need for

someone to be able to make correct, independent decisions, depending on the particular circumstances pertaining at the time, was recognised by Ariston of Chios. The philosopher Julia Annas called the Stoic philosophy “the only explicitly intuitionist theory in ancient ethics”. (Annas, 1993, p 102) What the agent for moral reasoning needed to know was a set of tools for moral reasoning, for someone to use when trying to decide what course of action to follow. This was the role of the *praeceptae* e.g. Cicero’s ‘De officiis’ discussed the theory of virtues in relation to action.

As a result of a comprehensive examination of the rules in decision making in moral philosophy of the Stoics, Inwood came to the following conclusion: The rules set out a theory of typology which described the kind of things which should be of moral concern, e.g. our relationship with other human beings. The general rules provided the moral agent a framework in which to find a balance between an abstract theory and the demands of a practical situation. So, Inwood’s work does **not** conflict with Foucault’s claim that the *epimelia heautou* was concerned very much with spiritual values which strongly influenced how one responded to ethical rules and cultural norms.

The Importance of *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*

The opposition between the ancient and modern ways of life, was discussed by Foucault in terms of the interplay and relative importance of ‘care of the self’ as compared with ‘know yourself’. Why did he do this? He was engaging with Heidegger’s ideas on truth and Being. He made this very clear at a lecture on 3rd February 1982: “Not that many people have posed the question: what is involved in the case of the subject and the truth? - - - What is the subject of truth, what is the

subject who speaks the truth--I have tried to reflect on all this from the side of Heidegger and starting with Heidegger.” (Foucault, 2005, p 189)

Let us briefly review our understanding of the *epimeleia heautou* and where it might lead us. First of all, Foucault has clearly established that there were ancient practices devoted to ‘care of the self’ in spiritual terms. I believe that we can regard the various spiritual practices described by Foucault as ways of returning to Being, a kind of homecoming, a retreat from homelessness, a recurrent theme in Heidegger’s later writings. (Heidegger, 1993c, p 242) In his description of the demise of the practices associated with the *epimeleia heautou*, Foucault seemed to be addressing Heidegger’s concerns about nihilism and the problems of metaphysics. For Heidegger, metaphysics has forgotten that it is ‘homeless’, which resonates with Foucault’s description of the demise of the *epimeleia heautou*. To recover from homelessness, Heidegger argued that we need to go back in history to discover the abandonment of Being. (Heidegger, 1999, p 51) This surely is what Foucault set out to do.

Frédéric Gros pointed out that Foucault did not present his lecture course on *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* as a new conception, but as the on-going principle of his entire work. (Gros, 2005, p 515) Through his work on Stoicism in particular, Foucault wanted to learn about practices when the emphasis on knowledge, the *gnōthi seauton* was merely an integral part of the practice of *epimeleia heautou*. Spiritual values have become lost with the increasing inexorable weight and emphasis placed on reason since the time of Spinoza.

CHAPTER 4

Governmentality, Politics and Power

Introduction

In this chapter we will explore the role of the practices of confession and ideas on salvation in the development of ‘techniques of the self’ in the middle ages in Christian ideology. This is important because salvation was pivotal in the process by which the *epimeleia heautou* became replaced by the *gnōthi seauton* as the most important characteristic of the ‘care of the self’. Foucault argued that the medieval promise of eternal life after death was a crucial factor in the development of modern versions of subjectivity and the modern types of power relations. (Foucault, 2005, pp 353–356)

Foucault’s approach of discussing Christianity in the context of power relationships brings the important idea of salvation to the foreground of this discussion. (Foucault, 2009, pp 165-185) As the doctrines of the Catholic Church developed, salvation was portrayed as the route from the passage from the world of the corporeal body, to the life after death; in effect salvation held out the promise of spiritual journey. Salvation as it developed became a new form of power.¹² (Foucault, 2009, p 183) These themes of the pastorate and salvation are important, because Foucault believed that they are the key to our understanding how the modern state came into being, and has become dependent on technology to sustain its power.

Michael Zimmerman discussed Foucault’s point of view that Christianity had paved the way for current political ideas about security and the production of subjectivity.

(Zimmerman, 1990, pp 202-203) Likewise, modern technological systems, in

¹² Foucault said that: “I will end by saying that with the Christian Pastorate we see the birth of an absolutely new form of power.” (Foucault, 2009, p 183)

Heidegger's view, treat human beings as objects to be controlled. However, Zimmerman pointed out that Heidegger himself had argued that the development of religious introspection had been responsible for the modern 'will to power'.¹³ (Zimmerman, 1990, pp 168-182) Thus Christianity had facilitated the development of modern technology with its power to determine the characterization of the modern subject. (Zimmerman, 1990, p 180) McGushin also agreed with Foucault, that the changes in the notion of salvation after the sixteenth century underlie the development of modern political power and the development of modern technology. (McGushin, 2007, p 213) Salvation changed its nature, instead of being concerned only with the after- life, salvation in the modern age has become concerned with the material needs and security of a subject here on earth.

Foucault pointed out that salvation has developed into an objective of philosophical analysis; it is not today regarded as a subject for the sole concern of religion. (Foucault, 2005, p 182) In this context, the philosopher Mary Midgley has written two books, *Science as Salvation* (Midgley, 1992) and *Evolution as Religion*. (Midgley, 1985). Her argument was that today, science and technology have come to be accepted as being necessary for a subject's salvation with respect to both security and power whilst living on earth.

However in the medieval world, the Church regarded the corporeal body as being beset with sin and temptations, so that the path to the next life could only be granted if one had successfully followed the doctrines of the Church. Confessional practice

¹³ See, for example Zimmerman's interpretation of Heidegger's views on Christianity and Technology: "Christendom could be of no avail in halting the technological Will to Power, because Christendom had helped to promote it. By defining a "true man" as one who was self-certain about his own righteousness and justification, Christendom had paved the way for the modern concept of security and salvation." As we shall see, these views of Heidegger's are very similar to the themes which Foucault developed in his later work on the "technologies of the self". (Zimmerman, 1990, p 180)

played an important part in the enabling of a subject to make a successful passage from one world to the next. This development of Christian doctrine in the medieval age, according to Foucault, was very different from that of Hellenistic and Roman times. His work in *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, and *Technologies of the Self*, referred to salvation in the ancient world as an activity, a way of life, rather than the medieval doctrine of promising the possibility of eternal life. Salvation at the time of antiquity was a kind of training for living a life where one could obtain a mastery over oneself, and therefore be in a better position to cope with all the challenges and vicissitudes of fortune inevitable in any life. One learnt how to cope with the routine of the everyday, but also with unfamiliar challenging situations; there was no pre-occupation with the medieval fear of death.¹⁴ (Foucault, 2005, p 184)

Christianity developed the doctrine of salvation to the idea of a boundary to be overcome, so the Christian who wanted to save his soul had to submit to some kind of examination (*askēsis*) where another person, the other, was needed. This other person became the custodian of pastoral care. We are now so used to this idea of salvation, that Foucault claimed we accept it philosophically. It has become a cultural reality in the history of philosophy.

Foucault explored the contention that salvation in antiquity was very different from the meaning accepted today. One of the senses in which the term was used was to preserve oneself or perhaps others from danger. This danger might be concerned with ethical practices of the society of the time. Another concept was the idea of

¹⁴ Foucault wrote: "The person saved is the person in a state of alert, in a state of resistance and mystery, and sovereignty over the self- -There is no reference to anything like death, immutability, or another world in the notion of salvation, found in the Hellenistic and Roman texts." (Foucault, 2005, p184)

preservation, perhaps of the body itself, or ideas related to honour and one's standing in the community. Foucault's fundamental point which he continually emphasized in his writing and lectures was that both the object and the means of salvation was oneself. For salvation in antiquity, "you needed nothing and no one but oneself".¹⁵ (Foucault, 2005, p 184)

Foucault in a conference paper at the University of Tokyo in 1978 gave a detailed description of the Christian development of salvation. (Foucault, 1999, p 115) First of all, every Christian was expected to seek and prepare for salvation, it was not a matter of choice. (Foucault, 1999, pp 124-125) Without salvation, punishment would become inevitable in the life after death. Those who were thought to have rejected salvation along the terms set out by the church, or were deemed to be unworthy, might suffer punishment of the body here on earth e.g. the persecution of those deemed to be heretics during the Inquisition and the burning of witches. The obligation to seek salvation and follow the teachings of the pastor gave the Church tremendous spiritual and moral authority. The fact that everyone had to conform to the same kind of techniques for the operation of power meant that there was not only a curtailment of freedom, but the notion of a group of subjects who had to submit to authority of the Church – 'the flock'.

Secondly, the pastor was placed in a position to conduct surveillance and continuous control in order to ensure that no member of the Church could escape from the obligation to seek salvation.

¹⁵ Foucault claimed that " In what I will call this salvation of Hellenistic and Roman Philosophy- - - the self is the agent, object, instrument and end of salvation." (Foucault, 2005, p185)

Thirdly, the pastor could command absolute obedience. In Roman Times, although a person was subject to autocratic rule a Freeman would have repudiated the idea of total and absolute obedience to someone else. In contrast, Foucault claimed that the absolute obligation for a Christian was to be obedient to the authority of someone else. Foucault claimed that the Christian notion of humility as a virtue, was simply, surrendering all idea of 'taking care of oneself'. The practice of *epimelia heautou* became discarded, instead virtue became the practice of unthinking obedience. This obedience was claimed vicariously to be the will of God, the ground of everything.

Finally, the pastor became the agent for the practice of a variety of various techniques for the elucidation the truth about a Christian subject. A major technique which was developed, and still practiced today, is the practice of confession. The examination of one's own conscience, became not a responsibility for oneself, but the responsibility of another Christian subject invested with some kind of authority from the Church. The pastor thus had the right to wield power as a result of what Foucault called "games of truth".¹⁶ (Foucault, 1988c, p 16)

The ancient philosophers were concerned with the nature of truth, but did not principally seek to determine the most intimate secrets, desires, passions of each and every human subject. Salvation in the ancient world was concerned with the human body, instead of a means of salvation to another world. In order to understand how the whole concept of salvation was promulgated, we need to consider the role of the confession as a mechanism to make a 'subject' obey God's laws. For Foucault the role

¹⁶ In this passage, Foucault explained what he understood by the notion of the word truth. In effect, Foucault argued that truth is political in nature: "The word "game" can lead to error: when I say game, I mean an ensemble of rules, for the production of the truth. It is not a game in the sense of imitating or entertaining--it is an ensemble of procedures which lead to a certain result, which can be considered in formation of its principles and its rules or procedures, as valid or not, as winner or loser." (Foucault,1988c, p16)

of the pastor was the model of authority and power which was appropriated as the state evolved during modernity. The work of the pastor in the evolution of Christianity will now be discussed in the light of Foucault's philosophy.

The Pastor

The practices of confession and salvation were concerned very much with notions of examination in order to determine whether or not a Christian subject had been obedient. The examination was the responsibility of the pastor. The scope, nature and temporality of the examination resulted in the practice of surveillance - the shepherd was responsible for looking after the flock.

The other important feature of 'care of the self' during this period was the dualistic nature of man, a corporeal body with a soul which ultimately belonged to God. The 'body' became an object to be ordered, regulated and observed as the body was the origin of sinful desires which were held to offend God. As Zimmerman pointed out, the body came to be regarded as an object, the subject of knowledge. (Zimmerman, 1986, pp 47-48) The practice of *gnōthi seaton* came to be the principle which enabled access to truth, not the ancient practice of *epimelia heautou*. The theme of obedience was highly developed as integral to seeking God's approval, but these themes were present in the Hebrew tradition, even in the Old Testament. Zimmerman argued that by understanding ourselves as objects, which is true of mankind today, we repudiate any possibility of what Heidegger termed an authentic mode of existence. (Zimmerman, 1986, pp 198-228)

The practice of Christianity hindered the possibility of an authentic nature of human existence. For a subject to be able to capable of an authentic existence, then he must

be able to make his own decisions about his life, he must be free. Foucault in turn traced in the development of Christianity a gradual loss of freedom. This loss of freedom has been of profound importance because it has been unperceived, and therefore dangerous. If one wishes to challenge the notion of Foucault's that Christianity was concerned with power, then the teachings of Paul of Tarsus in the Corinthians leaves one in no doubt that the early Christians were very much concerned with power. (Castelli, 2004, pp 19-38) Let us consider the confession as a modern way of wielding such power.

Confession as a Form of *Parrhēsia*

In his early works such as *The Birth of the Clinic* and *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault showed, according to Edward McGushin, that the modern forms of the examination of a subject constitute a major technology for producing pliable individuals as objects of knowledge. These subjects are willing and co-operative in the various types of control wielded by society. As Heidegger pointed out in *The Question Concerning Technology*, "everywhere we remain unfree". (Heidegger, 1977a, p 4) McGushin agreed with Foucault's thesis that these modern forms of examination have been derived from confessional practice as developed by Christianity. (McGushin, 2007, p 172)

As opposed to the ancient Greek and Roman practices, when *parrhēsia* was a method when one discovered truth for oneself, Christianity subverted the earlier practices, whereby the subject had to be told what to believe and have to account for various sins and 'passions of the flesh'. *Parrhēsia* thus developed into a kind of juridical practice. To be a true Christian one had to accept that no one was free from sin, and the pastor had the power to forgive sins and give guidance as to how salvation might

be attained. With the strengthening of the exercise of pastoral power by the Christian church, McGushin argued that the practice of confession had resulted in a permanent renunciation of oneself; as a result one's own freedom had to be surrendered.

(McGushin, 2007, pp 164-172) For Foucault, this development has led to the foundation of the modern disciplinary forms of power which we take for granted; as Heidegger pointed out, today we cannot conceive of living in any other way.¹⁷

(Heidegger, 1977a, p 24)

As Jeremy Carrette has pointed out, Foucault's interest in Christianity was primarily its metamorphosis into the forms of political technology which have been accepted by the subject of today. (Carrette, 1999, p 4) John Caputo claimed that Foucault's work on theology was concerned with the question of how man has lost his freedom.

(Caputo, 2004, pp117 – 139) This loss of freedom was a topic which Heidegger had addressed in 'The Question Concerning Technology'.

As opposed to the time of Socrates when *parrhēsia* was a method of arriving at the truth by giving an account of actions, possibilities and events to oneself; the practice of confession became transformed where one had to give an account of the truth to someone else- the pastor. The Christian penitent had during confession to produce a history of sins committed and desired, and have his future actions guided by spiritual values coming from God. *Parrhēsia* thus became both a form of juridical practice but linked with guidance as to one's future conduct. The powerful motivation to submit to this type of *parrhēsia* was the promise or assurance of salvation.

¹⁷ The relevant passage is: "The essence of modern technology starts man upon the way of that revealing through which the real everywhere, more or less distinctly, becomes standing reserve".

James Bernauer argued that Foucault in his various writings and lectures described three quite distinct phases in the way by which ancient practices of *parrhēsia* were incorporated into Christianity. (Bernauer, 2004, pp 77 – 97) The first phase was the time of Judaism. In the same way that the Greeks practiced *parrhēsia*, it was a willingness to have the courage to tell the truth and to be open and honest both with oneself, and with others. However, in Judaism, *parrhēsia* also meant that one had to open to the word of God, and be prepared to be guided in one’s actions in life. The practice of *parrhēsia* in time became to be classed as a form of communication between God and man, in many of the ancient biblical texts, e.g. descriptions of such encounters with God by Moses, or Abraham.

The second phase of the practice of *parrhēsia* took place during the time of Christ and the period when the Gospels were written. In the New Testament, *parrhēsia* is not spoken of as divine revelation, rather it became to be a way of life which embraced an unspoken confidence in God’s will – thus the beginnings of the human subject realising that obedience was an essential requirement for salvation.¹⁸ (Foucault, 2009, p 207-208) *Parrhēsia* as a way of subjecting oneself to God’s will was not without danger. Foucault termed *parrhēsia* ‘Fearless Speech’. (Foucault, 2001) The early Christians were prepared to sacrifice their lives to the opposition of the Roman Empire. Bernauer pointed out that this willingness to tell the truth as one saw it, during this time, was very similar to the notions and practice of the Greek *parrhēsia*.

¹⁸ Foucault developed the surprising argument that Christianity is not an ascetic religion. For example, Foucault claimed that: “Asceticism is a sort of exasperated and reversed obedience that has become egoistic self-mastery. Let’s say that in asceticism there is a specific aspect that denies access to an external power”. Throughout the history of Christianity he argued that there has been a tension between asceticism and the pastoral requirement for a true Christian to always remain obedient to the source of power. (Foucault, 2009, pp 207-208)

The third phase was developed during the period of Christian asceticism. The positive meaning of *parrhēsia* embraced the notion that one could oneself encounter God and therefore had a responsibility to believe that one could be heard by God e.g. by prayer. As time went on, the principle of obedience to God's pastors and representatives here on earth became more and more important. Rather than for a good Christian seeking to be open and truthful by trying to communicate with oneself by self-examination, or trying to communicate with God, the religious authorities encouraged the practice of *parrhēsia* to cease. The absolute ideal in this respect was for one to be totally silent.

Christianity as it developed in the middle ages had two poles which created various tensions, some of these of course led to the Reformation. One pole represented the love of God and the power of prayer – a form of *parrhēsia*. The other pole which developed was the ascetic tradition.¹⁹ (Carrette, 1999, p 38) Truth could only be found by someone promising to be obedient to God. Access to this truth was facilitated by the pastorate, and one had to submit oneself to various kinds of examination; of these, confession became the most important practice.

To sum up, pastoral power was described by Foucault as a power that was introduced into the West by Christianity. This form of power took on an institutional form in the ecclesiastical pastorate. The salvation of each and everyone concerned the saving of each member's soul in the pastorate. This salvation depended on knowledge of each person, so spiritual concerns were occupied with regard to a human being as an object of knowledge. Jeremy Carrette argued that what Foucault was trying to do was to

¹⁹ Carrette argued that: "Foucault sees religion, alongside ideologies, philosophies and systems of metaphysics, as part of the mechanisms for controlling the functions of human life. These ideas would later develop into Foucault's conceptualization of religion as a political power and a 'technology of self'. It shows how Foucault is interested not so much in religious beliefs, as in the practice or function of religion." (Carrette, 1999, p 38)

argue that in medieval times religion developed into a mechanism and model for political governance. The practice of confession had to involve the permanent renunciation of oneself, of one's own subjectivity. As a result, this laid the foundation for modern disciplinary power and the development of modern technology to exercise this power in the most efficient way. (Foucault, 1997a pp 177 - 178) Foucault was surely here addressing the problem of which Heidegger wrote about in 'The Question Concerning Technology', what is the essence of modern technology, and how did it arise?²⁰ In 1979, the theme of religious power as a 'technique of the self' was the topic of the Tanner Lectures given by Foucault at the University of Stanford. It was at these lectures that Foucault put forward his ideas on pastoral power and political rationality –how the modern state orders the truth for its subjects. It was by introducing the idea of governmentality, that Foucault linked the production of the modern subject who accepts that he is to be told what is to be taken as true and what is false, as a natural development of the Christian pastorate. He had developed this theme in his lecture course *Security, Territory and Population* which he delivered in 1977 at the Collège de France. (Foucault, 2009, pp 163-185) Foucault in his analysis of modern political power detailed a complete change in the practice of *parrhēsia*. He described this development as due to the development of Christianity. (Foucault, 2009, pp 163 – 185) This is such an important strand in Foucault's work on the technology of the self that it needs to be explored in some detail.

²⁰ Foucault said: "I will end by saying that with the Christian pastorate we see the birth of an absolutely new form of power. --It is also a prelude to governmentality through the constitution of a specific subject, of a subject whose merits are analytically identified, who is subjected to continuous networks of obedience, and who is subjectified through the compulsory extraction of truth." (Foucault, 2009, p 183-185)

Security, Territory, Population – the Pastorate to Governmentality

Foucault devoted much of this lecture course at the Collège de France to the development of the pastorate by the Church and its role in developing the perception of the human subject as an obedient object. The development of the obligation to tell the truth to the pastor, an official of the Church, became more and more highly developed in the medieval period. By means of the refinement of existing practices, the process of confession became to be used as a means to examine a subject's conscience. A new technology of the self was created, and a new kind of subjectivity was formed.

Foucault's goal was to uncover the origins of the operations of power of the modern state, and the source of the authority to wield such power. In his earlier works such as *The Birth of the Clinic*, and *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault had investigated the development of the ways by which power had come about in modern medical practice and prisons. In order to gain a more fundamental understanding of the development of power relations, Foucault wanted to draw out the more general themes of power relations by means of a strategic analysis. A major theme which he developed in *Security, Territory, Population*, was that the way in which modern political power had developed had been profoundly influenced by Christianity. (Foucault, 2009)

The pastorate was based on the metaphor of a shepherd-flock relationship. Pastoral power as an important factor in the renunciation of the self was outlined in his lecture course 'Society, Territory and Population'. Foucault wrote: "This form of power so typical of the West, and unique, I think, in the entire history of civilizations, was born,

or at least took its model from the fold, from politics seen as a matter of the sheep-fold.” (Foucault, 2009, p 130)

The shepherd was responsible for the guidance and protection of the flock. This theme of the shepherd was a recurrent theme in the biblical tradition. In respect of the development of governmentality, Foucault identified what he considered to be a number of important features of the pastorate.

The first important feature is that the power exercised by the shepherd was meant to be beneficial to the members of the flock, and the responsibility was not territorial in nature. (Foucault, 2009, p 125) Wherever a Christian subject chooses to go, the good shepherd still has a responsibility for him. The beneficial power adopted by the pastor is exercised not for his own self-aggrandisement, but for the salvation of the flock, God’s subjects. One of the duties of the good shepherd is to keep watch over his flock. The better the surveillance technique could be carried out, then the more chance that the lost sheep could be found again. If necessary, the good shepherd had to be prepared to sacrifice his own welfare, in order to save a soul from eternal damnation. Pastoral power was not developed as a role requiring strength and the ability to dominate others; rather the task required devotion to God and the ability to maintain an all-encompassing vigilance.

The second theme which Foucault developed was that the Christian Church, as it developed, presented itself as a pastoral organization which exercised a type of beneficial power for its members. (Foucault, 2009, p 126) The pastorate developed over several centuries. The overwhelming interest for Foucault was the emphasis put on absolute obedience to the pastorate as an essential requirement for the salvation

of the soul. Christian obedience did not mean obedience to the law, but subordination to a cleric who was God's official here on earth. Commensurate with the requirement for a true Christian to be subordinate, was the principle of humility. To be humble was a virtue which would facilitate the possibility of salvation. As a corollary to humility was the suppression of one's own will, one's whole way of life now had to be directed by another. Foucault contrasted the Christian need to be humble with the Stoics practice of *apatheia*, which meant that one had obtained mastery of oneself - a goal throughout life. (Foucault, 2009, p 178) Instead, Christianity embraced the notion of *pathē*, a renunciation of egoism, the wish to command oneself. In the earthly life this humility was not expected to lead to any benefit, or reward.

This practice of subordination was such an integral aspect of the pastorate, that the pastor became obligated to his flock. The role of the pastor as it developed was one of providing a service to others. This was a completely different principle from the ancient Greek and Roman concepts of office, where one exercised power as an official from above. The pastor himself had a whole variety of duties, including the teaching of the scriptures. The inability of the pastor to exercise his mind freely to ideas of his own meant that he too, was subordinate, through a hierarchy, to the will of God.

For a humble Christian subject, the requirement was for one to be willing to accept spiritual direction, for the whole of one's life. For this spiritual direction to take place one had to renounce the idea of examining one's conscience for oneself. The truth about oneself and the ethical value put on them had to come from the pastor. Hence the examination of conscience was changed into a technique of subordination. In terms of the development of modern forms of government, and various types of power relations, Foucault emphasized the increasing requirement for absolute

obedience. This requirement for subordination had, in Foucault's view, three important outcomes for the development of governmentality, the exercise of power by a global, totalizing institution, namely the modern state. (Foucault, 2009, pp 108-109)

The first point is that the subject freely agrees to be obedient, it was not a legal obligation backed up by various legal sanctions. As Foucault claimed "Christian obedience is not an obedience to a law, a principle, or any rational element whatsoever, but subordination to someone because he is someone." (Foucault, 2009, p 175)

The second interesting point which Foucault made is that the relationship is never finalised, at least in the world of the corporeal body. (Foucault, 2009, p 183) The result of the complete subordination to the pastor in this life here on earth, was the inculcation of absolute humility, and the agreement that the route to truth was under the jurisdiction of the pastorate. Pastoral power, in Foucault's view, denied any possibility of an affirmation of the self, but instead the destruction of one's opportunities for self-determination.

Thirdly, the pastor had to deal with the problem of truth. There was a need for the pastor to guide and teach the flock. This teaching involved two new important principles. The first mode of teaching required the subject to give an account to the pastor of one's daily conduct. The subject had to agree to submit all aspects of one's life to examination, be prepared for continual surveillance and to undergo rigorous cross examination during the process of confession. Everything that a subject might want to do, or wish to do, was subject to scrutiny.

The second principle of teaching was that the pastor was expected to direct the subject's conscience. This practice of the examination of conscience was very different from that in antiquity. The Stoics, for example, had developed techniques of self-mastery and to enable one to cope with the circumstances of daily life. The Christian pastorate insisted upon the subject being willing to accept spiritual direction. The examination of conscience became a process of subordinating oneself to someone else's will.

So, surprisingly, the Christian pastorate according to Foucault is not of interest "because of its relationship to the law, salvation or truth". (Foucault, 2009, p 183) Instead, the importance of Christianity resides in the way that modern forms of power were developed and exercised in the production of absolute obedience and the recognition that the truth and access to it lay not in the mind of the human subject but in a form of power which would remain hidden from them. Thus the pastorate developed a new form of power which was the prelude to the way that power is exercised by the modern state. (Foucault, 2009, pp 181-185) The ancient imperative to 'take care of yourself', was gradually being supplanted by a form of authority which was nurtured on the imperative to 'know yourself'.

McGushin pointed out that Foucault's work pursued the thesis that salvation, after the sixteenth century, evolved into a new meaning: the well being of life. The focus of salvation became the well being of the body of a human subject, its health, productivity and material well-being. (McGushin, 2007, p 221) Before moving on to discuss governmentality and technology, the role of the body in philosophical discourse which describes a subject is pertinent.

The Body

In the course '*Abnormal*' at the Collège de France, Foucault argued that the body was the focus of opposition to the dogma of Christianity. He argued that our bodies are constituted by culture. (Foucault, 2004, pp 212 -213) here is no such thing as a 'natural body'; it is changed from one era to another as a result of changes which have occurred as a result of altered power relationships. St. Augustine regarded the body as the centre of the threat of forces to disrupt the control of the soul by the pastorate. (St. Augustine, 1961, p 164) He was concerned that the body was the focus of lust and disease⁵) Of course, women have traditionally been regarded as agents of lust and danger and therefore have been vilified throughout Christianity. (Winguaards, 2001, p 85)

The Christian ideas about morality developed on the basis of the practice of confession and the repudiation of the body. The result was a negation of freedom. Rules had to be obeyed as the codes of obedience became more highly developed. At times in the history of the Church refusal to obey the rules led to overt expressions of a powerful response in the form of the Inquisition. Joseph Perez described the great importance that the Holy Office of the Roman Catholic Church placed on public confessions and repentance. (Perez, 2006, p 165) Those who refused to obey the rules were deemed to be heretics, and worthy of punishment to the corporeal body. What is important to realise is that the burning of heretics and similar punishments, were carried out in order to ensure the subject's salvation. The concern was the saving of souls from damnation, not for the benefit of those wielding the power to destroy the earthly body. Incorporated into the practice of the Inquisition were methods to detect magic and witchcraft. The supposed evil practices of witchcraft were deemed to be

perpetrated solely by women, who were consistently denied the opportunity to become priests, act in the role of confessor, or take part in any major way in the activities of the Catholic Church. About 1000 years after Christianity had developed, priests were not allowed to marry, have children and engage in any sexual activity whatsoever. Women are still denied the priesthood in the Catholic Church. The words “silent and invisible” have been used by Susan White to describe the history of women in Christian worship. (White, 2003, p 9)

Priests in the eighth-century were allowed to marry, although the Bishops had to be celibate. It was in the eleventh century, that the drive for the repudiation of the body really began in earnest. It was in 1123 that the First Lateran Council forbade every cleric of the order of Sub-dean or above, to marry. Women’s bodies have been more vulnerable to extremes of cultural pressures than men, as a result of beliefs associated with temptation, pleasures of the flesh, magic and witchcraft. Women were also held responsible for diverting attention away from spiritual values and the salvation of the soul. Christianity, in Foucault’s view, has instituted a whole set of regulatory and disciplinary practices associated with the control of the body. Foucault developed the concept that ethical behaviour could only be attained by what he termed “docile bodies”, subjects willing to be obedient and be under supervision and surveillance. (Foucault, 1991, pp 135 - 169)

The importance of the bodily dimension to Foucault’s philosophy was that there is not an ultimate truth to be found in the investigation of a subject, but rather that the subject has been created throughout history as a result of changing cultural practices and beliefs. The ancient practice of *askēsis* was moulded by Christianity to produce compliant subjects, who renounced the body and sought to obey the direction from

the pastor. Daniela Vallega-Neu pointed out that Heidegger's concept of Dasein, is a being with a body and thinking always occurs within the body. (Vallega-Neu , 2006)

Foucault approached human existence 'from without' and neither Foucault's nor Heidegger's approach was rooted in the construct of a purely thinking subject.

Although Christianity focussed attention onto the immortal soul, it was on the body that disciplinary practices were carried out. In the age of modernity, governmentality in Foucault's philosophy is directed at the Cartesian ego, instead of the Christian concept of the soul. The work of Descartes was instrumental in the concept of the ego and the next chapter is directed principally how Foucault thought that it facilitated the formation of the modern subject.

Governmentality and the Essence of Technology

I would claim that Foucault's work on the development of religious practices during the medieval period of history provides an account of how the practice of *epimeleia heautou* became sublimated by the practice of the *gnōthi seaton*. The subjectivity required by the Catholic Church meant that a Christian subject became an object of knowledge. As Foucault explained in 'Return to Morality', "I tried to locate three major types of problems, the problem of truth, the problem of power and the problem of individual conduct. These three domains of experience can only be considered in relation to one another, not independently." (Foucault, 1988e, p 243)

In relation to technology, Foucault proposed that 'techniques of the self', should be investigated as a possible important element in the control of technology. The technologies of domination and surveillance were themes which Foucault identified himself in his work on the pastorate. The topic of governmentality, according to

Foucault's perspective, refers to the application of technologies of domination in relation to the technologies of the self. (Foucault, 1988, p 19) It was Christianity which transformed the ancient practices of the care of the self, the *epimeleia heautou*. (Foucault, 1988c, p 9)

What, then, is the essence of technology, the question raised by Heidegger? It is not technological, it is not the objects and mechanical instruments of technology which are important. (Heidegger, 1977a, p 20) In his work on the pastorate, Foucault identified two important features which surely are important in respect of the essence of technology. These are obedience to a source of power, linked with the understanding that one always must account for one's actions and accept, or even welcome, a life of continuous surveillance. Heidegger described modern technology as enframing, a form of revealing the truth, and of course the pastorate was concerned with truth. For Heidegger, everything, including man has become a standing reserve, a resource to be regarded as available for domination and for study. (Heidegger, 1977a, p 24)

CHAPTER 5

Descartes and the Development of Cartesianism

Introduction

In the *Hermeneutics of the Subject* Foucault claimed that the 'Cartesian Moment', represented a period of gradual change when philosophy became disconnected from spirituality. The *gōthni seauton* gradually became more important as a 'care of the self' than the practices of *epimeleia heautou*, which eventually was disqualified as a method of discovering the truth. Foucault made it clear that Descartes had been a seminal figure in the process of the development of modernity, with an increasing faith in science as a guide to conduct and the shape and organization of society: "Before Descartes, one could not be impure, immoral and know the truth. With Descartes, direct evidence is enough. After Descartes we have a non ascetic subject of knowledge. This change made possible the institutionalization of modern science." (Foucault, 1997b, p 279)

Foucault pointed out that Descartes' work on the *ego* had been important in the rejection of spirituality by philosophy: "So the liquidation of what could be called the condition of spirituality for access to truth is produced with Descartes and Kant: Kant and Descartes seem to be the two major elements." (Foucault, 2005, p 190)

As Modernity developed, Cartesianism, according to Foucault, came to be defined as an accepted method for gaining access to the truth, but is merely knowledge, (*connaissance*) of a set of objects. According to Foucault, as time has gone on, the notion of spiritual access to the truth has been lost. The study and knowledge of objects has become man's primary pre-occupation. The knowledge and manipulation

of these objects (technology), has assumed primary importance, with man as merely another object to be studied and ordered about. Since the time of Descartes there has been an enormous cultural shift in man's relationship to nature and to himself.

Both Foucault and Heidegger considered that the influence of Descartes and Kant had been profound in the genesis of modern technology. Before a summary of their views on this development is given, a brief account of Descartes' philosophy of the ego is necessary.

Descartes and the *Ego*.

Descartes developed the notion that man is a thinking substance, hence introducing the concept of dualism; and the belief that matter is extension in motion. (Descartes, 1986) To contemporary ideas of science, this dichotomy of mind and body is untenable, yet it has been very influential with regard to how modernity views the world. Descartes' novel idea is often encapsulated in the phrase: *cogito sum*, "I think, I exist". The importance of Descartes' work in the *Meditations* for Heidegger's work, was the development of the modern ideas about subjectivism and the world of nature. All beings, including human beings, other than the thinking, seeing subject, become objects. Hence all knowledge is to be found in the form of some kind of information about objects. This information about objects can only be known if it fits into a conceptual scheme of the knowing subject. The *ego cogitans*, has become accepted in the modern age as the basis of all knowledge. Heidegger saw technology as a natural result of a modern type of subjectivism which limits the understanding of human existence to be accounted for solely in the material world of objects, their organization, and the forces which can arrange and control objects.

There are a few points about the *Meditations* that need to be outlined before a discussion of both Foucault and Heidegger's views on Cartesianism. First of all, Descartes established the idea that reason based on empirical observation should be the authority for all knowledge, and so was instrumental in the abandonment of the ancient practices of 'care of the self', described by Foucault in *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*. It is somewhat ironic that the *Meditations*, a key work in the development of modernity, should have been based on ancient spiritual exercises, which modernity has done so much to discredit. (Foucault, 1997b, p 278) Secondly, the *Meditations* are founded very much on arguments and reasoning which assume the existence of God, while the Enlightenment and modernity have placed philosophical reasoning in a position of repudiating such reliance on a supreme deity. Robert Scharff has pointed out that many of the features of modern concepts of Cartesianism, often bear little relation to Descartes' reasoning in the *Meditations*.²¹ (Scharff, 2006, p 496) Modern philosophy, according to Heidegger, is very much based on a picture of the world which is termed 'Cartesianism', but which is different in many ways from Descartes' original ideas.

Thirdly, the truth rule proposed in the Fourth Meditation opened up a methodology for the practice of science, which is the subject of a later chapter in this thesis, as science and technology are very much inter-related. Modern Cartesianism has become the basic stand point of analytical philosophy in its classical sense. The primary focus of modern Cartesianism is the language and structure of scientific knowledge related to objects. Heidegger's concept of man as a being-in the world is a

²¹ Descartes complained that during his lifetime, his work had been misinterpreted: "I should like to take this opportunity of asking future generations never to believe that I am the source of opinions people may tell them are mine, unless I have myself published them." (Descartes, 2006, p 57)

very different and challenging viewpoint from the typical Cartesian position. It is because both Foucault and Heidegger rejected this rather limited view of life that we must now discuss their concerns in more detail.

Cartesianism, and How Man Sees the World

McGushin claimed that Foucault's work was influenced by Descartes from his *History of Madness* to his final lectures on the 'care of the self'. (McGushin, 2007, p 175) The importance of Descartes work was the development of a new kind of subjectivity, based on truth and reason. Descartes, in his *Discourse on Method*, repudiated the ancient practice of *parrhēsia*, and began a project which has led to a new relationship between the human subject and knowledge. (Descartes, 2006) McGushin pointed out that part 6 of the *Discourse on Method* was regarded by Foucault as being crucial in the development of what is now termed Cartesianism. Descartes introduced the new idea of man being able to understand how to obtain a mastery over nature.

(Descartes, 2006, p 51) Foucault claimed that: "--the extraordinary thing in Descartes texts is that he succeeded in substituting a subject as founder of practices of knowledge for a subject constituted through practices of the self." (Foucault, 1997b, p 278)

McGushin argued that the effect of Descartes work was to change the whole way in which man sees himself in relation to nature. The modern subject sees the world in the form of *cogito, sum*, "I think, I am". (McGushin, 2007, p 194) The importance of Descartes for Foucault was that the concept of the *cogito* has led to various ways of accumulating power as a result of new kinds of knowledge. Beatrice Han in her article: 'The Analytic of Finitude and the History of Subjectivity' pointed out that the Cartesian

concept of a subject's relationship to power and knowledge had led to three major consequences according to Foucault. (Han, 2005, pp 194-195) These were detailed in *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* as a renunciation of spirituality as being fundamental in order to gain access to the truth; what one might regard as the move towards modern scientific practice; and finally the *epimeleia heauton* became of less importance than the *gnōthi seauton*. The rejection of spirituality in relationship to a search for the truth was, in Foucault's judgement, begun by Descartes. (Foucault, 1997b, p 280)

The Cogito and the Unthought

In his book, *The Order of Things*, Foucault included an essay entitled: 'Cogito and the Unthought'. (Foucault, 1994b, pp 322 - 328) In this essay, Foucault argued that man as an empirical object of study cannot reasonably posture as possessing the sovereign power of the *cogito*. This essay argued that Descartes work on the *cogito* was merely concerned with a rather limited objective to explain the sources of error and illusion and therefore be better placed to guard against such sources of error. The modern concept of the *cogito* has changed radically from Descartes' lifetime, and is still subject to a variety of interpretations and assumptions. In a world of objects, man is more and more as just another object for study and control, and this was the theme of his lecture course on *The Birth of Biopolitics*. (Foucault, 2008) The modern form of reflection has been established in such a way that spiritual values have been excluded from the modern *cogito*. Because modern forms of thought have no morality, the spiritual dimension to life has become, for Foucault, "the unthought". This is because the modern ideas of the *cogito* reflect the notion that knowledge and power do not rely on a moral dimension to thinking, as objective 'facts' are held to be true

irrespective of spiritual values. Foucault disputed in 'The Cogito and the Unthought' the truth of the proposition linking "I think" to the evident truth of "I am." For Foucault, neither Cartesianism nor Kant's work properly address man's being in the 'unthought,' – a whole realm of spiritual aspects of man's being which is neglected or ignored by concentrating analysis on objects and a world of factual knowledge.

In this essay on the *cogito*, Foucault also attacked the value of phenomenology. Interestingly, Heidegger is never mentioned, although Husserl figures prominently in the discussion. The substance of Foucault's problem with phenomenology is that it consistently resolves any analysis into an empirical view of the world and human existence which cannot properly address those aspects of life which Foucault termed "the unthought." The effect of Cartesianism has been to establish the relationship between the self and itself solely in terms of knowledge. However, Foucault challenged the principle that a human subject can both be the *cogito* and an empirical subject.

In an interview 'On the Genealogy of Ethics' Foucault emphasized the break with the practice of *askēsis* to seek the truth. (Foucault, 1983, p 252) Descartes effectively charted a path whereby scientific rationality would be divorced from ethics. Foucault claimed that what Kant had attempted in part of his work was to re-introduce some form of ethics into philosophy by formulating a universal standard of conduct supposedly under the guise of rationality. It is now appropriate to discuss Foucault's views on Kant in relation to the *cogito*.

Foucault and Kant's Philosophy

Foucault believed that Kant had built his whole philosophical edifice on elaborating Descartes' ideas on the ego. Foucault wrote an essay entitled 'What is Enlightenment?' (Foucault, 2007b, pp 97-119) In this paper, Foucault commented on Kant's own paper which had been published in 1784 with the same title. According to Foucault, Kant had described the Enlightenment as a movement which was enabling man to free himself from Christian authority, and the necessity to demonstrate obedience, because reason would be the mechanism for determining knowledge which would be used to guide society as it developed over the future. Thus Kant's perspective was that the Enlightenment was a continuing process of liberation.

In his work on prisons, psychiatry, sexuality, medicine, etc., Foucault had devoted much of his work in seeking to investigate power relationships. Technology had been used to facilitate the establishment and maintenance of power relationships, and Foucault did indeed address these issues in this particular article on Kant. He pointed out that the result of technology had intensified the use and capacity of power by the state and certain elements of society, and posed an important question: how can the growth in this capacity for power brought about by technology properly be used? (Foucault, 2007b, pp 115-116) The era of the Enlightenment had given way to that of modernity, by which time these issues of power and technology had intensified.

Foucault also directed his attention to the replacement of spiritual values and the practice of *askēsis* by reason and the creation of the new philosophical concept of man by Kant. Foucault claimed that before the eighteenth century, 'man' as an object of philosophical enquiry did not exist. (Foucault, 1994c, pp 303 - 343) In his book *The*

Order of Things, Foucault wrote that: "man was constituted at the beginning of the nineteenth-century." (Foucault, 1994c, p330)

Han agreed with Foucault's proposition that Kant's philosophical heritage rests upon the same basis as Cartesianism. (Han, 1998, p 162) *Askēsis* has become abandoned as a way of life, and as a method of conducting a search for the truth. Philosophy has become an academic activity principally devoted to epistemology and the knowing subject, with empiricism based on the concept of the *cogito* guiding any search for truth.

Kant's three critiques (*The Critique of Pure Reason, the Critique of Practical Reason and The Critique of Judgement*) have been a powerful force in the development of the modern critical attitude to philosophy which Foucault termed 'the ontology of the present'. McGushin summarized in his book, *Foucault's Askēsis*, Foucault's attitude to Kant. (McGushin, 2007, pp 253-255) As a major philosopher, Kant had been the prime mover in the development of a whole new set of power relations, what society became to regard as normal or acceptable conduct, and a new relationship of the self to the self. In *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant developed the idea of the "categorical imperative," a universal rule or moral edict which should be followed by everyone. (Kant, 1993b, p 30) One can see how such a principle would lend itself to legal force and be a powerful tool for those exercising power, with technology being a useful tool to ensure compliance. This type of development did not seem to have been anticipated by Kant.

In an interview, Foucault was challenged by Dreyfus and Rabinow to respond to the view that the classical nature of the self had been lost, or possibly transformed.

(Foucault, 1997b, p 277 - 280) Foucault replied that there had been a problem of how to forge a relationship between ethics and the modern theories of knowledge which had developed after the work of Descartes. The major figure who had attempted this had been Kant, with his *Critique of Practical Reason*. (Foucault, 1997b, p 279) Kant had tried to re-interpret old ideas into a new format, based on practical reason. The 'self' is not given, but has to be constituted in relationship to itself as a subject. (Foucault, 1997b, pp 279-280) In this respect, Han has pointed out the fact that Foucault did have quite different views from Kant. At the time of the Ancient Greeks, action or intention did not in itself, constitute morality; the constitution of the subject was also important: "Thus Foucault doubly takes the opposing perspective to Kant by affirming the impossibility that the Greeks would have understood morality independent of the quality of the moral subject and have defined this quality independent of his actions." (Han, 1998, p 159)

Heidegger and Descartes

Descartes was important for Heidegger because he is the foundation of our scientific view of the world and is the basis of modern Cartesianism, which underpins our view of how things really are and how events come about. Heidegger repudiated such common sense views which underpin the perspective that human existence is solely one of a subject/object relationship. Descartes understood the world as a metaphysical concept based on the idea of extension, which is fundamentally a spatial property, therefore Being is associated with the concept of permanence. Heidegger asserted in *The Introduction to Metaphysics* that "spirituality" is an important aspect of man's existence.

He wrote: "Spirit is neither empty acuity, nor the concomittal play of wit- -nor even reason, but rather spirit is originally attuned, knowing resolution to the essence of Being." (Heidegger, 2014, p 54)

Jacques Derrida claimed in his book *Of Spirit* that spirituality was a central feature of Heidegger's philosophy. (Derrida, 1994, p 79) Descartes' assumptions determined the appearance of phenomena, rather than letting them appear as they really are. For Heidegger, the world is grounded in the way that Dasein exists.

In his essay, 'The Age of the World Picture', Heidegger linked the metaphysics of Descartes to the idea of man as a rational being. (Heidegger, 1977d, p 152) He complained that man conceives of everything in terms of technology, controlling and dominating everything, including man. Cultural values have become associated with objects, and, Heidegger argued, it is only a short step to values becoming only appreciated or understood if represented as objects. (Heidegger, 1977d, p 142)

Heidegger described how our thinking about Being and beings has been transformed by Descartes into representing driving everything into the unity of a particular object. (Heidegger, 1977d, pp 150-151) The connection with technology is fundamental, as Heidegger claimed that: "Machine technology remains up to now the most visible outgrowth of the essence of modern technology, which is identical with the essence of modern metaphysics." (Heidegger, 1977d, p 116)

The fundamental problem of the modern age for Heidegger is that human existence is governed by a very limited view of the world. Because of the emphasis on a world depicted as a picture, thinking can only be driven and guided by representation. Heidegger's contrary view was that we cannot define Dasein's ontological constitution

with the aid of self-consciousness, but instead he built a philosophy around a structure of existence. (Heidegger, 1982, p 174) Heidegger emphasized in *Being and Time*, that man in the world, Dasein, is constituted not simply by self consciousness, but by engagement with other beings. He wrote: "Proximally, it is not 'I' in the sense of my own self that 'am', but rather, the Others, whose way is that of "they". In terms of the "they" and as "they", I am 'given' proximally to myself." (Heidegger, 1962, p 167)

For Heidegger, existence includes a world of other beings, imagination, and temporality. The problem created by Descartes is that he concentrates everything onto the all seeing "I". (Heidegger, 1962, p 167) Michael Zimmerman summarized Heidegger's position: "The self validating subject (the ego is sure of its own existence), which is permanently present because it accompanies all its representations, now becomes the ground and standard for everything. Man assumes God's place in the great chain of Being." (Zimmerman, 1981, p 209)

Heidegger also criticized the depiction of self as a form of unified awareness, which can accompany the representations in 'I think'; he had no doubt that human beings are conscious, but he refused to make such self-consciousness the ground for selfhood. My 'self' is always my openness and involvement with other beings in the world. (Heidegger, 1962, pp 317-325) Western man, as the centre of all representations, has come to look upon existence as necessarily anthropocentric, and naturally, has set about mastering it. (Heidegger, 1962, p 211)

Charles Guignon, pointed out that the crucial decision made by Descartes was to determine the ground of understanding as lying in the self-certainty of the knowing subject. With this shift in the conception of Being, the anthropocentrism and

subjectivism of the modern age began to dominate how man perceives human existence. This is the essence of the technology of the modern age. (Guignon, 1983, pp 11–38)

Kant and the Problem of Technology

Laurent Verseyne argued that Heidegger's critique of Kant was centred on the fact that the self, the thinking subject, becomes the ground for all thought. (Verseyne, 1965, p 66) As a result of Kant's influence, Being has become to be construed as an object for a thinking subject, so that objectivity is now established in the modern age as the ground for Being, certainty and truth. It is in his later work that the important role which Kant's tremendous influence on philosophy and culture has led to the problem of Modern technology. In his book, *What is called Thinking*, Heidegger argued that without Being, then: "Kant's thinking would have no place in which to make even a single statement of his 'Critique of Pure Reason'." (Heidegger, 2004, p 234)

Heidegger here also makes the important point that our pre-occupation with the nature of human existence as being thought of as the control and ordering of nature is the hidden essence of technology. Taylor Carman argued that Heidegger's thinking with respect to his rejection of empiricism as the basis of human existence, was not so much neo- Kantian, but rather "Anti-Kantian through and through". (Carman, 2010, pp 131-127)

In the 'Question Concerning Technology', Heidegger used an example of a silver chalice to illustrate the fallacy of the belief that simple empirical observation will reveal all that is meaningful about such an apparently straightforward object. (Heidegger, 1977a,

pp 6–10) Both the shape and the silver material, are necessary for the construction of the vessel. However, also important are ideas associated with consecration and bestowal, with the silversmith being the agent to fashion the object into the required form. In, 'The Age of the World Picture', Heidegger developed his theme that the structured image of the world is one of man producing and dominating nature, which is only thought of in terms of empirical objects. (Heidegger, 1977, pp 115–151)

Cultural values having become debased, human values are transformed into objects themselves: "Value is the objectification of needs as goals, wrought by a representing self-establishing within the world as a picture." (Heidegger, 1977d, p 142)

Heidegger's concern is that "The essence of consciousness is self consciousness." (Heidegger, 1977c, p 100) Nature appears everywhere to be present as merely a series of objects for technological domination. The whole world is perceived as a result of objectifying nature as a resource to be utilised and man's nature set on dominating all that exists. In his essay on Nietzsche, Heidegger claimed that: "Nature appears everywhere – because willed from out of the essence of Being – as the object of technology." (Heidegger, 1977, p 100)

Foucault in his work on *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, argued that at the 'Cartesian Moment', at the time of Descartes the ideas pertaining to the 'care of the self' were gradually superseded by the overriding importance granted to knowledge and empiricism. The building of Kant's monumental work on metaphysics has according to arguments presented by Heidegger resulted in a distorted world view. This is because of the reliance on empiricism to determine the limits of possible experience. Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* was not a treatise on knowledge, rather a study of how knowledge could be made possible. (Kant, 1993a) It has facilitated an empirical and

limited view of existence, with the result is that we live in a technological age, enframed by technology, yet seemingly oblivious of that fact. The greater our ability to dominate nature, the more it appears that knowledge based on empiricism is not only productive and useful but the only possible way by which we should conduct our lives. According to Heidegger, scientific practice is to a major extent subservient to a technological world-view and it is to science that we now direct our attention in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

Heidegger, Science and Philosophy

The Nature of Thinking

Perhaps Heidegger's attitude to science can be encapsulated by his remark "science does not think".²² (Heidegger, 1993, p 373) In his lecture series entitled: *What is Called Thinking*, Heidegger made it clear that we need to learn to think in order to establish the essence of modern technology, which keeps itself hidden.²³ (Heidegger, 1976, p 26) He argued that science cannot properly reveal the truth about the major elements of what shapes man's existence, such as history, art, poetry, man, language, or God. (Heidegger, 1976, p 33) These subjects are what thinking should really be concerned about.

In his work, *Being and Time*, Heidegger introduces us to the concept of Dasein – a being in the world. (Heidegger, 1962, p 32) In the discussion of Heidegger's views on science, the interpretation which I will employ is one that is due to Einar Øverenget, Dasein refers to a human being, whose life in the world is shaped and determined by existence. (Øverenget, 1998, pp 105-107) The concept of Dasein as a being in the

²² Heidegger wrote: " 'This situation is grounded in the fact that science itself does not think, and cannot think - which is its good fortune, here meaning the assurance of its own appointed course. Science does not think. This is a sobering statement.'" (Heidegger, 1976, p 373)

²³ Heidegger argued that: "This one – track thinking, which is becoming ever more widespread in various shapes, is one of those unsuspected and inconspicuous forms, mentioned earlier, in which the essence of technology assumes dominion – because that essence wills and therefore needs absolute univocity." (Heidegger, 1976, p 26)

world is important, as Heidegger developed the concept of two modes of existence, authentic or inauthentic.

Heidegger posed the question: “- - -what is it that commands us to think?” (Heidegger, 1976, p 122) His answer was being thoughtful, which is an engagement with Being, rather than a process of intellectual activity often associated with calculation. Thinking as a call to becoming closer to Being – an abandonment of homelessness, or estrangement from Being as a manifestation of meaning, requires one to be receptive to new ideas, rather than to engage in attempts to gain knowledge. (Mugerauer, 2008) The problem of homelessness, the modern condition of man, is the real danger from the activities of modern science and technology. The emphasis on knowledge, which dominates the present age, was castigated by Heidegger. The explanation, in Heidegger’s view, lies in the lack of immediate practical usefulness, of an ability to exploit technology: “Thinking does not bring knowledge as do the sciences. Thinking does not produce usable practical wisdom. Thinking solves no cosmic riddles. Thinking does not endow us directly with the power to act.” (Heidegger, 1976, p 159)

In total opposition to Kant, Jarava Mehta agreed with Heidegger’s view that reason is the most pernicious opponent of thinking.²⁴ (Mehta, 1976, p 247) A scientist of course, claims to be a rigorous exponent of the practice of reason, in order to understand the world of nature. However, Trish Glazebrook argued that there is an ordering principle which determines the way in which scientific experiments are

²⁴ Here, Mehta quotes Heidegger’s comment from the *Holzwege*, p247: “Thinking only begins when we have realized that reason, elevated for centuries into a position of supremacy, is the most pertinacious opponent of thinking”. (Mehta, 1976, p 247)

organized. (Glazebrook, 1994, p 250) Nature is projected as behaving in such a way that repeatability and ordering can be observed, it is an artificial and contrived experience. (Glazebrook, 1994, p 242) In *Being and Time*, Heidegger claimed that there are 'no bare facts' to be uncovered. He wrote: "In the mathematical projection of nature, moreover, what is decisive is not primarily the mathematical as such; what is decisive is that this *discloses something a priori*." (Heidegger, 1962, p 414)

In his essay, *Modern Science, Metaphysics, and Mathematics*, Heidegger pursued these ideas. (Heidegger, 1993d, pp 271-305) However, the important conclusion which Heidegger argued in this essay was that a decisive change had occurred in the way that the ordering principle lay behind the various representations in which nature was conceived. Instead of nature and its organization and revealing being within the power of God, Descartes had initiated the development of reason coming to be regarded as having the highest ground. Although a devout Christian himself, Descartes work subsequently displaced God as the foundation of all things, by a Cartesian 'self'. Heidegger concluded in 'The Age of the World Picture: "We first arrive at science as research when and only when truth has been transformed into the certainty of representation. What it is to be is for the first time defined as the objectiveness of representing, and truth is for the first time defined as the certainty of representing, in the metaphysics of Descartes.'" (Heidegger, 1977d, p 127)

Heidegger and the importance of Being for Science

The fundamental ontology for Heidegger was the question of Being, and this is a necessary first step before empirical statements can be made about science.

Heidegger's *Being and Time* contains many of his early ideas on the limitations of science, although its primary focus is the whole question of Being. Heidegger distinguished between the study of being, which is ontological enquiry, and ontical knowledge brought about by the study of entities. The fundamental difference between these two quite different types of study was termed by Heidegger the ontological difference. (Heidegger, 1982, p 319) The understanding of this existence requires an attempt to come to a better relationship to Being. Science, as practiced today, is primarily focussed on objects and their relationships; it is merely a type of secondary, or *ontic* knowledge. In section 7 of *Being and Time*, Heidegger wrote: "Being, as the basic theme of philosophy, is no class or genus of entities; yet it pertains to every entity. - - Being and the structure of Being lie beyond every entity and every possible character." (Heidegger, 1962, p 62)

Modern science ignores the concept of Being as advocated by philosophers such as Heidegger. The pre-Socratic philosopher, Parmenides, was Heidegger's source of inspiration for his work on Being. (Heidegger, 1992, pp 1-6) Heidegger developed the idea that, instead of regarding thinking and Being as essentially the same, instead thought and Being belong together, because the essence of thought is the disclosure of Being. (Heidegger, 1968, pp 199-207) In the *Introduction to Metaphysics*, Heidegger explained that: "All scientific thinking is just a derivative and rigidified form of philosophical thinking. Philosophy never arises from or through science. - - only

poetry is of the same order as philosophical thinking, although thinking and poetry are not identical.” (Heidegger, 2014, p 29)

What Heidegger developed in his philosophy of Being was the view that it could not be regarded simply as a way of presenting, appearance, empirical knowledge, or thinking. Vick in his discussion of Heidegger’s rehabilitation of Parmenides “Being” argued that Heidegger in his account of *physis*, or standing forth, developed the concept that becoming, appearance and thinking are methods by which Being might present itself. (Vick, 1971, p 149) In ‘What Calls for Thinking’, Heidegger answered the question: “What is it that calls us into thought?” as the disclosure of Being, entrusted to us as our essence, by the call of Being. (Heidegger, 1993e, pp 369-391)

Heidegger helpfully clarified what Being is not, in his book, *Basic Concepts*. (Heidegger, 1998, p 57) It is not a person, or an object, rather it seems to denote in Heidegger’s philosophy some kind of relationship between man and the world, which influences human existence – man’s essence. This emphasis on what one might term ‘spiritual qualities’, is reminiscent of the *epimeleia heautou* described by Foucault in *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*.

Heidegger in his essay ‘What is Metaphysics?’ deplored the fact that science does not want to be involved with Being. He wrote: “Science wants to know nothing of the nothing. But even so it is certain that when science tries to express its proper essence it calls upon the nothing for help. It has recourse to what it rejects.” (Heidegger, 1993a, p 96)

Heidegger’s ideas on nothing were surely stimulated by the earlier work of Nietzsche. For example, in *The Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche wrote: “The characteristics which

have been given to the 'true Being' of things, are the characteristics of non-Being, of nothingness—the real world has been constructed from the contradiction of the actual world: an apparent world- -." (Nietzsche, 2008a, p 19)

Jarava Mehta argued that the Aristotelian question "Why is there something, rather than Nothing' enabled Heidegger to explore the question of Being, in a form of enquiry which repudiated an analysis based on pure reason, or scientific data." (Mehta, 1967, pp 316-319) In his essay 'What is Metaphysics?' Heidegger wrote "But in our inquiry concerning the nothing it has by now become manifest that scientific existence is possible only if it holds itself out into the nothing- - -The presumed soberness of mind and superiority of science becomes laughable when it does not take the nothing seriously." (Heidegger, 1993a, p 109)

Heidegger's approach to Science

Heidegger developed a questioning attitude to science. His concern was that since the Enlightenment, all aspects of human existence have become subjected to a manner of discourse couched in terms of reason. In his famous 'Letter on Humanism', Heidegger rather facetiously compared the power of science to the idea of trying to determine the essence of a fish by examining it on dry land. He developed the metaphor that science has stranded thinking onto dry land. He wrote: "Philosophy is hounded by the fear that it loses prestige and validity if it is not a science. Not being a science is taken as a failing that is equivalent to being unscientific. Being, as the element of thinking, is abandoned by the technical interpretation of thinking." (Heidegger, 1993c, p 219)

However, he acknowledged the power of science to reveal empirical facts:

The sciences are fully entitled to their name, which means fields of knowledge, because they have infinitely more knowledge than thinking does. And yet there is another side in every science which that science can never reach - -the essence and essential origin of its sphere, the essence and essential nature origin of the manner which it cultivates, and other things besides. (Heidegger, 1976, p 33)

As time has gone on, reason itself has gradually become to be the prerogative of science with scientific methodology used to substantiate claims about truth. Moral and aesthetic questions are today studied under the framework of psychology or sociology, with these disciplines employing a 'scientific' methodology wherever possible to substantiate their claims. (Kockelmans, 1985, p 3) Instead, according to Heidegger, the correct path to pursue was to initiate an ontological inquiry, before ontic objectification; his entire early philosophy was the investigation of fundamental ontology. Heidegger claimed in the *Introduction to Metaphysics* that all science is in principle merely an aspect of philosophy. (Heidegger, 2014, p 29)

Quite a few philosophers since Heidegger have entertained the notion that technological imperatives are the motivating force behind scientific advances. Don Ihde, for example, in his book *Philosophy of Technology*, argued that modern science was practiced very differently from the Ancient Greeks; today science is embodied in technologies and instruments. (Ihde, 1993, p 74) Heidegger's approach to science was to involve: " - -developing the pre-ontological understanding of beings (which is already necessarily implied by the sciences) in an investigation into and the science of being i.e. ontology." (Heidegger, 1997, p 25)

However, there is a problem for the uncovering of an ontology, because Heidegger admitted that it cannot be established in a purely ontological manner: " - - ontology

has an ontical foundation". (Heidegger, 1982, p 19) In this way, it is Dasein as a being in the world that becomes the initial focus of his enquiry. Thus Dasein is the basis for whom being is an issue. It follows that ontology cannot be established in a purely ontological way. For Heidegger, ontology becomes arcane when an enquiry does not begin within the temporality of Dasein's existence that is dispersed into the ontic field. The critique of Heidegger's with respect to the dangers from science and technology, was based on the anthropocentric nature of human existence which has resulted, with nature and the world being treated as a resource to be used as man dictated. Yet Heidegger himself in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* placed man as the central focus for his ontology. (Heidegger, 1982, p122)

Heidegger's work on science was not directed at a critique of various scientific methodologies. More fundamentally, Heidegger studied how modern science has played a major part in shaping how man in the technological age lives, thinks and views the world. (Heidegger, 1977d, pp 115-154) In *The Question Concerning Technology*, Heidegger makes the rather bold claim that science receives its impetus and direction from technological imperatives. (Heidegger, 1977a, p 21) This is contrary to the view that it has been scientific advances which have led to many and varied technological applications. Science is the servant of technology, not its master, so in order to be in a position to discuss Heidegger's views on technology we will need to explore his ideas on science. In his later work, *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger devoted a section on 'Propositions about Science'. (Heidegger, 1999, pp 100-110) He deplored the total lack of, in terms of his own philosophy, science advancing appropriate questioning about existence. Heidegger claimed that as science serves the imperative of technology, so that every perceived need of man is to be met, the result of which is an existence of total boredom. (Heidegger, 1999, p 109)

Heidegger disputed the notion that science and reason are sufficient to determine the shape of man's existence. The substance of Heidegger's critique was what had become to become accepted in the age of modernity as knowledge and truth. The primary importance which science had given to rational thinking had pictured empirical observations into forms of representation in such a way that Being eludes its grasp. This theme was pursued by Heidegger in his essay, 'The Age of the World Picture'. He wrote: "the fundamental event of the modern age is the conquest of the world as a picture." (Heidegger, 1977d, p 134) He complained that as a result of the picturing of the world as an opportunity to secure objective knowledge and the power which could result, to be explored and become known to science, man himself has become to be simply another subject of knowledge. (Heidegger, 1977d, p 128)

Aesthetics seems to have been for Heidegger the preserve of the non-scientist. Much of science has been developed because of the perceived beauty of the ideas which were being developed; Einstein and Dirac were two physicists who had been captivated by the beauty of the equations which they had developed.²⁵ Also, Heidegger did not consider serendipity as an important type of event which has led to major scientific advances, presumably because this type of consideration would not have conformed with his attack on science as being solely concerned with calculation. Darwin's famous theory of evolution, a major event in the development of biology, had little to do with calculation. Heidegger's philosophy of science seems to have been very much focussed on mathematical physics, to the exclusion of biology.

²⁵ Contrary to many claims of philosophers such as Popper and Carnap, aesthetic judgements do play an important part in scientific endeavour. The physicist, Roger Penrose, has described how beauty and elegance have been driving forces in theoretical research in science. (Penrose, 2005, p 1038) Brian Greene in his book 'The Elegant Universe' discussed the two great theories of twentieth century physics, Einstein's Relativity theory, and Quantum Mechanics. (Greene, 2000, pp 117-131)

Drew Leder summarized the account of science developed by Heidegger in his various writings as having three main concerns. (Leder, 1985, pp 245-256) First of all, the way in which the world is portrayed, as described for example in 'The World as a Picture', restricts and limits our understanding of Being and reality. Secondly, the approach taken by science is grounded in the *cogito*, the 'I think', so that everything is to be founded on the basis of reason alone. Knowledge is the key to understanding, not spiritual or reflective thinking. This is reminiscent of Foucault's arguments in the *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, where the ancient practices of the *epimeleia heautou*, were gradually supplanted by the *gnōthi seauton*.

Thirdly, science on its own, based on empirical knowledge gained by the power of reason, can determine the ground and find an explanation for everything. The belief that science is capable of being able to provide a totality of understanding for everything, with no place for philosophy or religion, has been claimed by scientists such as Richard Dawkins in *The God Delusion*. (Dawkins, 2006) These claims have been addressed more recently by the philosopher Mary Midgley, in her book *Science as Salvation* (Midgley, 1992, pp 1-16) She discusses the 'saving power' of science, as a theme of modernity. The power of domination over nature granted by science and technology has been accepted as proof, that together they alone can grant access to truth. This feature of modernity is of course, what Heidegger deplored.

Philip Kitcher has provided evidence to support the claim by Heidegger that modern science is dependent on technology, not the other way round. He pointed out that over 90% of the world's Biomedical research is directed to only 10% of the world's population. This small proportion of the potential beneficiaries of 'fundamental science', just happen to live in the richest nations. (Kitcher, 2001, pp 51-57)

Heidegger's Confrontation with Heisenberg

Werner Heisenberg was a famous German scientist of the early twentieth-century. He was a leading theoretical physicist who discovered the famous 'Uncertainty Principle'. This scientific 'truth' established that one could not determine at the same time both the position and momentum of an elementary particle (such as an electron) at the same time. Advances in experimental science would make no difference to this result, as it was theoretically impossible for this principle to be violated. Heisenberg's physics was accepted by the scientific community and it is an integral belief to the modern understanding of Quantum Mechanics. As a result of this new viewpoint or representation of the fundamental particles of matter, the subject/object conjunction of science, became blurred. The behaviour of fundamental particles defies 'common sense' and the whole way by which scientists approached their subject in particle physics became subject to a heated debate. Albert Einstein, he who had shocked the whole world with his contention that matter and energy are manifestations of the same being, could not accept this new way of looking at the world. He had a long running dispute with Niels Bohr, one of the founders of Quantum Mechanics, about the nature of reality. (Kumar, 2008, pp 261-299)

Heidegger's views on science were now subjected to a new kind of challenge. The relegation of science to empiricism and dominated by a blinkered view of reality, now had to accommodate the results of scientific endeavour which had forged an abrupt break with the past. Heisenberg was very much a reflective scientist, who engaged in discussions and arguments with Heidegger. In his book entitled *What is a Thing?*

Heidegger claimed that Heisenberg thought about scientific problems in a philosophical way. (Heidegger, 1968, p 67)

A confrontation between Heisenberg and Heidegger was arranged at a meeting in Munich in 1954, which Cathryn Carson described in 'Science as Instrumental Reason'. (Carson, 2010a, pp 483-496) At his lecture, 'The Picture of Nature of Modern Physics', Heisenberg claimed that the recent developments in particle physics had blurred the distinction between science and philosophy. He claimed that the way in which scientists picture the world, had resulted in man simply encountering himself. Carson summarized Heisenberg's position:

- - -Modern physics had already made plain the impossibility of abstracting from human activity. It had gone beyond the Cartesian separation of subject and object, no longer occupying itself with particle and motions in themselves. Rather than nature on its own, its object too, was nature as exposed to human posing of questions. And these changes pointed, finally, to the appropriate course of action to take with respect to technology. (Carson, 2010a, p 494)

Heisenberg went on to claim that although the familiar foundations of science had been undermined, it was in a stronger position than before. The implication for philosophy was to recognise that the foundation of technology had changed with that of science, and philosophers needed to address the new set of circumstances which faced them.

Before moving on to discuss Heidegger's response, it is appropriate to note some points about Heisenberg's position. What is remarkable is how much of Heisenberg's views appeared to resonate with Heidegger's ideas. Both of them had communicated freely over the years. Heisenberg included in his address notions about questioning, the unity of science and philosophy, and the view that man imposes his representation

of the world on science, according to pre-conceived theories. What the challenge was for Heidegger to respond to was the abandonment by physics, science at its most fundamental level, of the Cartesian picture of the world. Hans Seigfried explained the profound repudiation of Cartesianism as follows: “The Cartesian dichotomy of *res extensa* and *res cogitans* – the clear separation of objective processes in space and time - - - and the mind, serves no useful purpose in modern physics.” (Seigfried, 1990, p 629)

Previously, much of Heidegger’s attack on science and technology had been mounted against Cartesianism, and much of the philosophical deference to the power of science to explain the world of nature, which had come about since the work of Descartes. Because the physicist was no longer simply an observer, but a participant, Heisenberg remarked that: “we encounter only ourselves”. In the ‘atomic age’ science had become the servant of an all pervading world view which was dominated by technology.

How would Heidegger respond? Carson described the scene:

When Heidegger entered the auditorium the evening after the physicist the stage was perfectly set’. He took up the idea that science had become transformed by the new relationship between mass, or objects of some kind, and energy. Just as the Cartesian picture of a simple subject/ object relationship had been superseded by the new physics, so too had the direction and power of modern technology. Nature had become a form of standing-reserve (*Bestand*), as a result of a new kind of rationality and power available to man. Heidegger claimed that: ‘—whatever man encounters exists only insofar as it is a human product. This impression calls forth a final decisive aspect. It appears that man encounters everywhere only himself. Heisenberg has pointed out, completely correctly that, that the real must present itself in this way to man today. *Nevertheless, man today in truth no longer anywhere encounters himself, that is, his essence.* (Carson, 2010a, p 494)

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger had argued that the essence of Dasein lies in its existence. (Heidegger, 1962, p 67) Charles Guignon has summarized quite clearly how Heidegger's concept of *essence* evolved in his various writings. It is Dasein's place in the world which embraces the totality of existence, it is "his actual place within a total context". (Guignon, 1983, pp 99-100)

In his essay "The Question Concerning Technology", Heidegger had claimed that: " - - nowhere does man encounter himself, in his *essence*." (Heidegger, 1977a, p 27) This statement is of course, in agreement with his position in the debate with Heisenberg. Seigfried argued that Heidegger's and Heisenberg's philosophy of science are incompatible. (Seigfried, 1990, pp 619-630) This is because Heisenberg claimed that today man in the world only encounters himself, whilst Heidegger had claimed that man today no longer encounters himself. (Heidegger, 1977a, p 27) The crucial point here is that Heidegger was arguing that if man creates technology, transforms the natural world around us, and projects through physics a picture which he has helped to create, then he has no possible way of finding his *essence*.

Both Heisenberg and Heidegger agreed that the world is understood by man in a variety of ways which he has brought about himself, principally by technology, this gives man a form of power which he is reluctant to forgo. The essay 'Science and Reflection', summarizes this perspective. (Heidegger, 1977a, pp 155-182) However, Carson pointed out that Heisenberg was still trapped by a picture which " - - remained in the ordering attitude characteristic of modern science." (Carson, 2010a, p 494) Even though both Heidegger and Heisenberg had corresponded for some years, Heisenberg still seemed to be unappreciative of Heidegger's concerns about the danger from technology.

Trish Glazebrook pointed out that Heidegger's philosophy had not been undermined by the advent of Quantum physics. (Glazebrook, 2000, p 250) Nature is still subject to some kind of mathematical projection and measurement which is arranged in advance by the experimental scientist. As early as the preparation of *Being and Time*, Heidegger had claimed that science depended for much of its power on mathematical ideas. (Heidegger, 1962, p 195) The Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle in fact set out the idea that there must be limits to scientific knowledge.

In her book *Heisenberg and the Atomic Age*, Carson discussed Heisenberg's beliefs in relation to the public sphere. (Carson, 2010b) She claimed that Heisenberg "held on to the notion of disinterested contemplation." (Carson, 2010b, p 454) How can one be disinterested when one has actually set up an experiment? How can one be disinterested if you have projected your own transcendental understanding onto instrumental data? In a section on value judgements Carson referred to a lecture by Heisenberg at which he stated that values cannot come from science. (Carson, 2010b, p 456) As he had previously worked on the production of the atom bomb during World War Two, Heisenberg had time to reflect on the fact that technology could be used for evil purposes.

Both Heisenberg and Heidegger agreed that nature was being treated as a resource to be exploited. This aspect of human existence which treated both man and nature as a standing reserve was termed *Bestand* by Heidegger in his essay 'The Question Concerning Technology'. (Heidegger, 1977a, p 17) The apparent power of science and technology to shape the way in which man in the world chooses to live limits the horizon of possibilities for human existence. This aspect of modernity was termed

'Gestell' by Heidegger. (Heidegger, 1977a, p 21) Science cannot explain or govern how Dasein should live in the world.

Heidegger, Politics and Technology

Heidegger's critique of the way in which political decisions are influenced by the ability of technology to offer unbridled power for politicians to dominate both man and nature, is encapsulated by the following quotation from a lecture on Gestell in 1949:

"Agriculture is now a motorized food industry in essence, the same as the manufacturing of corpses in gas chambers and the extermination camps , the same as the blockading and starving of nations, the same as the manufacture of atom bombs."

(Caputo, 1993, p 132)

John Caputo quotes this comment in a chapter in his book *Demythologizing Heidegger* which portrays Heidegger's views on technology as a scandal. In the 'Question Concerning Technology', Heidegger makes it clear that technology is all encompassing. Both man and nature are a resource to be used as required by those in power. The extermination of the Jews was a political act to serve the interests of the Nazi state. Caputo argued that the development of modern agriculture is benign and cannot be included in a reference to the Holocaust: "It is possible to understand what Heidegger is saying, but I do not believe that it is possible to remove the scandal." (Caputo, 1993, p 142)

I disagree with Caputo's claim that Heidegger's philosophy is scandalous. There are two aspects to Heidegger's wish to raise concerns over modern agricultural practice. He was actually stating a position with respect to his philosophy; it would have been ridiculous if he had argued that technology was 'all encompassing' and then allowed

for exceptions. His claim, which was repeated again and again in different essays apart from 'The Question Concerning Technology', was that both man and nature become simply resources to be used by those in power. The most important aspect to Heidegger's remarks is that nature itself has no function other than to be exploited for man's own use in a calculative way.²⁶

Let us also consider Caputo's criticisms in terms of modern history. His point is related to the assumption that modern agriculture is beneficial. This surely can be called into question. In North America the native population was subjugated and put into 'reservations' in the nineteenth-century. The justification for this was that the new white settlers could feed an immigrant population only by using the land in ways which were practiced in Europe. In the nineteenth-century Britain arranged for the Highland Clearances in order to farm sheep, and in 1876 in Tasmania the last native Aborigine was hanged by the British, the disappearance of the native population is rarely spoken of as 'genocide'. The island was now subjected to the import of European farming methods. In the Amazonian Basin, deforestation has led to many people having their lives disrupted and great hardship. The slave trade in the West Indies was required for the cultivation of sugar. The majority of these slaves died an early death. The historian Patricia Fara said of those people who had been displaced as: "Subordinated at the time, indigenous people have been further suppressed by being silenced in the historical record." (Fara, 2012, p 18)

To describe these events as benign is plainly questionable-people were displaced and sometimes even killed for the benefit of those in power. Because one particular group might benefit oneself from modern agriculture does not make it right. I think this

²⁶ Today, there is more concern about the environment, for example the Norwegian philosopher, Arne Naess, is a leading member of the 'Deep Ecology' movement. (Naess, 2006, pp 466-470)

reaction to Heidegger's philosophy illustrates his lament that we cannot think in any other way than living under the framework of technology.

Paul Feyerabend, in his book *Farewell to Reason*, argued that: " - - -the sciences of today are business enterprises, run on business principles. Research in large institutions is not guided by Truth and Reason, but by the most rewarding fashion and the great minds of today universally turn to where the money is - - -" (Feyerabend, 1987, p 102)

Mahon O'Brien has said that Heidegger failed to " - - -outline how his philosophical vision would result in political action". (O'Brien, 2011, p 173) He did not mean this point as a criticism. However, Heidegger did claim that poetry could release man from a technological framework. This is explored in the final chapter of this thesis. In his confrontation with Heidegger's philosophy, Foucault explored the link between technology and the development of the political power. This is discussed in the chapter on Governmentality and Biopolitics.

Conclusion

The concerns of Heidegger with respect to science and technology are fully consistent with the proposal by Foucault that the 'Cartesian Moment' has led to the world view that scientific and technological knowledge should solely determine how we should conduct ourselves in the world and relate to the world of nature.

Many of these ideas of Heidegger's on Being and metaphysics are so complex and controversial, that this account can only be perfunctory. However, it should be clear that Heidegger's views on Being, ontology and science were remarkable and

revolutionary and form the basis of his concerns over technology. Many philosophers of technology have argued that Heidegger's views on Being are too ambiguous and put forward at such a high level of abstraction to be of any value in relation to the practice of science and technology. The philosopher Andrew Feenberg, is a good example of this kind of critic. (Feenberg, 2003, pp 662- 664) I believe that in fact Heidegger described a possible way out of the 'oblivion of Being' through the power of *poiesis*, the use of human imagination to reveal new possibilities for human existence. It is the development of new ways of representing man's place in the world that *poiesis* can reveal new possibilities for human existence, which Heidegger termed *Ereignis*. This aspect of Heidegger's work will be discussed in the last chapter on Heidegger's poetics.

CHAPTER 7

Foucault, Science and Philosophy

Heidegger' Influence on Foucault's Philosophy of Science

Samuel Ijsseling made an important claim that Heidegger's essay, the 'Age of the World Picture', raised the very questions which Foucault had addressed in all of his work.²⁷ (Ijsseling, 1986, pp 413-424) For both Foucault and Heidegger the history of the subjectifying and objectifying the human being are important themes. An interesting point made by Ijsseling is that: "Foucault's work is an attempt at describing and thinking what for Heidegger has been the task of thinking." (Ijsseling, 1986, p 416)

Foucault, in a similar way to Heidegger, was perfectly willing to accord science its place as a domain of knowledge. What he objected to was a way of thinking which was dominated by calculation based primarily on knowledge—the *gnōthi seauton*. This objection is resonant of the 'enframing' which Heidegger discussed in his essay on 'The Question Concerning Technology'.

In *Society Must Be Defended*, Foucault challenged those who claim to have access to the truth, because of the claims of scientific discourse: "What types of knowledge are you trying to disqualify when you say that you are a science? What speaking subject, what subject of experience and knowledge are you trying to minimize when you say 'I

²⁷ Ijsseling wrote: 'I don't think it can be denied that the text with the greatest importance on Foucault is the 'Age of the World Picture' from Holzwege. In that essay Heidegger describes the modern age in which the world is *re-presented*. The modern age is the time of representation. Reality becomes an object; this goes hand in hand with the *subjectifying* and *objectifying* of man. Important in this respect also is Heidegger's claim that the modern sciences have taken on all the characteristics of institutions. - - - "The Age of the World Picture" deals with the very questions that structure and organize the whole network of Foucault's texts." (Ijsseling, 1986, p 416)

“speak this discourse, I am speaking a scientific discourse, I am a scientist’.” (Foucault, 2004,b p 10)

Allan Megill made the point that by describing his work as ‘discourse’, Foucault felt free to engage in a questioning style of challenging the established way of thinking.²⁸ (Megill, 1987, p 231) Foucault himself defined science as a specific transformation within various types of discourse which has only developed since the eighteenth century. (Foucault, 2004b, p 182) In terms of Foucault’s ideas of the relationship between various scientific and social and political practices, Hacking defined Foucault’s meaning of the term ‘discourse’ as a system of possibilities for a web of belief. (Hacking, 1984, p 48) The practice of scientific investigation had taken place from the time of the ancient Greeks and before. However, ‘science’ has emerged today as a totalizing discipline of knowledge which claims to possess all those elements which should determine our ‘way of life’. Foucault claimed that modern science is: “The disciplinarization of knowledges, and its polymorphous singularity, now leads to a phenomenon and a constraint that is now an integral part of our society. We call it ‘science’.” (Foucault, 2004, p 182)

Foucault’s theme was that someone who speaks with the authority of ‘science’ expects to have their discourse to be allowed to go unchallenged. It has replaced religion as an ideology:

The problem is now: Who is speaking, are they qualified to speak, at what level is the statement situated, what set can it be fitted into, and how and to what

²⁸ Megill wrote further: ‘Foucault is engaged in undermining the whole structure of thinking, a whole approach to “reality”, that he sees as oppressively uncreative. By focussing on “discourse” as the final end of his analysis, he aims to bypass this rigidifying mind-set, much as Nietzsche sought to do in declaring reality itself to be a human creation.’ (Megill, 1987, p 231) It is interesting to note that Megill’s comments about Nietzsche stating that man creates reality, corresponds to some of the modern theories of Quantum Mechanics.

extent does it conform to other forms and technologies of knowledge? (Foucault, 2004b, p 184)

Foucault described the importance of transformations in belief, ideas and practices, of which science was only an example of this kind of activity and analysis. Foucault in 'The Ethics of Care of the Self as a Practice of Freedom' explained how science has become an ideology. (Foucault, 1988, pp 1 - 20) This has developed since the period of time which Foucault had termed 'The Cartesian Moment' in *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*. (Foucault, 2005, p 14) In many types of discourse today, 'science' is often invoked as the sole arbiter of what is held to be true. Foucault considered this type of activity a kind of game, 'a game of truth'. This kind of game is not one which is frivolous or one which is entertaining; it is a serious and important feature of modern discourse. Foucault defined this kind of 'game' as "an ensemble of procedures which lead to a certain result, which can be considered in function of its principles, and the rules of procedures, as valid or not, winner or loser." (Foucault, 1988b, p 16)

Foucault's Archaeology of Science

In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* Foucault argued that science is not a privileged method of determining what is to be held to be true, it is merely another example of a domain of knowledge with rifts in beliefs, ideas and practices. (Foucault, 2002, pp 196-215) These rifts have occurred in all types of human existence, for example, theology, politics and morality. His interest in science was not one of trying to uncover its philosophical pre-suppositions, but rather to "investigate the system of formation of its objects, its types of enunciation, its concepts, its theoretical choices. It is to treat it as one practice among others." (Foucault, 2002, p 205)

Foucault studied the various strategies and techniques for subjectification which were developed by the mechanisms and power of science. As science has progressed in its ability to enable man to dominate and control nature, more and more emphasis has been placed on the 'knowledge of the self', as opposed to the 'care of the self'. As Heidegger pointed out in 'The Age of the World Picture', one needs to think beyond the limits which govern the Cartesian outlook of modern science. Foucault claimed that with his work in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, he had tried to develop a method of meeting this need. This book was not an attempt to outline how science should be practiced. Instead, Foucault was engaged, according to Megill, in discrediting the modern belief that only 'science' should govern human behaviour: "He is concerned with an essentially Dionysian project - that of smashing science altogether." (Megill, 1987, p 231)

In his *Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault distinguished three types of archaeological analysis with respect to science. (Foucault, 2002, pp 208-212) The first type he termed 'formalization', a process by which mathematicians themselves historically re-define the position and importance of existing bodies of knowledge in the light of new discoveries. An example which he quoted was the re-interpretation of the ancient mathematician, Diophantus. In the light of much later work in the nineteenth-century by French mathematicians such as Galois, the earlier work was held to be more original and wide-ranging in its applications than originally thought.

The second type of analysis is the study of how it came about that a concept has been granted the special status of being a 'scientific concept'. Many scientists and philosophers such as Carnap, have regarded only scientific knowledge to have any real value. The investigation of the practices associated with the inclusion or exclusion of

certain categories of knowledge Foucault claimed, was an epistemological history of the sciences.

The third type of archaeological analysis is the study of discursive practices in the interaction between cultural practices, and scientific knowledge. He explained: “One is trying to reveal between positivities, knowledge, epistemological figures, and sciences, a whole set of differences, relations, gaps, shifts, independencies, autonomies, and the way in which they articulate their own historicities on one another.” (Foucault, 2002, p 210)

This analysis is how Foucault formulated his concept of an *episteme*, in this case a representation of how the world is governed, or at least influenced, by science.

The *Episteme*

Foucault developed the idea of investigating his ideas in an historical fashion, by the way of conceiving an *episteme*. An *episteme* for Foucault was a term used to denote a group of ideas or concepts which led for a time to a certain unity of discursive practices. In his explanation of his approaches to archaeology, Foucault wrote in his preface to *The Order of Things*:

- - - what I am attempting to bring to light is the epistemological field, the *episteme*, in which knowledge, envisaged apart from all criteria having reference to its rational value or to its objective forms, grounds its positivity and thereby manifests a history, not of growing perfection, but rather that of its conditions of possibility. (Foucault, 1994b, p xxii)

Foucault explained in the introduction that how an *episteme* became to become established, was an investigation of a time when a range of possibilities were available to a culture at a particular time. He described an *episteme* as a world-view, a cultural

perspective which is common to most of mankind. (Foucault, 2003, p 211) For a particular culture, we can understand the present rather better, if we understand that at various times in the past, there were different 'ways of life' which could have been selected. Of course, Foucault, as a result of these investigations, which he termed genealogy, has written about the different aspects of power relations, so that he has been categorized as a philosopher of power. His interest always was the human subject; power relations were merely an important aspect of this focus for his work.

In his essay, 'The Question Concerning Technology', Heidegger wrote: "From earliest times until Plato the word *technē* is linked with the word *episteme*. Both words are names for knowing in the widest sense. They mean to be entirely at home in something, to understand and be expert in it. Such knowing provides an opening up." (Heidegger, 1977a, p 12)

In 'The Age of the World Picture', Heidegger describes a vision of the world which seems to be close to Foucault's idea of an *episteme*. He wrote:

Modern science simultaneously establishes itself and differentiates itself in its projection of object-spheres. These projection plans are developed by means of a corresponding methodology, which is made secure through rigor. Projection and rigor, methodology and ongoing activity, mutually requiring one another, constitute the essence of modern science, transform science into research. (Heidegger, 1977d, p 126)

What Heidegger described here was what Foucault termed a 'totality of relations' between the sciences and their methods. The aim of Heidegger's questioning, was, accepting the fact that science exists, to try to establish what activity constituted a science. This question is not one of questioning the legitimacy of science, instead Foucault's approach was to how 'science' is culturally an accepted feature of our 'way

of life'. His interest was to explore how and why someone speaks with the authority of science. (Foucault, 2004, p 12)

In an essay on Georges Canguilhem, Hans-Jorg Rheinberger claimed that Foucault's philosophy was constructed along the lines that the fruits of scientific research should be considered as cultural-historical beliefs which are subject to correction and change over time. (Rheinberger, 2005, pp 187-197) In Canguilhem's view the sciences are nurtured from the social and political environment in which the work is conducted; it is science that is dependent on the politics of the time, rather than everything about existence being dependent on science. It is, of course, these social and political forces which utilized science for various 'games of truth'.

One of the chief topics of Canguilhem's work on the history of science, was concerned with the famous dictum of the French nineteenth century doctor, Claude Bernard which was that the human body does everything in its power to maintain the 'internal environment'. Thus Bernard postulated that the true functions of all the many manifestations of all kinds of processes within the body was to keep the internal environment constant and in good working order. This principle became one of the fundamental guiding principles behind the subsequent development of human physiology. This is surely a good example of Foucault's notion of an over-arching idea which he termed an *episteme*. Claude Bernard's principle really was a great paradigm for the science of medicine as it provided an idea of fundamental organization which helped researchers to uncover details of the circulation of the blood, feed-back mechanisms, and an explanation as to why both the lungs and the kidneys are important in maintaining the constant acidity of the blood, for example. But these benefits, according to Heidegger, came at a price, that of making man into an object of

study who had to conform to prescribed patterns of behaviour which had been determined by science. This conformity which resulted as a result of the advancing field of science, has led to what Heidegger termed: 'enframing'. This 'enframing' describes a limited picture of the possibilities for human existence. The more successful a theory such as Claude Bernard's is subsequently found to be, the more it comes to be believed that science alone, can provide all that is necessary to shape human existence.

Docile Bodies and Surveillance

Foucault discussed the ways by which scientific advances had been utilised to create more effective forms of discipline in order to regulate, monitor and supervise what he termed 'docile bodies'. Foucault, in a chapter on Panopticism in his book, *Discipline and Punish*, described how Jeremy Bentham's concept of an all seeing eye has become established as a fundamental feature of the design and operation of all prisons.

(Foucault, 1991, pp 195-228) He also developed the association between science as a field of knowledge, and the operation of power within political systems. Bentham was of course, one of the early advocates of a form of ethical and political philosophy which has become known as Utilitarianism.

Let us consider briefly Foucault's own work on Panopticism. He was engaged in his early work in studying the type of institution which has been developed on panoptic principles, such as hospitals, asylums, medicine, as well as the modern prison system. Foucault claimed that all these power structures: "--all tend, like the prison, to exercise a power of normalization." (Foucault, 1991, p 308) Foucault defined power

as: “the multiplicity of force relations in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization.” (Foucault, 1978, p 92)

Unlike Rousseau, Foucault opposed the type of society where everything is visible to whoever holds positions of authority and power. (Megill, 1987, p 243) The disciplinary power associated with panopticism was described by Foucault: “Hence the major effect of the Panopticon is to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assumes the automatic functioning of power”. (Foucault, 1991 p 201)

Although both the prison and the nineteenth-century workhouse in Britain were built on Jeremy Bentham’s architectural ideas, Foucault in his work argued that modern disciplinary systems, both those of the state and the workplace, are exerted by continual surveillance without those made visible in all their actions being aware of what is actually being done to them. The disciplinary power is exercised by those who are invisible on those who are made visible. It is this continual observation which “maintains the disciplined individual in his subjection”. (Foucault, 1991, p 187) In his essay ‘An Unmasking of the Human Sciences: Foucault’ Habermas described Foucault’s critique of the human sciences as “the new, disciplinary violence that dominates modernity. They owe this to the fact that the penetrating gaze of the human scientist can occupy that centralised space of the panopticon from which one can look without being seen”. (Habermas, 1990b, p 245)

The principle of continuous surveillance which has been developed from panopticism was explored by Foucault in his work on governmentality and is a major theme in the chapter on Governmentality and Biopolitics.

The Principle of 'Ordering' Determined by Technology

As an example of Heidegger's 'ordering', Foucault described how scientific ideas had led to more 'efficient' ways of deploying troops. He quoted Guibert, an army strategist: "In the eyes of most soldiers, tactics are only a branch of the vast science of war: for me, they are this science itself because they teach how to constitute troops, order them, move them, get them to fight." (Foucault, 1991, pp 167 - 168)

Foucault studied the ways by which various forms of discipline were developed in the most efficient manner by utilising the fruits of scientific knowledge. He identified four techniques for disciplinary practices. The first is one of drawing up tables, or performance schedules, work procedures which should be adhered to, and so on. The second technique prescribes movements or some actions which are carried out in a prescribed manner. Thirdly, exercises, or training programmes are prescribed in order to facilitate the skill level of the individual or individuals. Finally, there exists what Foucault termed 'tactics'. These are procedures protocols and arrangement for the deployment, organization, and operation of numbers of individuals in complex ways, in order to accomplish some task. (Foucault, 1991, p 167)

Gutting's Classification of Foucault's work on Scientific Cultural Practices

Gary Gutting identified four rules which Foucault seemed to employ in his work. (Gutting, 1989, p 234) The first type are rules for the formation of subjects, a theme with which Heidegger had been concerned. For example, those who are deemed to be mad or criminal by society, those who offend socially constructed norms, or are deemed to be deviant by some kind of authority e.g. a psychiatrist. Another person may have symptoms of a mental illness, but have a physical condition such as

thyrotoxicosis, which produces mental symptoms as a result of a physical disease, which could be treated surgically. This kind of formation of an object for study belongs to different kinds of discursive practices where they meet.

The second type of rule which Foucault studied is the right of certain individuals to make authoritative statements. For example, only a properly trained scientist could be in a position to give authoritative estimations of the danger from radio-active fall out after the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. (Gutting, 1989, p 235) The third rule is concerned with issues concerned with transformation and presentation, e.g. rules concerned with the manipulation of data to be presented in an acceptable statistical form, or rules and conventions of translation of one language into another. (Gutting, 1989, pp 236-7) Finally, Foucault identified both the concepts and strategies which have been employed in order to establish 'truths' which today govern how we live. An example quoted by Gutting, is the theory of evolution in biology. (Gutting, 1989, p 237) Scientific ideas in Foucault's philosophy are mediated by a wide variety of different factors, with a complex interplay between them. Gutting encapsulated Foucault's early work as establishing that: "-- a science is just one, localized formation in the "epistemological site" that is a discursive formation. Science neither supersedes, nor exhausts the discursive formation that is its background." (Gutting, 1989, p 252)

In the preface to *The Order of Things*, Foucault claimed that scientists were driven by unconscious desires and forces, which are random and complex. His own work on science and its effects on society was aimed at revealing a truth which would otherwise remain hidden, (what Heidegger termed *alētheia*). (Foucault, 1994d, pp 125 - 163) Foucault acknowledged that both Nietzsche and Heidegger were profound influences on the development of his philosophical thought. One can regard

Foucault's oeuvre as responding to Heidegger's challenge about the danger to man from science and technology.

In *Society Must Be Defended*, Foucault said that his genealogies are antisciences. His purpose was to fight the claims of those who claimed to possess the sole sovereignty to the truth in any discourse which claims to be 'scientific', e.g. some Marxist theorists. (Foucault, 2004, p 9) Foucault did not dispute the validity of certain claims to knowledge along a path which involved objects, and the world of nature. His field of interest was the genealogy of power associated with the growth in scientific knowledge and its application by technology. (Foucault, 2004, p 178)

Foucault made the intriguing argument that 'science' as we know it today, is a fairly recent phenomenon, he claimed that: "Science in the singular did not exist before the eighteenth-century." (Foucault, 2004, p 182) In the same passage he stated quite categorically that: "Philosophy no longer has any part to play within science and the processes of knowledge." Thus a modern philosopher such as Foucault accepted the notion that science has taken over from philosophy as the principle, or perhaps the only, domain of knowledge for making sense of our existence in the world. This is interesting and relevant as this view is a claim which has been made by many scientists themselves. Of course, Heidegger was very much opposed to modernity and the resulting notion that science has usurped the scope of philosophy.

Megill argued that one can consider much of Foucault's early work on Medicine, Prisons, Hospitals and psychiatry as a reaction to the political and social structures put in place by "scientific rationality". (Megill, 1987) Foucault's work on prisons had an effect on changing attitudes to the prolonged incarceration of those deemed to be

insane. Megill has pointed out that Foucault's early work could be looked upon as continuing Heidegger's attack on science and technology. Heidegger's essay: 'Science and Reflection,' corresponded in respect to its theme, on psychiatry, to Foucault's whole approach to psychiatry in his *History of Madness*. (Megill, 1987, p 367)

Heidegger's concern about psychiatry discussed in 'Science and Reflection' was that it treated the human patient as an object to be studied and supervised, observed and perhaps controlled in some way. (Heidegger, 1977e, pp 174-5)

In *The Birth of the Clinic*, Foucault argued that as the science of medicine developed, it provided a new type of knowledge, which could allow an inversion of the structure of human existence being dominated by finitude. (Foucault, 2007d, p 245) What modern medicine offers man is health rather than the prospect of salvation after death. The procedures, examinations, treatments, surgery, etc., all subject man to his finitude, but usually also provides the prospect of death being indefinitely delayed.

Foucault's Concept of Scientific Truth

Leida Alcoff has pointed out that Foucault's approach to the archaeology of the sciences is reminiscent of Thomas Kuhn's approach to the history of science with its employment of paradigms which change, evolved and sometimes become discarded as new paradigms take their place. (Alcoff, 2005, p 211) Three reasons were advanced by Alcoff to explain why Foucault has not been considered to be a philosopher of science. (Alcoff, 2005, p 212) First of all, rather than the natural sciences, such as physics, Foucault worked mainly in the field of the human sciences, where there often is no experimental or statistical data to produce what are often held to be 'unchallengeable facts'. Secondly, Foucault has been categorized as a member of a

particular French postmodern philosophy circle. Finally, in many circles, Foucault has been thought of as a philosopher solely concerned with power relationships, perhaps because much of his later work has only recently been translated into English. Although someone like Heidegger conceived of technology and science as being inter-related, with the deployment of power being regarded as a principle problem, scientists and their historians typically consider science to be concerned only with facts and rationality.

At a meeting in Paris, Foucault was asked about the philosophy of Karl Popper (1902-1994) with respect to the operation of power. Published later as an essay 'What is Critique?' Foucault disputed the notion that there is "good science", which is true and does not facilitate the misuse of power, and "bad science", which does. (Foucault, 2007a, p 72) Surely, Foucault is correct, as atomic power derived from Einstein's work on the transformation of matter into energy, can be utilized for atomic bombs or for peaceful purposes. In an essay entitled 'Subjectivity and Truth', Foucault made it quite clear that in his previous work he had not tried to carry out a history of the physical sciences, but rather those which purported to describe a kind of scientific knowledge of the subject. (Foucault, 2007c, p 151)

In an interesting debate, Foucault challenged the idea that science has led to a pre-ordained march towards ultimate truths. He argued with the linguist Noam Chomsky that Science instead had been an activity which was concerned broadly with transformations, often termed 'progress', which was often regarded as being immutable if presented as a 'science'. Foucault questioned the immutability of scientific knowledge. He argued in 'Human Nature: Justice versus Power':

Take, as an example, animal and plant classifications. How often have they not been rewritten since the middle ages by completely different rules: by symbolism, by natural history, by comparative anatomy, by the theory of evolution. Each time this rewriting makes the knowledge completely different in its functions, in its economy, in its internal relations. (Chomsky and Foucault, 2006, p 26)

Chomsky was forced to agree with Foucault's arguments. If one thinks of physics, Newton's corpuscular theory of light held sway, to be superseded by Thomas Young's theory of wave projection. Each way of regarding the behaviour of light has a certain degree of validity within its own sphere of internal relations, just as Foucault argued was true of scientific beliefs. Chomsky said:

I agree with your conception of scientific progress; that is, I don't think that scientific progress is simply a matter of the new accumulated addition of new knowledge and new theories and so on. Rather, I think that it has this sort of jagged pattern that you describe, forgetting certain problems and leaping to new theories- - -. (Chomsky and Foucault, 2006, p 27)

Foucault claimed that the greater influence on his views on the philosophy of science was not Bachelard, but rather Gorges Canguihem. (Foucault, 1998, p 465) Both Bachelard and Canguihem were important philosophers of science in the early twentieth century. Foucault argued in 'Life: Experience and Science' that the various stages of scientific knowledge can only be considered rigorously from the viewpoint of an epistemologist. (Foucault, 1988, pp 465 -78) A historian will trace back the various steps along the way to the establishment of a well defined and accepted scientific 'truth'. However, along the way there will have been many paradigms which were accepted at the time, played a part in the development of the science, but have been either lost to history, or more probably, ignored. Foucault, taking inspiration from Canguilhem, put forward the notion that error has been an important factor in the accumulation of what we term to be knowledge or truth. Rather subversively perhaps,

he posed the question: "Should not the whole theory of the subject be reformulated, seeing that knowledge, rather than opening up the truth of the world, is deeply rooted in the "errors" of life?" (Foucault, 1998, p 477)

Foucault, Science and Art

Without mentioning Heidegger by name, Foucault confronted the search for the 'saving power' alluded to in Hölderlin's poetry in 'The Question Concerning Technology' (Heidegger, 1977a, p 42) Foucault argued in *The Birth of the Clinic* that:

The importance of Bichat, Jackson and Freud in European culture does not prove that they were philosophers as well as doctors, but that, in this culture, medical thought is fully engaged in the philosophical status of man. This medical experience is therefore akin even to a lyrical experience that his language sought, from Hölderlin to Rilke. (Foucault, 2007d, p 245)

This passage is clearly a reference to Heidegger's championing of poetry. (In, for example his essay 'What are Poets For?' (Heidegger, 1971a, pp 91-142) Hölderlin is mentioned in the very first paragraph of this essay, and Rilke in the last.) Both Heidegger and Foucault discussed the value of art in their work; for Heidegger the search for truth is served by poetry, such as that of Hölderlin and Rilke. Megill believed that Foucault did not share Heidegger's confidence in looking to the poets for guidance. (Megill, 1987, pp 221-223) Instead, Foucault believed that art could illuminate the truth, but sometimes also mislead us to a false way of thinking. Jana Sawacki seems to agree that art and poetry had little part to play in Foucault's ideas about the forms of power wielded in a technological society: "Unlike Heidegger, the later Foucault does not find in art a source of redemption. To the contrary, it is simply another arena for struggle." (Sawacki, 2003, p 71)

Conclusion

Foucault repudiated the philosophical tradition which has developed since the time of Plato, which has embraced reason as being the guiding principle of philosophy. He instead believed that human existence is determined by chance, with reason merely modulating the vicissitudes of life.

However, Foucault was an important contributor to the philosophy of science, in an almost unique way, because he tried to show how science was used to change and develop existing power relationships. e.g. his work in psychiatry. The large mental hospitals (asylums) where those who were deemed to be insane were often incarcerated for life, have almost all closed. The scientific rationality which governed their establishment has been undermined, and Foucault was a leading figure who contributed to this change. Foucault did not believe that power was exercised only from above, but also from below, often in unexpected and multi-faceted ways.

I agree with Alcoff's view, that what Foucault attempted to do, inspired by Heidegger, Nietzsche and Canguilhem, was to challenge a number of various systems of beliefs and practices which today are accepted as being rational, inevitable and ethical; because they were supposedly built on the secure foundations of 'science'. (Alcoff, 2005, p 222) Foucault's work has demonstrated many examples where the implicit prominence which has been given to the *gnōthi seauton* has resulted in the practices associated with the *epimeleia heautou* having become superseded.

CHAPTER 8

Biopolitics

The Enlightenment

We have now reached a point in this thesis where there is a need to correlate a number of themes together in relation to Foucault's contention that the disappearance of the practice of the *epimeleia heautou* represented a rupture with previous 'ways of life'. Towards the end of the 1970s, Foucault gave three series of lectures on the themes of governmentality and biopolitics at the Collège de France. Foucault addressed issues related to topics which have already been discussed, such as salvation, technology, science, panopticism, ethics, power relations and economics. So an account of Foucault's work on governmentality and the nation state may illuminate the question which Heidegger had posed in 'The Question Concerning Technology', which was 'what is the *essence* of technology?' (Heidegger, 1977a, p 23) Could this question be related to the historical period known as the Enlightenment, a time which corresponded with the disappearance of the *epimeleia heautou*?²⁹

James Bohman defined the Enlightenment as "Freedom, in which human powers and capacities are no longer put in the service of 'idols' or self-imposed tutelage, but can be brought to bear upon the comprehensive goal of human emancipation." (Bohman, 2005, p 353)

²⁹ The Enlightenment is generally regarded as an historical period which is associated with man being enabled to escape from dogma and enjoy greater limits to freedom. Yet Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer claimed that "- -the fully enlightened earth radiates disaster triumphant." (Adorno and Horkheimer, 2008, p 1)

This 'self-imposed tutelage' surely corresponds to the former practice of *epimeleia heautou*, which Foucault described in *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*. (Foucault, 2005) The Enlightenment is important because it is associated with the growth of science and technology, which Heidegger had claimed is the greatest danger to mankind. Kant, Heidegger and Foucault all had important things to say about the Enlightenment and its impact on our way of life. Allan Megill has claimed that today " - - the whole structure of the social sciences and humanities is based on Enlightenment propositions." (Megill, 1987, p 340)

In his essay 'What is Enlightenment?' Foucault described the Enlightenment as an historical process, 'a set of events', rather than simply an age of modernity founded upon reason and freedom. (Foucault, 1997c, p 313) He believed that the Enlightenment was merely one, of a number of cultural and philosophical themes, which could be included within the blanket term, 'humanism'. (Foucault, 1997c, p 314) Marxism and existentialism were examples of 'humanism' which Foucault thought represented too wide a range of disparate themes to "serve as an axis for reflection," (Foucault, 1997c, p 314)

In a lecture in 1983 'The Art of Telling the Truth' Foucault had posed the following question "What is happening today? What is happening now?" (Foucault, 1990, p 87) He was discussing the question in terms of a period of history which is generally believed to be both culturally and scientifically advanced, with most people in the world enjoying much a greater degree of freedom than in previous epochs. This view was strongly expressed by the American philosopher and historian, Francis Fukuyama at the end of the 1990's in a series of lectures, and later in a book entitled *The End of History*. (Fukuyama, 2006) His thesis was that a global economy, allied to the military

power of America, heralded a new era of prosperity and peace; in effect, the culmination of centuries of Enlightenment thinking.

Foucault himself was very much aware of Kant's influence, and as we have seen, he wrote an essay on the subject of the Enlightenment to discuss Kant's views and also the status of the Enlightenment phenomenon in the late twentieth century.

(Foucault, 1997c, pp 303-319) In his essay 'What is Enlightenment?' Foucault pointed out that in 1784 Kant had discussed this question in an obscure periodical. Foucault thought that this little known work by Kant was extremely important; in fact, Foucault considered that Kant's famous three Critiques represented a monumental attempt to address the nature of the Enlightenment. (Foucault, 1997c, p 309) In his essay on Kant, Foucault began by stressing how important Kant had been in recognising the importance of the Enlightenment in our culture. Kant believed that mankind existed in the eighteenth century in a state of immaturity, the age of Enlightenment had ushered in an opportunity to move forward to some new 'way of life', based on reason.

Foucault argued that there are positive features of the Enlightenment which are to be welcomed. For him, the most important features are the philosophical kind of enquiry developed by Kant, which examines the problems of man's relationship to the world and his own constitution as an autonomous subject. (Foucault, 1997c, p 312) He concluded his essay on the Enlightenment by putting forward his opinion that we are still living in a state of immaturity, the positive aspects of life which had been promoted by the advocates of the Enlightenment, are still some way off. Foucault argued that the Enlightenment should not be simply regarded as culture which merely accumulates knowledge, or is a superior 'way of life' to the past. The true value of the

Enlightenment is that it embodies a cultural critique which continually questions man's place in the world, a critical ontology of ourselves. (Foucault, 1997c, p 319)

The areas of study which Foucault thought philosophy should take in the light of critique of the present include: knowledge, power and ethics. (Foucault, 1997c, p 318)

This critique should address the issues which had arisen from Kant's questioning of the way out of man's immaturity. This immaturity is a 'way of life' which always forces us to accept someone else's authority over our actions; reason alone, not spiritual or religious influences, should guide our 'way of life'. Foucault in his early work had discussed how, in some ways, mankind is entering into another state of immaturity, e.g. when our conscience lies at someone else's direction, or the care of our bodies is surrendered completely to the medical profession. (Foucault, 1997c, p 305)

A more recent picture of the Enlightenment has been given by Alasdair MacIntyre, a philosopher well known for his championing of what has come to be known as 'Virtue Ethics'. His book is one of those tracts which have become influential in the development of Virtue Ethics as an alternative moral theory to Utilitarianism.

(MacIntyre, 1985) What is interesting is that he developed a series of arguments to justify his contention that the Enlightenment project was doomed to fail. (MacIntyre, 1985, pp 51-62) An example is his opposition to Kant's moral law couched in terms of the categorical imperative published in *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals* "Act only according to the maxim whereby you can at the same time, will that it should become a universal law." (Kant, 1993b, p 30)

MacIntyre questioned which person or persons should have the power to determine these categorical imperatives. On what basis can one know which imperative will lead

to the truth and which to falsehood? One can, like Megill, characterize Macintyre's views on the Enlightenment, as an epoch which has failed to advance its aims of promoting freedom and justice. Megill cited the French Revolution, born to some degree out of Enlightenment thinking, as an example of the failure of the Enlightenment. (Megill, 1987, p 6)

Heidegger, of course, had considered the Enlightenment as a time which had come to be dominated by calculative thinking and technology. Michael Zimmerman has summarized Heidegger's position as one which believes that man has lost his freedom and 'The Age of Reason' has led to nihilism. (Zimmerman, 1986, p 19) This pessimistic outlook is not universal. In contrast to Heidegger's views, the modern political philosopher, Jürgen Habermas, has described the Enlightenment as having enabled man in the modern age to have enjoyed an improved opportunities for cultural life and self-expression compared with previous generations (Habermas, 1990b, p 345). Views more akin to those of Heidegger's are those of the philosophers Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, leading philosophers of the mid - twentieth century of what became to be known colloquially as the Frankfurt School. They claimed that the "Enlightenment had extinguished any trace of its own self – consciousness". (Adorno and Horkheimer, 2008, p 4) Mankind today, accepts the widespread belief that we are privileged to live in the current epoch, without giving the matter any serious thought. Perhaps surprisingly, Adorno and Horkheimer believed that the development of totalitarian regimes in Europe in the mid-twentieth century was a manifestation of Enlightenment thinking; calculation, technology and power, which had been sought and deployed in the name of reason. A major pernicious influence, in their view was that of Kant. (Adorno and Horkheimer, 2008, pp 81-119)

Horkheimer in *The Eclipse of Reason*, criticised the Enlightenment as the development of a way of life which has come to encompass mankind's desire to dominate nature, a viewpoint which Heidegger shared. (Horkheimer, 2004) As man is the superior being in the world, today a way of life which is predicated on ideas related to domination seem to be natural, virtuous and just. Horkheimer claimed that "The disease of reason is that reason was born from man's urge to dominate nature and the 'recovery' depends on insight into the nature of the original disease, not on the cure of the latest symptoms." (Horkheimer, 2004, p 119)

However, it must be remembered that the views of both Adorno and Horkheimer were very much coloured by the events in Europe before and during the Second World War, those events surely could give little support to mankind having become more 'enlightened', or having reach an age of maturity. A central feature of the critiques of the Enlightenment by Adorno and Horkheimer was that the development of technology had concurrently produced new methods of domination. (Adorno and Horkheimer, 2008, pp 3-42)³⁰

Cultural attitudes have been so influenced by Enlightenment thinking, that it has become almost impossible to challenge them. Although many philosophers have based their criticisms about the Enlightenment in terms of concerns about science and technology, Bohman instead argued that the fundamental force behind the Enlightenment is the use of reason to determine action in political institutions such as

³⁰Robert Pippin described the viewpoint of philosophers who are hostile to the Enlightenment. The modern goal of achieving a total mastery of nature includes man, who as a result is subject to: "--- domination, control and psychological repression ---". (Pippin, 1995, p 48)

democracies. (Bohman, 2005, p 356)³¹ Technological developments and their widespread application have depended upon political structures. The improved living standards which have been brought about by technology have been so welcomed by people that the concomitant erosion of freedom has been ignored. These improved living standards, better health and so on, were termed by Foucault as 'biopolitics', and a major focus of attention for the state or government concerned with the population. As we shall see, Foucault believed that various types of governmentality had been developed to facilitate the technological mechanisms at its disposal with respect to biopolitics. The main concerns of state officials, was not simply altruistic, but concerned primarily with the development and maintenance of power. Johanna Oksala argued that the Enlightenment represented for Foucault "a set of beliefs and assumptions, on which he could base his work on power, domination and governmentality." (Oksala, 2009, pp 184-187) These new types of domination were described by Day Wong as "invisible, dispersed, secret and autonomous." (Wong, 2005, p 62)

Foucault rejected what he termed "the blackmail of the Enlightenment". (Foucault, 1997c, pp 312-313)³² He refused to accept the principle that one should either

³¹Bohman wrote: " - - it is surprising that few defenders of Enlightenment follow Concordet in arguing that Enlightenment is brought about not by science, but by the use of reason in democratic institutions." If one accepts this perspective, then the essence of technology could well lie within political power relationships, rather than from the accumulation of scientific knowledge, or technological developments.

³² In philosophical circles, the debate between Foucault and the German philosopher Habermas has aroused controversy on many sides. Yet this debate is peripheral to the search for the essence of technology in Foucault's work. In any case the debate is left unfinished because of Foucault's untimely early death. Wong has summarized Foucault's distinct perspective as follows: " - - the philosophical ethos of the permanent critique of our historical era implies a refusal of the blackmail of the Enlightenment, that is, either accept the Enlightenment and remain within its tradition, or else you try to escape from its principles of rationality. One can find this blackmail of Enlightenment underlying Habermas's accusation of Foucault. Habermas assumes that Foucault adopts an anti-Enlightenment position in the earlier work by criticising the Enlightenment and trying to escape from its principles of rationality, whereas in his later essays on Kant, Foucault shifts to a pro-Enlightenment position and seeks to remain within its tradition. Habermas concludes that Foucault's positions are inconsistent - - -

support the Enlightenment as a cultural phenomenon, or oppose it. Instead, he saw it as an historical event, which our age is part of; as something endowed with cultural, political and philosophical aspects which are ripe for analysis. This approach to the Enlightenment was novel. (Rajchman, 1985, p 79) Rather than seeking to develop a critical theory to support a theoretical framework, an approach taken by Habermas, Foucault started from the point of view that theories are found to be the basis of different 'ways of life' and political action. (Rajchman, 1985, p 79) Examples of this approach are to be found in Foucault's critique of Adam Smith's economic theory of 'the market', and the profound influence of utilitarianism on democratic governments. To develop these themes, It is now appropriate to discuss Foucault's late work presented in three lecture courses at the Collège de France in the late 1970's; on governmentality, biopolitics and the state. These lectures were based on an approach to historical events which he had termed archaeology and genealogy. (Foucault, 2004b, pp 10-11)³³

Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France 1975 -1976

In this course, Foucault developed the theme that modern power was exercised along medieval notions of sovereignty together with a more sophisticated judicial system. Rather than science being regarded as the natural and inevitable source of power in this age of Enlightenment, Foucault argued that reason as the justification for the operation of power was the crucial element; science and technology had given tools to

Habermas's conclusion not only reveals the blackmail of the Enlightenment, but also his overlooking Foucault's intention to subvert these simplistic alternatives and binary oppositions." (Wong, 2005, p 66)

³³ Foucault had of course described both archaeology and genealogy in previous works such as *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and *The Order of Things*. However he summed up these approaches quite succinctly as: "Archaeology is the method specific to local discursivities, and genealogy is the tactic which, once it has described these local discursivities, brings into play the desubjugated knowledges that have been released from them. That just about sums up the overall project." (Foucault, 2004b, pp 10-11)

those in government for new forms of power to be exercised. This new form of power was termed “disciplinary power”. (Foucault, 2004b, p 38) Foucault gave as an example the practice of medicine, where the behaviour of people in society has become regulated by social norms of conduct which accept medical authority, and in many respects the allocation of medical resources is controlled or regulated by the state. (Foucault, 2004b, p 39)

Foucault’s genealogy of power relationships challenged the belief that today the Enlightenment and modern society have slowly but steadily advanced to an improved new way of life, which is founded on rationality. It is a perspective which is radically different from Fukuyama’s celebration of living during a time in the final phase of the Enlightenment. (Fukuyama, 2006) Foucault questioned an historical approach which assumes a gradual development of rationality. (Foucault, 2004b, pp 15-19)

Historically, the most important way in which power was applied was by the use of force by a state or some agency of government. Foucault turned Clausewitz’s aphorism on its head by claiming that: “politics is the continuation of war by other means.” (Foucault, 2004b, p 165) Foucault argued that war is merely an extreme feature of the deployment of political will by force. A nation state does not suspend its application of power wherever it can, when peace comes about.

Later in his course, Foucault sought to investigate whether forces of domination can explain power relationships in the age of Enlightenment. The notion that it is only forces of domination which can explain all aspects of power relations, was termed by Foucault as the ‘repressive hypothesis.’ This concept embodies a form of power which is juridical in practice, with laws which have been determined on the historical basis of some form of sovereign authority. What Foucault developed was the idea that after

the sixteenth century, around the time of 'the Cartesian Moment', some new mechanisms of power came into play. These technologies of power were developed, and are still developing, to control, manipulate, and observe human beings in order to maximise the value of their time and labour. (Foucault, 2004b, p 35) The old types of power which had been exercised in the use or threat of force, is today embodied in the law. (Foucault, 2004b, p 37)

In *Society must be Defended*, Foucault introduced the idea of biopolitics as being a major development in our modern human 'way of life'. He wrote "It is these processes – the birth rate, the mortality rate, longevity, and so on – together with a whole series of related economic and political problems, which in the second half of the eighteenth century, became 'Biopolitics' first objects of knowledge and then targets its seeks to control." (Foucault, 2004, p 243)

The state assumed the role of being responsible to pursue any avenue which could be used to enhance the welfare and productivity of its citizens, and as a result, increase the economic wealth and political control of the population. Thus what has developed is a new type of disciplinary power. In *The Birth of the Clinic*, and *Discipline and Society*, Foucault had explored how some of these mechanisms of power had come about. These new power relationships are not restricted to totalitarian regimes; democratic and religious organizations have been involved as well. The distinction made between Fascism and Democratic regimes, was in Foucault's view, exaggerated. In his essay: 'The Subject and Power', Foucault claimed that all the technological systems of control, surveillance, rewards, and punishment linked to productivity were features of both democratic and totalitarian regimes. The distinguishing features of fascism and Stalinism from democratic regimes is " their own internal madness".

(Foucault, 2000c, p 328) One of the most important beliefs which Foucault introduced in his 1975 -1976 Lecture Course was the idea that political theories based on juridical models of power and equality should be abandoned. These have been predicated on the old principle of sovereign power, which science and technology have strengthened. However, Foucault believed that power relationships are complex, and he explored his ideas on governmentality in his next two Lecture courses at the Collège de France.

Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977-1978

In this course, Foucault defined the state as “ a firm domination over peoples”.

(Foucault, 2009, p 237) The state is not simply a country or geographical area, its continued existence involves some kind of governance over a population. In a lecture in March 1978, Foucault developed his ideas related to the way in which the state has developed its power and scale of operations since the 16C. For the modern state governance includes power relations with the growth of the population, its health and material well-being, and the occupation and leisure activities of the people, including those involving religion. (Foucault, 2009, p 328) Today, the modern state is concerned with all aspects of a citizen’s ‘form of life’; it has taken on the role of providing salvation for mankind, but for an existence here on earth. The ‘form of life’ which is espoused by modern man is that of a sheep-fold. (Foucault, 2009, p 130)

Foucault described a number of ways by which the power of religious authority was diminished. (Foucault, 2009, pp 204-210) He claimed that God’s pastoral government of the world was severely limited during the period from 1580 to 1660. (Foucault, 2009, p 236) This is a very interesting observation, as it corresponds very well to the time of ‘The Cartesian moment’, when the *epimeleia heautou* was became of less

importance to an individual's 'way of life', as Foucault was later to argue in the *Hermeneutics of the Subject*. Concurrent with the erosion of pastoral power, there came into being a new form of governmentality. This new form of governance was termed by Foucault as the *raison d'Etat*. (Foucault, 2009, p 238)³⁴ The principle of power enthroned in the King, began to be ceded to a new form of power which was more complex and determined by the intellect and the power of reason, rather than simply a sovereign power which had been granted by birth. This period since the seventeenth century is the time when reason has been used to justify all types of political action and the application of the power of the state over individuals.

Heidegger in 'The Question Concerning Technology' had asked for the answer to the question "What is the essence of Technology"? (Heidegger, 1977a, p 4) Foucault argued that 'reason' has become to be regarded in the age of modernity as the *essence* of things. He wrote:

Reason is therefore a means of knowledge, but it is also something that allows the will to adjust itself to what it knows, that is to say, to adjust itself to the very essence of things. So reason will be the essence of things, knowledge of the reason of things, and that kind of force that enables, and up to a point obliges [the will] to go to the very essence of things. (Foucault, 2009, p 256)

The acquisition of knowledge and the justification for the wielding of power by reference to the authority of 'reason' is utilised by politicians. This has led, in Foucault's view, to the development of the police state.

³⁴ The *Raison d'Etat* was defined by Foucault as " - - the type of rationality that will allow the maintenance and preservation of the state once it has been founded, in its daily functioning, in its everyday management." (Foucault, 2009, p 238)

The Police State or the History of the Present

What Foucault seemed to believe was that the idea of a police state does not simply encompass some notion of abject domination by the power of the state. Instead, man is the object of new kinds of knowledge, in respect of a subject's relationship to the state. (Foucault, 2009, p 322) Man in the modern age has become to be regarded simply as a 'thing'. This was of course, one of Heidegger's objections to the modern development and operation of technology. However, this relationship includes many elements concerned with the health and security of the citizens of the state. This feature of this new type of governmentality, was termed by Foucault as biopolitics. Because of this type of power exerted by the modern state is regarded as virtuous and well intentioned, the increasing surveillance of all aspects of a citizen's life is generally accepted, or even welcomed as part of the measures to promote public safety or health. Foucault contrasted these interests of the modern state with the old operation of sovereign power exercised by a King, which was principally concerned both with the ability to raise an army and to raise revenue.

Foucault outlined five areas of knowledge which are of interest to a police state. These include the number of citizens, their material circumstances, their health, their social activities and the economic circumstances surrounding individuals' goods, organizations; markets, trade and wealth creation. (Foucault, 2009, p 323-325) The extent to which the modern police state seeks to govern is immense, as Foucault said: " - -what police has to govern, its fundamental object is all the forms of - -men's co-existence with each other." (Foucault, 2009, p 326)

Foucault described a number of new aspects of governmentality, which he associated with the development of the power of the modern state. By concerning itself with all aspects of life of its citizens, the state has acquired many new responsibilities, and has needed to develop management responsibilities which were unknown in the time when a King ruled the realm. (Foucault, 2009, pp 322-325)

Secondly, the new methods of governance were, or claimed to be, 'scientific'; hence a state could claim that any opposition to its use of power could be deemed to be irrational. As science advanced, the knowledge gained could be utilised by the state to accomplish its aims. A degree of legitimacy has developed between scientific knowledge and technology, and the operation of power conducted on behalf of its citizens by the officials of the state.

Thirdly, the new practice of governmentality has to take account of how the population lives and seek to ameliorate any problem which might be harmful, e.g. poor sanitation, poor health care, etc. Instead of a population simply existing to be ordered about and controlled, the state has increasingly assumed a degree of responsibility for the welfare of its citizens.

The fourth objective of the new model of the state was the regulation of people's activity, particularly with respect to work and perceived idleness. Although Foucault does not mention Bentham's panopticon at this point, one can see how his model of how society should be under constant surveillance could be developed. In his early works on prisons, schools, hospitals, Foucault had explored how Bentham's ideas were put into practice.

Finally, the object of concern for the state was to take an interest and facilitate economic activity. However, what had to be accepted was that some events which take place are not subject to state control and that there exist boundaries to the application of state power, e.g. natural disasters. Here, Foucault also included economic events, which anticipate his later discussions of the theories of the economist Adam Smith. An important implication for the facilitation of economic activity, meant that much of the business world and trade would have to be left to continue with the minimum of interference. Hence, Foucault maintained that what emerged here as a result of this new perspective is a new kind of freedom. He said: "Failing to respect freedom is not only an abuse of rights with regard to the law, it is above all ignorance of how to govern properly." (Foucault, 2009, p 353)

As a result of his work, Foucault argued that, rather than the modern state having grown by simply extending the power of negative forces exerted by means of domination, the modern practices of governments involve a limited role in economic management, but a major one in relation to the welfare and control of the citizens. The need to allow markets to function without much interference in order to allow wealth to be created necessitated new domains of freedom. These new functions and powers of government were additional to the existing authority wielded by an army or the police. (Foucault, 2009, p 354) Some of these activities of the state can be encapsulated in the term 'pastoral care', whereby the salvation offered by religious authority has, to some degree, become supplanted by the welfare role of the modern state.

The project which Foucault had been addressing in his lectures on *Security, Territory, Population* was "a matter of asking what type of practice governmentality is, inasmuch

as it has effects of objectification and veridiction regarding men constituting themselves as subjects.” (Foucault, 2009, p 387)

In his final lecture in the series *Security, Territory, Population*, Foucault developed this theme of how, in order to be efficient, in terms of managing the economy, an omnipresent governing state seeks today to manage all aspects of every citizen’s life. (Foucault, 2009, pp 356-357)

Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France 1978 – 1979

Perhaps rather surprisingly, rather than exploring the various facets of government which related to biopolitics, Foucault devoted his main discussion in these Lectures to the subject of the modern role of the state with respect to power. He regarded ‘governmentality’ as a grid for examining power relations. (Foucault, 2008, p 186)

What Foucault claimed that he wanted to do in his investigation of governmentality, was to examine the topic from a completely different point of view from the usual approaches which had come to be accepted in political philosophy. In this series of lectures, Foucault discussed how an individual subject is constituted by political action. One could describe his approach as one of maintaining that: ‘the personal is political’.

He claimed that what has evolved during the Enlightenment is: “An omnipotent government, a government from which nothing escapes, a government which conforms to the rule of right, and a government which nevertheless respects the specificity of the economy, will be a government that manages civil society, the nation, society, the social.” (Foucault, 2008, p 296)

Two main streams of power have been developed in the modern state. First of all, the evolution of the traditional absolute power of sovereignty which often led to domination. Secondly, a new type of power was developed which Foucault termed Biopolitics. This new form of disciplinary power superficially appears to be concerned benevolently with the health and welfare of its citizens. However, these different foundations of power can be used to further both these seemingly quite different objectives; for example surveillance can be used to control the behaviour of the population along the principles which lay behind Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon. Towards the end of his life, Bentham had proposed that the Panopticon should be the basis for the operation and maintenance of the political will; "the very formula of government". (Foucault, 2008, p 67) At the same time as carrying out this type of function, active surveillance can be promulgated as benefiting the security of every citizen. So, quite often the domains of power which the modern state has developed often share similar features such as "its omnipotence, its bureaucratic development, the state with the seeds of fascism which it contains, the state's inherent violence beneath its social welfare paternalism - - -." (Foucault, 2008, pp 186-187) The state tends to seek to increase its own power, and the welfare state is an example of this phenomenon, just as much as that of totalitarian regimes. (Foucault, 2008, p 187)

Early in his career, Foucault had developed a method of philosophical enquiry to reveal how the regimes of truth have become established with respect to topics such as madness, medicine, delinquency and sexuality. (Foucault, 2008, p 19) He disputed the Anglo-Saxon view which regards utilitarianism as an important modern moral theory of philosophy. For Foucault, utilitarianism is not important as a principle of ethics, but instead for the modern practice of using some of the principles of utilitarianism as the justification for the technology of government. (Foucault, 2008, p 41) The principles

underlying many of the practices of a modern state rely on the principle of utility – but in respect of what is deemed best for the interests of the state, rather than on some great moral principle, whether not it was enunciated by philosophers such as Bentham, Mill, or Sidgwick.³⁵ However, the development of the principle of utility has had the effect of limiting the power of the apparatus of the state. These effects are illustrated by the necessity for certain aspects of freedom for the principle of a market economy to work. (Foucault, 2008, p 44)

There are two distinct concepts of freedom which have evolved, according to Foucault. (Foucault, 2008, pp 41-50) The first concept is contained within the juridical concept of freedom – one is free insofar that the action does not break the law. The other notion of freedom is the independence of the governed from the power of the state.

He does point out that these two notions of freedom have meant that there has become established “two conceptions of freedom and law, I do not mean two separate, distinct, incompatible, contradictory, and mutually exclusive systems, but two heterogeneous procedures, forms of coherence and ways of doing things.” (Foucault, 2008, p 42)

These two seemingly contradictory operations of the power of the state were chillingly portrayed in three iconic novels of the twentieth century. The novels written by George Orwell, *1984* and *Animal Farm*, illustrate the aspect of power which Foucault termed ‘Sovereign Power’. Technology has been used to control and supervise the

³⁵ The famous economist, J M Keynes surely anticipated Foucault’s philosophical position. He held, that, notwithstanding appearances to the contrary, our lives are governed by theories which are usually, incomplete, ill understood, or just plain wrong. He wrote: “Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slave of some defunct economist. Madmen in authority, who hear voices in the air, are distilling their frenzy from a few years back.” (Keynes, 1957, p 383)

citizens. A quite different viewpoint was of Aldous Huxley, who wrote *Brave New World* in 1932. (Huxley, 2007) In the type of society which he depicted, every human being lives in an age of safety, boredom, and with a complete rejection of spiritual values. Surely, this society is one which corresponds to Foucault's analysis of biopolitics? The major factor dominating the lives of everyone is material comfort and well-being. Society is concerned solely with material values, with a vision, or as Heidegger would have put it, a 'world picture', based only on empiricism. The advances in science and technology, facilitates the surveillance and control of the citizens. What is remarkable is that Huxley wrote *Brave New World* before Heidegger's polemical writings about the dangers from empiricism and a society which he lamented was one where: "Everywhere we remain unfree and chained to technology, whether we passionately affirm or deny it." (Heidegger, 1977a, p 4)

The Eclipse of the *Epimeleia Heautou*

The most interesting aspect of Foucault's 1978 – 1979 lecture course is the description of the replacement of God as the source of all authority for our modern 'way of life' by the 'invisible hand' of the market. According to Foucault, since the eighteenth century, what has evolved is " -- a state under the supervision of the market, rather than a market supervised by the state." (Foucault, 2008, p 116) This interesting viewpoint made by Foucault, who died in 1984, was very prescient. At the end of 2011, both Greece and Italy have had to bow to the power of the market, and democratically elected politicians have been effectively removed from office.

The continuation of the sovereign use of power by the state concurrently with the growth of capitalism and market economies in the West, should have made the modern state all-powerful. However, as a result of the new forms of power which have been established by market mechanisms, Foucault described how the nation state has had to surrender some of its power. (Foucault, 2008, p 268) A major agent of social change has been the 'invisible hand' of Adam Smith. In his treatise, *The Wealth of Nations*, Smith reasoned that self – interest should be regarded as a virtue, because of the favourable outcomes which should ensue. Smith argued that self interest in a business man is a virtue in a famous passage from book iv of *The Wealth of Nations* " By preferring the support of domestick to that of foreign industry , he intends only his own security; and by directing that industry in such a manner as its produce may be of the greater value, he intends only his own gain, and he is in this as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention." (Smith, 1976, p 456)

Foucault described this state of affairs as quite bizarre, as the modern economic practices at work and of business leads a modern subject to "live within a totality which eludes him and which nevertheless founds the rationality of egoistic choices." (Foucault, 2008, p 278)

Foucault described in *The Birth of Biopolitics*, how the absolute belief in the efficacy and good will of this 'invisible hand' have assumed the role of Malebranche's God. Nicolas Malebranche (1638 - 1715) was an important French philosopher of the seventeenth century. In his philosophy, God was supreme, good and responsible for all things. Foucault's concept of likening Malebranche's God to the invisible hand of Smith is compelling: "Smith's invisible hand would be something like Malebranche's

God, whose intelligible exterior would not be occupied by lines, surfaces and bodies; but by merchants, ships carriages and roads.” (Foucault, 2008 pp 278-279)

In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant described the mode of life which was based on deism in the eighteenth century. He wrote: “In other words, reason does not assure us of the objective validity of the concept; it merely gives us the idea of something, on which the supreme and necessary unity of all experience is based.” (Kant, 1993a, A674/B702) This link between deism and governmentality, is an example of what Foucault described as the ‘Christianization of the state’. Deism is an act of faith, upon which the principle of the market and ‘the invisible hand’, surely depend as well. This link between deism and economic theory is not altogether new, as John Maynard Keynes made a similar point in the 1930’s. (Keynes, 1957, pp 350-351)³⁶ This invisible hand is an abstract notion, metaphysical in character, yet rational human beings, claiming that their behaviour is solely to be guided by reason, place absolute faith in this abstract entity. In an earlier chapter, we described what Foucault termed ‘The Christianization of the State’. The way by which the Christian God was usurped as a source of spiritual authority was not fully mapped out, yet here Foucault’s reference to Malebranche opens up an extremely powerful explanation of the development of a secular society in the West.

Adam Smith’s arguments in his work on economics included the notion that, for the good of all, some individuals would have to suffer. The system could not be designed which would promote overall prosperity yet ensure that some individuals and their

³⁶ The link between classical economic theory and religious belief was made by Keynes in 1935. He wrote in his “General Theory of Employment” a critique of the notion that economic theories should be accepted as a matter of faith: “One recurs to the analogy between the sway of the classical school of economic theory and that of certain religions. For it is a far greater exercise of the potency of an idea to exorcise the obvious, than to introduce into men’s common notions, the recondite and remote.” (Keynes, 1957, pp 350-351)

families would not have to endure real hardship. Foucault's point was that Malebranche had accepted that the Christian God knew that evil things happened on earth, and that God had no real choice but to allow these things to happen. The benevolence of such a god is often difficult for a mere mortal to appreciate. What Malebranche did was to engage in the well worn debate amongst philosophers, the problem of evil, and free will. He corresponded with Leibniz and Arnaud on this topic. Nadler argued that both Malebranche and Leibniz believed that the God of Christianity allowed evil and bad things to happen on earth. (Nadler, 1994, p 578) The measure of agreement between them was summed up by Nadler:

They agree that God could (theoretically) diminish or even eliminate apparent imperfections in the world - the quantity of pain and unhappiness or inconvenience - but only by interfering with the laws and thus violating the simplicity of the divine ways (as Malebranche would put it) or by detracting from the overall and maximum metaphysical goodness or perfection of the world (as Leibniz would say). (Nadler, 1994, p 578)

Malebranche's approach encapsulates the idea of the simplicity of a method resulting in the best possible outcome. God is not responsible for each individual action or evil which occurs in the world, he allows free will; but what he established was a world wherein the best possible outcomes could take place. This analysis by Malebranche enables man to be 'free' to make his own decisions in life, yet is subject to a power which is both omniscient and omnipotent. This is analogous to the 'invisible hand', which allows unfavourable outcomes for some people, for the greater good overall. Malebranche's God is both omnipotent and omniscient. It should now be clear why Foucault invoked the idea of Malebranche's God to explain the blind acceptance, total faith, and passivity towards an impersonal, abstract source of power, a hidden entity: 'the invisible hand'.

The conduct of economic affairs under the aegis of ‘the invisible hand’, has meant that a modern ‘way of life’ is subject to two related requirements of Adam Smith’s theories. In order to benefit society as a whole, everyone is supposed to follow selfishly what they perceive to be in their own best interest. As Foucault rather acidly put it: “Being in the dark and the blindness of all the economic agents are absolutely necessary.” (Foucault, 2009, p 279) The invisibility of the process means that no individual economic agent in the age of Modernity, should pursue, or even consider, the common good. (Foucault, 2008, p 280) Although Foucault does not pursue the Christianization of the state to any great extent in *The Birth of Biopolitics*, he does make the point that one of the effects of the form of capitalism advocated by Adam Smith is the production of a ‘form of life’ where the power and influence of the Christian God is usurped and operationalised by the ‘invisible hand’ of the market.

Adam Smith responded to some criticisms of his *Wealth of Nations*, by publishing a text on ethics – *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. His treatise consisted of an historical analysis of actions which could be of benefit to the whole community. Adam Smith criticised the principle of self-love in “any degree or duration”. (Smith, 2009, p 356) This notion is inimical to the ancient ideas of *epimeleia heautou*, where the necessity to care of oneself was a fundamental requirement before one could attend to the needs of others as a good citizen.

The three main components of virtue for Adam Smith, were benevolence, propriety and prudence. (Smith, 2009, pp 358-359) He argued that virtue is to be found in utility. (Smith, 2009, p 359) I have found nothing in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, to undermine the economic ideas in *The Wealth of Nations*. Indeed the following passage

is consistent with the operation of the 'invisible hand' with virtue, because of the possible growth in the overall prosperity for a community:

In directing all our actions to promote the greatest possible good, in submitting all inferior affections to the desire of the general happiness of mankind, in regarding oneself but as one of the many, whose prosperity was to be pursued no further than it was consistent with, or conducive to that of the whole, consisted the perfection of virtue. (Smith, 2009, p 356)

Acknowledging the widespread acceptance and practice of Adam Smith's ideas, Foucault argued that the modern state sets its sights upon various courses of action which are determined by the value placed on utility. He claimed that the fundamental question of liberalism is "What is the utility value of government where exchange determines the true value of things?" (Foucault, 2008a, p 46) Rather than the principles of political philosophies such as utilitarianism ushering in a number of improved 'ways of life', Foucault argued that they had been usurped to serve the interests of those who wielded power. He claimed that "The state only exists for itself and in relation to itself- -". (Foucault, 2008, p 5)³⁷

For a market to function efficiently there must be some degree of freedom for trade and commerce to take place without interference. As a result, Western nation states have had to accept the fact that some traditional powers of the state must be curtailed. Foucault claimed that: "We have then the conditions for the creation for a formidable body of legislation and an incredible range of governmental interventions

³⁷ The absence of a moral framework for a form of life which is to be determined by utility, was criticized by Hannah Arendt, who was a pupil of Heidegger. In her work: *The Human Condition*, she claimed that: "utility generates meaninglessness." (Arendt, 1998, p 155) She argued that both man and nature are treated as a mere means because of the notion of utility, and as a result have no value in themselves. (Arendt, 1988, p 155) The philosophy behind utilitarian principles, is in Arendt's view, consistent with Kant's philosophy, because it regards nature as merely in existence to serve man. (Arendt, 1988, p 156) The philosopher Eina Øverenget agreed with Arendt's views, and stated that: "it is impossible to locate the origination of meaning in a utilitarian world." (Øverenget, 2001, p 203)

to guarantee production of freedom needed in order to govern.” (Foucault, 2008, pp 64-65)

Magnus Hornqvist has argued that Foucault had not engaged sufficiently with the notion that it is the people themselves who demand the benefits of biopolitics.

(Hornqvist, 2010) The new forms of disciplinary power had been welcomed by those who are subjects of the state. What politician would propose: poorer sanitation, poor Health Care, poorer food supplies and of inferior quality, intermittent water supplies etc? On the whole, the increased power of the state through the development of biopolitics, utilising scientific knowledge and new technology, has been demanded by the population of a country as it has become industrialised. In ‘The Question Concerning Technology’, Heidegger asked why man is ‘enframed’ by technology? (Heidegger, 1977a, p 20) An important feature which has resulted from Foucault’s work is that to a degree, this ‘enframing’ has been demanded by man himself.

Salvation in the after – life, has been superceded by the provision of a material kind of salvation by the development of biopolitics here on earth. Lackey pointed out that the Christian subject: “- - -conceives of itself in relation to an imagined metaphysical reality.” (Lackey, 2009, p 131

In his book on Heidegger, Andrew Haas argued that the essence of technology cannot be reduced to: “a unitary essence”. (Haas, 2007, p 154)³⁸ I agree with this view, and would only claim that the ‘invisible hand’, a metaphysical concept due to Adam Smith, is merely one of a multiplicity of phenomena associated with Heidegger’s concerns

³⁸ Haas put forward an argument that the ancient Greek idea of trying to establish the essence of something, is irrelevant for technology which manifests itself in so many different ways. Haas wrote: “The multiplicity of technology cannot be reduced to a single essence. The smallest and largest difference between technology as a means-to-an-end, and an end-in-itself, between building an art or shelter, or the Rhine as a power source or as a source of inspiration cannot be maintained- - - “. (Haas, 2007, p 154)

about the origins of 'enframing' and the essence of technology. The modern 'way of life', has to some extent, abandoned the practices associated with the 'care of the self' – the *epimeleia heautou*. Foucault's work on governmentality has, I believe, explained some of the major influences on our 'way of life' as a result of this development.

However, 'the market' is an imaginary construct which has great impact on economic, social and political life in the West. It has more in common with the practices associated with Deism, as both Foucault and Keynes have pointed out, than is commonly supposed.

Foucault also pointed out two more important features of a world trying to conduct human affairs under the aegis of a market philosophy. Because each actor must ignore the outcomes of his actions on everyone else, the outcomes of economic events which will result are unpredictable. (Foucault, 2008, pp 279-290) Of course, Governments, individuals and companies will try to manipulate the market – a perfect market economy exists only in theory. The second feature which he described was that the state must allow certain aspects of freedom for the market to operate properly. The net result is: “- - -economic rationality is not only surrounded by, but founded on the unknowability of the whole process.” (Foucault, 2008, p 282)

It is worth pointing out that Foucault was well aware of the economic benefits of a market driven economy over an authoritarian one. He contrasted the collapse of the French colonies in America with the experience of the British. The French arrived with grand plans and projects which failed; the British merely set about embarking on trade based on the principles of self – interest and those colonies thrived. (Foucault, 2008, p 281)

Conclusion

Foucault's approach to philosophy was not one which sought to uncover one overarching explanation for historical events. (Foucault, 1987, p 14) He always argued that there are always a multiplicity of effects, connections, and counterveiling forces in all of his work on the archaeology and genealogy of knowledge. His explanations of the emergence of some new forms of disciplinary power based on biopolitics are original and compelling. Heidegger posed the question: "what is the essence of technology?" He made the point that it is nothing technological. I believe that In *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Foucault has uncovered one of the major factors in the essence of modern technology. Because so many of the features of Theodicy are common to both the Christian way of life and the new economic model of the market, there has been a gradual process of evolution so that the prospect of salvation in the after – life has become superseded by the provision of a material kind of salvation by the development of biopolitics here on earth.

"Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world." (Shelley, 1994, p 661)

CHAPTER 9

Heidegger's Poetics and the Hermeneutics of the Subject

Introduction

This concluding chapter will discuss Foucault's work on the creation of the modern subject in terms of Heidegger's poetics and will link such a discussion to the central arguments and ideas examined in the previous chapters. This thesis set out to connect Heidegger's lament about the modern 'oblivion of Being' to the 'Cartesian Moment' when the precept to 'know yourself' became the predominant mode of existence instead of the practices associated with 'take care of yourself' in the seventeenth-century. This turning away from Being has, in Heidegger's view, been associated with the development of man's 'enframing' (Gestell) by modern technology since the seventeenth-century. (Heidegger, 1977a, p 22)

This chapter contains five parts. First of all, in Part 1 a brief account of Heidegger's poetics is given. This serves as an introduction in Part 2 to Heidegger's philosophy of homelessness and its connection to a 'way of life' which is dominated by technology, and dependent on the primary importance given to knowledge (chapter 6). Part 3 is concerned with Heidegger's poetic thinking on man seeking out a 'homecoming' from the oblivion of Being.

In Part 4 there is a discussion of the 'Cartesian Moment' with respect to the development of the modern age in which Heidegger claimed that we are 'enframed' by technology. Finally, Part 5 considers the possible link between the virtual

abandonment of the ancient practices of 'care of the self' and Heidegger's lament that in modernity man has become oblivious of any thought of Being.

Part 1: Heidegger's Poetics

Heidegger argued that we must have a poetic relationship with all that exists. This theme was elaborated by Heidegger in his essay 'Poetically Man Dwells', which is a phrase quoted by him from a late poem by Hölderlin 'In Lovely Blue'. This dwelling is not related to living conditions, but instead a mode of life which embraced an authentic mode of existence. (Heidegger, 1971c, pp 213–229) Heidegger regarded Hölderlin as the essential poet because his poetic thinking attempted to address the problem of Being. ('What are Poets For?' Heidegger, 1971a, pp 132 - 142) This concern about Being was explained further by Heidegger in his essay 'Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry'. (Heidegger, 1949b, pp 306-307) The essence of poetic thinking is that it enables thinking to break free from a mere object/subject relationship. Poetry introduces imagination into a more fundamental aspect of language than the formal rational approach of linguistics. Language is perceived as only to be concerned with rational, objective thinking which of course corresponds to claim in *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* that 'knowledge of the self' has become the predominant practice in our 'way of life'. In the 'Letter on Humanism' Heidegger wrote: "The liberation of language from grammar into a more original essential framework is reserved for thought and poetic creation." (Heidegger, 1993c, p 218)

Rather than poetic thinking being a diversion from the realities of existence, Heidegger regarded poetry as a way of reconnecting with Being. In his essay 'Poetically man Dwells' Heidegger wrote: "Poetry does not fly above and surmount the earth in order

to escape it and hover over it. Poetry is what first brings man onto the earth, making him belong to it, and thus brings him into dwelling.” (Heidegger, 1971c, p 218)

Poetic thinking is not related to a particular ‘way of life’ but a type of thinking which calls for us to attend to the nature of Being. In his work on Hölderlin’s poem ‘The Ister’ Heidegger explained how poetic thinking can focus attention on the nature of Being: “What essentially prevails as being, and is never a being or something actual and therefore always appears to be nothing, can be said only in poetizing or thought in thinking.” (Heidegger, 1996b, p 120)

According to Jennifer Gosetti-Ferencei, Heidegger’s poetics is a counter to the prevailing view throughout the world which is based on knowledge, science and technology. (Gosetti-Ferencei, 2004, p 144) Instead, Heidegger offers a poetic vision of a world which is not dominated by technology. He drew a distinction between straightforward introspection and the essence of remembrance which necessitates thinking about Being and escaping from a state of homelessness. In his essay ‘Remembrance’ Heidegger wrote: “The thinker thinks towards what is un–homelike, what is not like home and for him this is not a transitional phase; rather this is his being *at home*. The poet’s questioning on the other hand is a commemorative questioning that puts the homelike itself into poetry”. (Heidegger, 2000, p 151)

Only by being open to different ‘ways of life’ can man overcome “the oblivion of Being” claimed Heidegger in the ‘Letter on Humanism’. (Heidegger, 1993c, p 242) Of all the dangers which face man by technology, this concern about the oblivion of Being is the most important. (Heidegger, 1977b, pp 36 - 38)

The importance of poetical truth for Heidegger lies in it being the kind of truth which “troubles the ordinary distinction between the real and the imaginary, the verifiable and the elusive.” (Gosetti-Ferencej, 2004, p 244)

Part 2: Man’s State of “Homelessness”

In his essay ‘Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry’, Heidegger quoted from a poem by Hölderlin, ‘The Voice of the People’ the line “Poetically man dwells on Earth”.

(Heidegger, 1949b, p 312) Heidegger explained that to “dwell poetically”, means “to stand in the presence of gods and to be involved in the proximity of the essence of things.” (Heidegger, 1949b, p 306) Heidegger described dwelling as “the basic character of Being in keeping with which mortals exist.” (Heidegger, 1971b, p 160)

Before discussing aspects of poetics which are pertinent to Foucault’s work, it is appropriate to establish why Heidegger developed the notion that man lives in the age of modernity in a state of ‘homelessness’. In ‘The Letter on Humanism’, Heidegger describes the condition of man’s existence today as being Homeless because modern man is oblivious to the problem of the estrangement from Being. (Heidegger, 1993c, p 242) Heidegger believed that in the modern age man is captive to a state of homelessness—it is “coming to be the destiny of the world.” (Heidegger, 1993c, p 243) Homelessness in Heidegger’s terms is not related to a place, building, or shelter. It is a condition in which man lives where “the truth of Being remains unthought.”

(Heidegger, 1993c, p 242) In his essay ‘Building, Dwelling, Thinking’, Heidegger introduced the idea of the ‘fourfold’ for man to dwell properly on earth. (Heidegger, 1971b, pp 149 -151) The fourfold comprises the earth, sky, and gods and mortals. The essential feature of the fourfold however is unity. (Heidegger, 1971b, p 149) This

concept of unity is important because of its relevance to Being. However, because of his emphasis on the essential nature of the unity of the fourfold, Heidegger explained that it would be impossible for man to investigate Being by himself.

As a result of our viewing the world as one of representation, in *The Introduction to Metaphysics*, Heidegger lamented that we have no place for any concept of Being. (Heidegger, 2014, p 130) Thinking has become detached from Being and as a result, the condition of man today is one of homelessness. (Heidegger, 1993c, p 243) He refuted the subject/object way of thinking and argued that philosophy should not be dominated by logic and scientific calculation – what corresponds closely to ‘knowledge of the self’, in Foucault’s *Hermeneutics of the Subject* (See chapter 3). The problem with language today according to Heidegger, is that it is concerned primarily with information. This is the reason that poetic language, releasing imagination and creativity, is so important. (Heidegger, 1993f, pp 420-425)

In the ‘Question Concerning Technology’, Heidegger described the modern ‘way of life’ which consists of living in a state of ‘enframing’, a mode of existence whereby man has lost his freedom. (Heidegger, 1977a, pp 3-35) This is the state of ‘homelessness’, when “The essence of modern technology starts man upon the way of that revealing through which the real - - - becomes standing reserve.”(Heidegger, 1977a, p24) This state of ‘homelessness’ has resulted in a situation where “nowhere does man today encounter himself, i.e. his essence.” (Heidegger, 1977a, p27) Homelessness is concerned with man’s estrangement from Being and the total range of possibilities for human life. (Heidegger, 1993c, p 243) Robert Mugerauer has summarized Heidegger’s position. “Man’s “Homelessness” has two aspects to it. First of all, we are oblivious that we

have foregotton Being, secondly we are oblivious to the fact that we are not at home.”

(Mugerauer, 2014, p61)

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger made it clear that in order to dwell properly on earth one must reject the modern ‘way of life’ throughout which man is treated as a resource to be ordered about. (Heidegger, 1962, pp 344 – 345) This was a theme which Heidegger later expounded in his essays ‘The Question Concerning Technology’ (Heidegger, 1977a, pp 3-35) and ‘The Turning.’ (Heidegger, 1977b, pp 36-49) Because our ‘way of life’ today is founded on the principles of logic and scientific rationality, Heidegger claimed that “the gods have fled.” (Heidegger, 1977d, p 117) In ‘The Age of the World Picture’ Heidegger made it clear that he was not referring to a god of organized religion. (Heidegger, 1977d) He invoked the idea that the gods as possessing a higher power than man, thus seeking to displace the anthropocentric view of man in the age of modernity.

Part 3: Homecoming

Heidegger believed that in order to dwell properly, some kind of journey has to be made which he termed ‘homecoming.’ He sought in Hölderlin’s poetry a possible way to reach ‘home’ and dwell properly on earth. The reason for embarking on this journey was described by Heidegger in his essay ‘Remembrance of the Poet’ as a “return into the proximity of the source”. (Heidegger, 1949a, pp 278 -9) In this essay, Heidegger claimed that in order to embark on this journey the assistance of the poet is required. This is because in the age of modernity, all sense of seeking the truth about Being has been lost. The poet by stimulating the faculty of imagination can reveal aspects of truth which is ignored in an age where the world and man himself is ‘enframed’ by

technology. One can think of Martin Luther King as an example of someone who used language and poetic imagination to bring about a fundamental change in the way that the Black Americans perceived themselves and hence repudiated a culture which 'enframed' them. In Hölderlin's poetry, the theme of 'homecoming' is recurrent. In 'What are Poets For?' Heidegger made it clear that the poet was essential in order to come somewhat closer to his notion of Being: "The Locality to which Hölderlin came is a manifestness of Being and which, out of that destiny, is intended for the poet."

(Heidegger, 1971a, p 95)

In his essay 'Remembrance of the Poet', Heidegger challenged the straightforward, common sense notion that in order to approach the source – Being, we need to "learn how to get to know it." (Heidegger, 1949a, p 279) Instead, Heidegger claimed that we " never get to know a mystery by unveiling or guarding it; we only get to know it by carefully guarding the mystery *as* mystery." (Heidegger, 1949a, p 279) The mystery is the apparently nonsensical belief that something can be both near and far away.

Heidegger pointed out that this claim is apparently not logical – how can something be both near and far away at the same time? (Heidegger, 1949a, p 280)

The explanation lies in Heidegger's Hölderlin's *Hymn "The Ister."* Hölderlin wrote poems about the Ister (The Danube) and the Rhine. Heidegger pointed out that "The river is both a locality and a journeying." (Heidegger, 1996a, p 43) On reflection, one can understand that the river is constantly changing, its composition, speed, position etc. It is not one set 'thing'. Moreover, where exactly is the origin of the Ister? There may be one named source, but the river will draw its strength from water and matter which are set over a vast area, so paradoxically, the nearer we get to the origin of a river, the more elusive and hard to reach it becomes. Heidegger quoted the words of

Hölderlin in his book on *The Ister*: "Yet what one does that river, no one knows."

(Heidegger, 1996a, p19)

This type of thinking by both Heidegger and Hölderlin is resonant of the pre- Socratic philosopher, Heraclitus. (Gosetti–FERENCEI, 2004 p17) So, the poet may get us nearer to the origin, but Heidegger's point seems to be that Being will always remain elusive for us. "Being is not something that is actual, but that which determines what is actual in its potential for being, and determines especially the potential for human beings to be." (Heidegger, 1996b, p 120) This potential 'for humans to be' is what Foucault discussed in *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* and his texts on disciplinary modes of human control and the development of biopolitics. (see chapter 8). In the light of Heidegger's Poetics, Foucault's work will now be discussed below.

Part 4: The Importance of The Cartesian Moment

In chapter 5 the importance of the work of Descartes in the establishment of the 'Cartesian Moment' is described. In Foucault's view, the 'Cartesian Moment' was a turning point when the 'care of the self' became of secondary importance to 'knowledge of the self'. It became more and more the case that the fundamental access to the truth could now increasingly be found only by recourse to scientific rationality. (Foucault, 2005, p 14) In this age of modernity it is almost universally accepted that the "subject's access to truth is by knowledge (*connaissance*) and knowledge alone." (Foucault, 2005, p 17) An important feature of modern life in Foucault's view is that anyone can access the truth, or what is believed to be the truth, about someone without that person's knowledge or agreement. With respect to the constitution and conduct of the modern subject, Foucault developed the theme that

effectively repudiated the idea that we should passively accept the revealed 'truths' about the subjects or groups found in our modern technological society. In 'The Subject and Power' Foucault wrote: "Maybe the target nowadays is not to discover what we are, but to refuse what we are. We have to imagine and to build up what we could be to get rid of this kind of 'double blind' which is the simultaneous individualization and totalization of modern power structures." (Foucault, 2000c, p 336)

In 'The Question Concerning Technology', Heidegger made similar claims to Foucault. (Heidegger, 1977a, pp 3 – 35) What was of concern to Heidegger was not the proliferation of technological devices, but his perception that our existence in the world is based solely on knowledge; poetic thinking is absent. (Heidegger, 1977a, p 20) Indeed, Heidegger criticised the recent development which places man at the centre of all things, based on a world evaluated by knowledge gained by representation alone: "What is decisive is that man expressly takes up his position as one constituted by himself, that he intentionally maintains it as that taken up by himself and that he makes it as secure as the solid footing for a possible development of humanity." (Heidegger, 1977d, p 132)

In chapters 6 and 7 of this thesis, both Heidegger's and Foucault's views on modern science are discussed. Both philosophers accord with the view that knowledge-based thinking linked to ideas about scientific rationality dominate our 'way of life' today. It is important to realise that this domination by scientific rationality of most of the thinking today is accepted and welcomed by many scientists and philosophers. Robert Mugerauer developed this theme in *Heidegger and Homecoming*. As the age of modernity has developed, truth has become solely associated with reason, together

with thinking being dominated by a subject/object empirical perspective. (Mugerauer, 2008, pp 297-299)

The 'Vienna Circle' was an intellectual group which was set up by leading philosophers and scientists in the mid-twentieth century and published an influential manifesto. It denied the value of spiritual or religious practices and placed man at the centre of all things: "Everything is accessible to man; and man is the centre of all things. - - -The scientific world conception knows *no unsolvable riddle*. Clarification of the traditional philosophical problems leads us partly to unmask them as pseudo-problems, and partly to transform them into empirical problems and thereby subject them to the judgement of experimental science." (Carnap, Hahn, Neurath, 2003, p 89) The origins of this kind of thinking were discussed in chapter 5 of this thesis.

The view of the world promulgated by the 'Vienna Circle' of course has no place for poetic thinking. This state of affairs Heidegger termed the 'oblivion of Being'. The next section will discuss whether this 'oblivion of Being' can be at all linked with the virtual abandonment of the former practices of 'care of the self'.

Part 5: Care of the Self and the Oblivion of Being

Before discussing topics such as spirituality and remembrance in terms of Heidegger's poetics and the practices of 'care of the self', a number of observations need to be made. First of all, in Part 4, I sought to establish that we do indeed live in an age when knowledge and rationality are the foundation of modern life. Secondly, as a result we live in a state which is completely oblivious of Being. Thirdly, it is possible that 'care of the self' did seek to address the question of Being. With these points in mind, some of the practices of 'care of the self' will be discussed in terms of Heidegger's poetics.

Foucault described the concept of spirituality as one of the key elements of the practices which were associated with the 'care of the self' over many centuries. (Foucault, 2005, pp 10 – 19) Spiritual exercises included remembrance of past events, questioning one's own conscience, meditation, and examination and thought (critically rather than passively) about any representation of how the world appears to the subject. (Foucault, 2005, p 11) In early Greek life, dreaming was regarded as an event when sometimes a hidden truth might be revealed. (Foucault, 2005 p 48) These techniques were developed in order to bring about a change in the subject, in order that the truth which lay hidden can be revealed.

Foucault wrote:

Spirituality postulates that the subject as such does not have right of access to the truth and is not capable of having access to the truth. It postulates that the truth is not given to the subject by a simple act of knowledge (*connaissance*), which would be founded and justified simply by the fact that he is the subject and because he possesses this or that structure of subjectivity. It postulates that for the subject to have right of access to the truth he must be changed, transformed, shifted, and become, to some extent and up to a certain point, other than himself. (Foucault, 2005, p 15)

There are three key features of Foucault's analysis of spirituality in terms of 'care of the self'. First of all, there is a clear distinction between spiritual truth and the truth which is granted by knowledge. Secondly, "The truth is only given to the subject at a price that brings the subject's being into play." (Foucault, 2005, p 15) Thirdly, this act of transformation of the subject does not merely grant some kind of understanding, it also more fundamentally produces a transformation of the subject so that the existence as a being-in-the-world is changed. "In short, in the truth and in access to the truth, there is something that fulfils the subject himself, which fulfils or transfigures his very being." (Foucault, 2005, p 16) In chapter 3 a full account is given

of Foucault's genealogy in *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*. However a key observation needs to be made here which is that in order to obtain a better understanding of the truth, a subject who is involved in the practices of 'care of the self' has to be prepared to undertake a journey – a journey which will in all probability never reach a final destination as these spiritual exercises were carried on throughout life. In *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, Foucault described *Ēthopoiosas* as a quality which enabled an individual to transform his relationship to the world. (Foucault, 2005 p 237) A subject who has this ability has the power to develop a new form of ethics, by a transformation of the self.

Meditation was one of the practices of 'care of the self' described in chapter 3. This was one of the ways by which the journey to find the truth was attempted, but this search proved to be a lifelong task. When he discussed in his essay 'Remembrance' Hölderlin's Hymn "*Andenken*," Heidegger described how he understood meditation in the light of Hölderlin's poetry:

The poet asks about *the companion* and about the friends and yet he is asking above all, though not only, about himself. Certainly, he is not speculating about the "ego" of his own personhood; rather, he asks, away from his ego, about the essential place of the self, whose own proper element is the fulfilment of the essence of his poethood. (Heidegger, 2000, p 151)

This passage is quite remarkable, as it could be regarded as a description of some of the practices of 'care of the self'. The change in the mode of existence which Foucault described as a transformation of a subject's very being, resonates with the description of Heidegger's that we exist in a state of homelessness. The recognition by a subject to be prepared to undertake a transformation in his very being surely has some degree of merit in recognising what Heidegger termed 'the oblivion of Being'. Clearly, this link might be described as tenuous, at best, but those who chose to undertake a

transformation rejected the idea that the truth could be granted by 'knowledge of the self' alone.

In his discussion of 'The Historically Grounded Spirit' Heidegger made it clear that the concept of 'spirit' in his philosophy was not to be confused with the Holy Ghost of Christian Theology, or a concept of the 'Absolute'. (Heidegger, 1996c, p 127) The poet Hölderlin described spirituality as a journey – a journey to the source. (Heidegger, 1996c, pp 140-143) However, what Heidegger described in *The Ister* was much more than what one might describe as varying practices to 'live well'. Heidegger explained "Poetry demands of us a transformation in our ways of thinking and experiencing, one that concerns being in its entirety." (Heidegger, 1996c, p 166) The journey which Heidegger alludes to is to dwell within 'the fourfold' and only then at the conclusion of the journey could one be at home.

In his essay 'What calls for Thinking?' Heidegger described how important memory is for the development of a poetic aspect to language and its value in helping to shape man's existence. (Heidegger, 1993e, pp 376-7) Heidegger discussed the importance of poetic thinking for the true meaning of remembrance:

Remembrance here does not mean merely thinking of that which has been, (namely journeying into the foreign) but simultaneously thinking ahead "to" what is coming, giving thought to the locality of the homely and its ground that is to be founded. Thoughtful remembrance as this multidirectional thinking that is directed toward what must be properly said by the poet is a pointing. (Heidegger, 1996b, p 151)

The poet is needed in order to draw attention to the origin, that is, the necessity to engage with the problem of Being. In *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* memory and remembrance were associated with issues related to matters of conscience,

understanding of the phenomenal world, and reviewing cultural practices of oneself and of others.

Heidegger paid little attention to the ancient practices of 'care of the self', presumably because these practices did not suitably address the problem of Being. However, Foucault made it very clear that in his work in *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* that he had been addressing Heidegger's problem of Being and the themes of homelessness and homecoming. In his summary of his lecture course on hermeneutics, Foucault declared that: "We are still very far from what would be a Hermeneutics of the Subject. On the contrary, it is a question of arming a subject of a truth he did not know and did not dwell within him." (Foucault, 2005, p 501) Foucault claimed that in the modern world, the 'the care of the self' is of value. Responsibility for how one shapes one's life is of fundamental importance. Foucault commented in an interview ('The Masked Philosopher') on the problem of truth for a subject today: "I would say at that this point that philosophy is a way of reflecting on our relation to the truth. But it must not end there. It's a way of asking oneself, if such is the relation that we have with the truth, then how should we conduct ourselves?" (Foucault, 1989b, p 307)

In his essays on language and poetry, Heidegger made the important claim that man in the world must ponder on different possibilities of existence. The practices of 'care for the self' described in chapter 3 of this thesis surely attempted to do that and reach a better understanding of the possibilities of how to live well. This seems to be a very close description of the intention behind the practices of 'care of the self'.

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger wrote in terms which were metaphysical:

"Understanding is the existential Being of Dasein's own potentiality-for-Being; and it is

so in such a way that this Being discloses in itself what its Being is capable of.”

(Heidegger, 1962, p 184) There is however a problem. If Being is always unattainable, then of what value is a poetic imagination if we cannot arrive at our destination – Being. Habermas made this point in his essay ‘The Undermining of Western Rationalisation’: “Because Being withdraws itself from the assertive grasp of assertive statements, because it can only be encircled in indirect disclosure and ‘rendered silent’, the destining of Being remains undiscoverable”. (Habermas, 1990a, p 140)

Wittgenstein also made an observation that: “What we cannot speak about must pass over in silence.” (Wittgenstein, 1974, p 74) However if we consider the metaphor of the origin of the river in *The Ister*, then the fact that we cannot arrive at the true ultimate source of all that pertains to its being does not negate the value of the journey and our increased understanding as a result. The practices of ‘care of the self’ complemented those associated with ‘knowledge of the self’. There was some recognition that man should not regard human existence to be determined solely by knowledge gleaned about the world. The loss of the practices of ‘care of the self’, surely have contributed to the domination of technology in our world today. In our age of modernity calculative thinking has replaced poetic reflection and concern about man’s relationship to Being.

The value of Foucault’s work in this thesis is that he engaged with Heidegger’s concerns about the ‘oblivion of Being’. The supplanting of ‘care of self’ by ‘knowledge of self’ is a convincing explanation of why man lives in such a technological framework. This work of Foucault’s was complemented by his work on science and biopolitics. However, Foucault’s work is generally descriptive, what Heidegger set out to do was to

encourage poetic thinking and imagination in order to bring modern man closer to Being.

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