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## DEATH OF THE SUBJECT: HEIDEGGER AND FOUCAULT ON SUBJECT AND SUBJECTIVITY

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DEATH OF THE SUBJECT: HEIDEGGER AND FOUCAULT ON SUBJECT AND  
SUBJECTIVITY

By

Qiuyue Chen

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## Abstract

The discourse on subjectivity, a central theme in philosophy, has garnered attention from thinkers like Heidegger and Foucault. Heidegger critiques subjectivity through a lens of metaphysics and ontology, while Foucault examines it as a social construct. This thesis aims to analyze their critiques and find common ground. The first chapter delves into Heidegger's critique of Cartesian subject and subject-object dualism in *Being and Time* and *Being and Truth*, arguing it obstructs a comprehensive understanding of human existence. In the second chapter, Foucault's analysis of subjectification, notably in *The History of Sexuality*, illustrates how the process of subjectification shapes self-knowledge and identities. The third chapter compares Heidegger's and Foucault's perspectives, highlighting shared insights into subjectivity's historical and philosophical dimensions.

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## Introduction:

The discourse surrounding subjectivity has long been a central debate in the history of philosophy, with thinkers like Heidegger and Foucault offering unique perspectives and critiques on the concept of the subject. Heidegger's approach to critiquing the subject stems from his broader examination of the history of metaphysics and ontology, while Foucault presents a groundbreaking critique by analyzing the subject as a social and historical construct. This thesis aims to elucidate these philosophers' critiques of the concept of the subject and explore common ground to bridge their analyses and thoughts on subjectivity.

In the first chapter, the problematic nature of the concept of the subject for Heidegger will be illuminated. In his seminal work, *Being and Time* and his lecture course, *Being and Truth*, Heidegger launches a profound critique of the Cartesian subject. He challenges the dualistic separation between the subject and the world, arguing that it impedes a comprehensive understanding of human existence. Heidegger contends that the Cartesian subject perpetuates a 'subject-object' dualism, hindering a holistic grasp of our Being.

The second chapter will delineate Foucault's exposition of the process of subjectification in the construction of sexuality and its impact on individuals' self-knowledge. Foucault's exploration, particularly evident in *The History of Sexuality*, delves into the intricate dynamics of subjectification, especially concerning sexuality, knowledge, and truth. He reveals how societal power structures employ knowledge and truth to mold individuals' identities and behaviors.

In the third chapter, a historical perspective will be adopted to demonstrate why Foucault and Heidegger can be compared regarding their thoughts on subjectivity. Heidegger's analysis of the role played by the concept of the subject in the history of metaphysics shares significant common ground with Foucault's examination of the influence of the “Cartesian moment” on the history of subjectivity and truth.

## Chapter One: Heidegger's Critique of the Cartesian Subject and Metaphysics

Heidegger has posited significant criticisms of traditional metaphysics and has carefully reexamined some of its fundamental concepts. One of the critical metaphysical concepts is the subject that traditional metaphysics usually identifies with the human self, especially since Descartes. In this chapter, I will first explicate Heidegger's critiques of the Cartesian metaphysical system, focusing on the reason why he finds the concept of the subject problematic and his criticism of the Cartesian dualism between subject and object. Then I will delve into Heidegger's phenomenological interpretation of "knowing" and demonstrate how it dismantles the Cartesian metaphysical system, especially the dualism between subject and object.

### Criticism of the Cartesian Metaphysical System

Descartes proposes the argument "*ego cogito, ergo sum*"<sup>1</sup> in his *Principles of Philosophy*, which translates to "I think, therefore I am"<sup>2</sup> in English. He proves this statement by arguing that as long as I am doubting, there must exist an "I" who is doubting. Doubting is one kind of thinking, so "I" who is doubting is also thinking. Hence, the "I" who is thinking cannot be questioned away by radical doubt. Therefore, "I" who is thinking must exist.

Heidegger criticizes the notion of the "I" derived from the argument "*ego cogito, ergo sum*,"<sup>3</sup> eventually becomes a mere "thing." Moreover, he contends that the Cartesian "I" distracts us from understanding the human self. To illustrate Heidegger's critique, I will explain it in three steps.

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<sup>1</sup> Descartes René, *The Principles of Philosophy*, trans. Jonathan Bennett (Charlottesville, VA: InteLex, n.d.), part 1, article 7

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Firstly, Heidegger points out that Descartes's radical doubt rests on the presumption that the most certain ground for philosophy and knowledge must be absolutely simple. Since by engaging in the methodical doubt, we suspect that everything related to sensual perceptions and extended bodies is an unreal illusion, Descartes seeks certainty which cannot be doubted even in the most extreme scenario where we cannot even trust our thoughts due to the possibility of being deceived by an evil genius. Through this methodical doubting process, Descartes actually looks for the most perspicuous and indubitable thing that is present-at-hand to serve as fundamentum for philosophy. What is present-at-hand, for Heidegger, is when an entity is taken out of its background or context, totally deprived of its significance in terms of practical usage as an equipment. Then this entity stands as absolutely independent or isolated object, merely bearing some generic attributes such as weight and height, devoid of any contextual relevance. By "*ego cogito, ergo sum*,"<sup>4</sup> what finally has survived through the methodical doubt is the most indubitable ground—"ego cogito." As Descartes engages in the process of radical doubt to discern the thinking "I," it resembles bringing this very "I" into focus and scrutinization. Every image, sound, color, memory and associated aspect of this "I" that cannot pass the test of radical doubt is discarded. What remains is solely the "I" who is thinking, laid bare before scrutiny. This thinking "I," emerging from the crucible of radical doubt, becomes phenomenologically removed from the settings of everydayness. Thus the thinking "I" also has the mode of Being-present-at-hand. That is, "I" who thinks is the most indubitable and perspicuous presence-at-hand.

Heidegger argues that in Western philosophy our understanding of the human self is mainly shaped by the Cartesian notion of the "I," stemming from the famous argument "ego

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<sup>4</sup> Descartes, *Principle of Philosophy*, Part 1, Article 7



cogito, ergo sum”<sup>5</sup>. Furthermore, the Cartesian “I” has subsequently become linked to the concept of “subject.” Heidegger writes, “...the conception of the human self was pointed in a certain direction by the Cartesian thought of the I: through Descartes, the I is really made into the subject, and it has been called the subject since then.”<sup>6</sup> The reasons are as follows. According to Heidegger, the term “*subjectum*” originated from the Greek word, “*ὑποκείμενον*”<sup>7</sup> initially designates “everything that already lies before us in advance that we run into and come upon.”<sup>8</sup> In other words, *subjectum* indicates something that lies outside of us and is already present before us as given.

To understand the connection between *subjectum* and the human self, we must understand how *subjectum* relates to Cartesian I. Based on the process of methodical doubt I just analyzed, the Cartesian I, which survives through the process of the methodical doubt, is exactly something indubitable and simple presence-to-us as proximally given. Thus, the properties of Cartesian I match the definition of *subjectum*, which is, in other words, something that lies in front of us as given. Therefore, the concept of Cartesian I falls within the scope of the *subjectum*. At the same time, since the indubitable thinking “I” gains its fundamental status in the Cartesian metaphysical system, serving as the most certain ground (or *fundamentum*) for all knowledge, the “I” originated from “ego cogito” is not just another *subjectum* but the essential *subjectum*. Hence, the Cartesian I is the most fundamental presence-at-hand. Therefore, Heidegger

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<sup>5</sup> Descartes, *Principle of Philosophy*, Part 1, Article 7

<sup>6</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Truth*, trans. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016), 34.

<sup>7</sup> Hypokeimenon, usually translated as material substratum, meaning the “underlying thing” in metaphysics

<sup>8</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Truth*, 35

concludes that “the I is a *subjectum* in the old sense...the *subjectum* is originally ‘I.’”<sup>9</sup> Moreover, since “subject” designates “the preeminent *subjectum*,”<sup>10</sup> “subject” then refers to the “I.” However, when we say “I,” this “I” also refers to ourselves, as Heidegger reveals, “but first of all, for the individual human being, the I means what he himself is, that within which he has his self as his own.”<sup>11</sup> Thus, when I utter “I,” I also indicate my own self. However, the “I” related to “subject” now appears as something present-at-hand like something we happen upon and encounter.

Therefore, we arrive at the final equation of subject as I as self, “self-qua-I as *subjectum*: something present at hand.”<sup>12</sup> As we have analyzed earlier, the Cartesian I endowed with the feature of presence-at-hand as the “subject,” ultimately makes the human self look like a thing. In order to grasp the full image of Heidegger’s critique of Cartesian subject, it is essential to fully understand what the term “thing” means. As to “thing”, Heidegger, in his 1927 *Being and Time* (henceforth *BT*) talks about the ontological meaning of this term. According to Heidegger, a “thing” is that to which its own Being does not matter. In other words, as for “things,” they are indifferent about their own Being, and the question of Being does not matter to them. Thus, “I” as the subject which appears as a thing is problematic for Heidegger. Through the concept of the subject, we can never get into the question of Being. Heidegger writes, “Thus Dasein is never to be taken ontologically as an instance or special case of some genus of entities as things that are present-at-hand. To entities such as these, their Being is ‘a matter of indifference’; or more

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<sup>9</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Truth*, 35

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Truth*, 33-34

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 35

precisely, they 'are' such that their Being can be neither a matter of indifference to them, nor the opposite."<sup>13</sup> To gain insight into the concept of "thing," Heidegger gives an account of its character of Being, including "substantiality, materiality, extendedness, side-by-side-ness."<sup>14</sup> It is the reason why Heidegger criticizes, "the thing-character of the I and self is not overcome as long as its subject-character is not removed in advance, that is, as long as the fatefulness of the Cartesian approach is not grasped and overcome from the bottom up."<sup>15</sup>

Additionally, the argument "ego cogito, ergo sum"<sup>16</sup> implies that this "I" knows itself as a thinking thing. Since when I am thinking, I become aware that this I who is thinking is something of certainty. It's this awareness of thinking I reflected back to the I who is thinking during the process of radical doubt finally confirms the existence of the "I." Consequently, Descartes' "cogito, ergo sum" endows the self with the essential attribute of self-consciousness. Heidegger asserts that "the essence of the self is primarily evident in consciousness."<sup>17</sup> Since the radical doubt has turned down all things except the thinking "I" and its awareness of itself, this "self-consciousness" becomes so significant to the Cartesian "I" that the Being of human self becomes "self-consciousness." However, this leads to another noxious consequence: The Being of the human self has already been presupposed by Descartes's "ego cogito." Self-consciousness as the Being of the self is all that we know. Heidegger points out, "In accordance with the priority of the I-qua-consciousness, consciousness determines the essence of Being. That of

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<sup>13</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2008), 42/68.

<sup>14</sup> *BT*, 68/96

<sup>15</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Truth*, 36

<sup>16</sup> Descartes, *Principle of philosophy*, Part 1, Article 7

<sup>17</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Truth*, 34

which one is conscious, in a particular mode of mathematical indubitability, 'is'—and this consciousness is genuine Being."<sup>18</sup> Therefore, the conception of the self as "Being-conscious"<sup>19</sup> cannot answer important questions, such as how the self is connected with others, how it exists in the world, and how it evolves over time and throughout history. For Heidegger, these questions are essential for understanding the human self, which understanding the Cartesian I fails to achieve. Therefore, Heidegger criticizes the Cartesian I as the "failure to reach the authentic self of man."<sup>20</sup> and "it obstructs in all possible ways every path to the human self."<sup>21</sup>

In conclusion, Descartes builds up his metaphysical system by exploring the epistemological question of how we can know this world truly and build our knowledge from a certain ground. His famous argument, "ego cogito ergo sum," establishes the *fundamentum* of philosophy on the certitude of thinking "I" and at the same time provides his answer of "to be" as being a thinking thing—that is, the subject. Descartes builds up the relationship between knowers and the outside world as the dualism between the subject and object. Furthermore, the understanding of the human self is transformed into the subject as something present-at-hand. However, Heidegger challenges this dualism by arguing that the relation between the subject and object can never be the same as the Dasein and the world. Based on previous analysis, equating Dasein with the subject is also wrong for Heidegger. Çüçen also stresses that "For Heidegger, the interpretation of the present-at-hand of Dasein is illegitimate because this interpretation is based

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 36

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Truth*, 35

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 36

on the epistemological attitude of ‘res cogito’ who knows and interprets itself as a present-at-hand.”<sup>22</sup>

Moreover, there seems to be a gap between the subject and the external world in the Cartesian metaphysical system. Çüçen points out, “the consequence of the spirit of Descartes’ philosophy separates the ideal inner world of the subject from the outer world of the object. The subject is divorced from the world and the world is put out ‘there’ as separate from the subject.”<sup>23</sup> This divide is connected by one major activity—knowing. Through the process of knowing, the subject transcends itself, goes into the outside world, and grasps things within this external world. Heidegger perceives this knowing procedure as “a subject provides itself with representations of something which remain stored up ‘inside’ as having been thus appropriated, and with regard to which the question of how they ‘agree’ with actuality can occasionally arise.”<sup>24</sup> Thus, Heidegger raises questions concerning this internalized subject and its knowing process,

“how this knowing subject comes out of its inner ‘sphere’ into one which is ‘other and external’; how knowing can have any object at all; and how one must think of the object itself so that eventually the subject knows it without needing to venture a leap into another sphere.”<sup>25</sup>

In order to reach the external world, the subject as the knower and the external world as something to be known is bridged by Descartes’ “ego cogito.” The subject is certain of one

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<sup>22</sup> A. Kadir Çüçen, “Heidegger’s Reading of Descartes’ Dualism,” *The Paideia Archive: Twentieth World Congress of Philosophy*, 1998: 62, <https://doi.org/10.5840/wcp20-paideia19986134>.

<sup>23</sup> Çüçen, “Heidegger’s Reading of Descartes’ Dualism”, 58

<sup>24</sup> *BT*, 62/89

<sup>25</sup> *BT*, 60/87

thing: “I think” and I think my thoughts. Since I am certain that I am thinking, these objects that I am thinking of enter into the inner world of the thinking subject as representations and thus also gain the certitude as representations of the outer world. However, the external world still seems afar. All these objects in the external world only get certified as representations in the content of the thinking “I” and the outside world is regarded as images brought into the inner world of the thinking “I.” These objects in the outer world only have limited certitude depending on the thinking subject, and hence this “I” seems isolated. Çüçen also states this issue of Descartes’ metaphysics, “as the ground of this metaphysics, the existent lies as present in front of us, as a representation in which the subject gets the certainty of things. In the metaphysics of Descartes, the existent is defined as objectivity of representation and truth is defined as the certitude of representation.”<sup>26</sup>

Another issue Heidegger raises is that Descartes, in his argument “Cogito ergo sum,” confuses the meaning of “I am” with “I think” without first figuring out the ontological significance of “Sum,” which refers to “to be” or “to exist.” Heidegger succinctly indicates this problem in *SZ*, stating, “with the ‘cogito sum’ Descartes had claimed that he was putting philosophy on a new and firm footing. But what he left undetermined when he began in this ‘radical’ way, was the kind of Being which belongs to the *res cogitans*, or more precisely the meaning of the Being of the ‘sum.’”<sup>27</sup> Shockey points out, “But what he left undetermined with this ‘radical’ beginning, was the way of being of the *res cogitans*, or—more precisely—the meaning of the being of the ‘sum’ (*BT*: 24/46). In other words, Heidegger claims that Descartes shifts our attention to subjectivity, to the entity we each are, but without then properly asking

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<sup>26</sup> Çüçen, “Heidegger’s Reading of Descartes’ Dualism”, 61

<sup>27</sup> *BT*, 25/46

what it is to be such an entity, and, a fortiori, without asking what connection our being has with being in general.”<sup>28</sup> Thus, according to Heidegger’s reading of Descartes, knowing is merely a dichotomous relation between the subject and the object. However, this dichotomous structure is presupposed without knowing the ontological nature of these entities. Heidegger writes, “So in this way it becomes the ‘evident’ point of departure for problems of epistemology or the ‘metaphysics of knowledge’. For what is more obvious than that a ‘subject’ is related to an ‘Object’ and vice versa? This ‘subject-object-relationship’ must be presupposed. But while this presupposition is unimpeachable in its facticity, this makes it indeed a baleful one, if its ontological necessity and especially its ontological meaning are to be left in the dark.”<sup>29</sup>

#### I. Destruction of Cartesian Dualism of Subject and Object

Heidegger came up with his phenomenological project of Dasein. Dasein is the being that takes its own Being as an issue. Heidegger emphasizes that it is different from the analysis of Descartes’ “ego cogito.” Dasein cannot be reduced to the “ego cogito” or the subject. He warns against this reduction stating “if we posit an ‘I’ or subject as that which is proximally given, we shall completely miss the phenomenal content [Bestand] of Dasein.”<sup>30</sup> Heidegger comes up with Dasein to answer the fundamental question of the meaning of Being. According to Heidegger, terms like subject, consciousness, and spirit cannot fulfil this task. All empirical sciences are inadequate to provide satisfactory answers too as Heidegger writes, “the subject, the soul, the consciousness, the spirit, the person. All these terms refer to definite phenomenal domains which can be ‘given form’: but they are never used without a notable failure to see the need for

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<sup>28</sup> R. Matthew Shockey, “Heidegger’s Descartes and Heidegger’s Cartesianism,” *European Journal of Philosophy* 20, no. 2 (2010): 288, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0378.2010.00408.x>.

<sup>29</sup> *BT*, 59/86

<sup>30</sup> *BT*, 46/72

inquiring about the Being of the entities thus designated”<sup>31</sup> and “In suggesting that anthropology, psychology, and biology all fail to give an unequivocal and ontologically adequate answer to the question about the kind of Being which belongs to those entities which we ourselves are.”<sup>32</sup>

Dasein is an ideal starting point for exploring the question of the meaning of Being. As Heidegger points out, Dasein has a crucial feature of “mineness”. Essentially, Dasein is always “mine” since it is an entity that considers its own Being as an issue in its Being. Heidegger notes, “Dasein has in each case mineness, one must always use a personal pronoun when one addresses it: ‘I am’, ‘you are’.”<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, Dasein always conducts itself towards its Being in one way or the other in its existence, which makes this entity “mine” as Heidegger indicates, “in each case Dasein is mine to be in one way or another. Dasein has always made some sort of decision as to the way in which it is in each case mine.”<sup>34</sup> Additionally, Dasein cares about its own Being in its existence, as evidenced by this statement “Dasein is an entity which in each case I myself am. Mineness belongs to any existent Dasein.”<sup>35</sup> Thus, Dasein becomes the main focus of Heidegger’s project of existential analysis different from the subject, the person, and the spirit, and we will explore how this project sheds light upon the human existence and human self.

According to Heidegger, Dasein's fundamental state of Being is known as “Being-in-the-world.” He explains that "Being-in-the-world" is an "existential" with a plural form known as "existentialia", which represents the characters of Dasein's Being. These characters can only be

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<sup>31</sup> *BT*, 46/72

<sup>32</sup> *BT*, 50/75

<sup>33</sup> *BT*, 42/68

<sup>34</sup> *BT*, 42/68

<sup>35</sup> *BT*, 53/78



discovered through the existence of Dasein. As such, this state of Being cannot be understood as one thing being inside another thing, like presence-at-hand. Heidegger explains this basic state of Dasein—Being-in-the-world from an etymological angle. The word “in” originates from “innan,” meaning “to reside or dwell,” and “An” means “‘I am accustomed,’ ‘I am familiar with,’ ‘I look after something.’”<sup>36</sup> Hence, “innan” implies “to reside or dwell” and “I care for something.” In German, “bin” translates to “am,” and “bin” is related to “bei,” so Heidegger concludes “‘ich bin’ (‘I am’) means in its turn ‘I reside’ or ‘dwell alongside’ the world, as that which is familiar to me in such and such a way.”<sup>37</sup> Moreover, Dasein with its major characteristic of mineness is always “I am.” And “Being” is the infinitive of “ich bin” (“I am”) so Being-in finally designates that “to dwell alongside the world”<sup>38</sup> and “to be familiar with the world in some ways.”<sup>39</sup> Thus, “Being-in is thus the formal existential expression for the Being of Dasein.”<sup>40</sup>

With a solid grasp of Being-in, we can better understand “knowing” as a state of Being of Dasein. Unlike Descartes who establishes the metaphysical system from the epistemological relation between the knower and the outside world as representations, Heidegger constructs Dasein which obliterates the gap between the subject and the object, the knower and the outside world. Knowing, according to Heidegger, is the prime exemplifier of Being-in-the-world. He asserts that Dasein is already and beforehand familiar with Being-in-the-world, as supported by

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<sup>36</sup> *BT*, 54/80

<sup>37</sup> *BT*, 54/80

<sup>38</sup> *BT*, 54/80

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

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

his statement that “Being-in-the-world is something of which one has pre-phenomenological experience and acquaintance.”<sup>41</sup> This state of Being can always be observed in every Dasein as it constitutes every aspect of Dasein’s existence. Heidegger explains that Being-in-the-world “makes up a basic state of Dasein, and in every case is already disclosed for Dasein’s understanding of Being, and disclosed along with that Being itself.”<sup>42</sup> This can be further illustrated by the fact that Being-in-the-world has manifested in various specific examples of Dasein’s existence like noticing something, paying attention and caring about something, making and using something, talking, considering, and deciding. Thus, Being-in-the-world is not just a mere character added upon Dasein, which can be dispensable, but an existential expression of Dasein’s Being. Heidegger emphasizes, “Being-in is not a ‘property’ which Dasein sometimes has and sometimes does not have, and without which it could be just as well as it could with it. It is not the case that man ‘is’ and then has, by way of an extra, a relationship-of-Being towards the ‘world’-a world with which he provides himself occasionally. Dasein is never ‘proximally’ an entity which is, so to speak, free from Being-in.”<sup>43</sup>

We have to understand Being-in-the-world phenomenologically as an essential state of Dasein’s Being. A significant way of Being-in-the-world is committing oneself to the world and discussing it, which is known as “Being-in-the-world which knows”<sup>44</sup> according to Heidegger, the ontical interpretation of the phenomenon of knowing merely as a relationship between two entities is subject to criticism. Dreyfus also points out, “...nor contemplative knowing can be

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<sup>41</sup> *BT*, 59/86

<sup>42</sup> *BT*, 59/85

<sup>43</sup> *BT*, 57/84

<sup>44</sup> *BT*, 60/87

understood as a relation between a self-sufficient mind and an independent world... Knowing the world is a founded mode of being-in. Knowing is an exemplary subject/object relation, so that if one makes knowing basic, one is from the start locked into the intentionalistic picture of human beings as subjects with beliefs (justified and unjustified) about objects and states of affairs.”<sup>45</sup> To fully grasp the meaning of knowing as a founded mode of Being-in, we need to find out the Being of this knowing, which I conclude can be expressed in two words: "inside" and "outside". As for “inside”, in Heidegger’s words, we have to notice that “knowing has the phenomenal character of a Being which is in and towards the world.”<sup>46</sup> This means that as a modality of Being-in-the-world, knowing is already “inside” the world in the sense that it is concerned about the world in which it exists. Since the essence of Being-in-the-world is concern, it is naturally drawn to the world that it is concerned about. Hence, as a mode of Dasein founded upon Being-in-the-world, knowing is already “in” and towards the world. When it comes to the concept of “outside,” it’s important to remind ourselves again that Dasein’s primary state of Being is Being-in-the-world, which is inherently concerned with the world around it. This means that Dasein has already situated itself "outside" and alongside the entities within the world, rather than dwelling solely within its inner world.

Additionally, it's worth noting that Dasein doesn't need to transcend an inner "castle" in order to understand and interact with the outside world, as might be the case in a Cartesian metaphysical system. This new perspective requires us to analyze the process of knowing from a phenomenological angle, rather than an epistemological angle of dualism between subject and

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<sup>45</sup> Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, Division I* (Cambridge, Mass. u.a.: MIT Press, 2009). 49

<sup>46</sup> *BT*, 60/87

object as prescribed by Descartes. Heidegger emphasizes, “knowing is grounded beforehand in a Being-already-alongside-the-world, which is essentially constitutive for Dasein's Being.”<sup>47</sup> Zimmerman also emphasize that, “Experiences which are normally regarded as "inner" or "subjective" are entirely worldly; they are part of my worldly experience. Even my experience of myself as a conscious subject is a worldly experience, for I cannot escape the world: I am always in the world of my experience. The world is not a collection of objects outside of me, and my self is not a bundle of ideas and feelings inside of me.”<sup>48</sup>

Heidegger’s approach to knowing is phenomenological, where he initially considers knowing as a means of understanding the nature of something present-at-hand through observation. However, he also emphasizes that when Being-in-the-world as concern removes itself from any production or manipulation, it transforms into another form of Being of Dasein which is Being-towards-the-world which just looks at entities as the way they are. In this mode, Dasein can direct its sight at what is present-at-hand. Heidegger suggests that this mode of looking becomes a mode of Being alongside entities within-the-world, which he refers to as “dwelling autonomously alongside entities within-the-world.”<sup>49</sup> Through this dwelling, Dasein has completed “the perception of the present-at-hand”<sup>50</sup> which involves addressing oneself towards something present-at-hand and then discussing it. According to Heidegger, a broad sense of interpretation has been consummated through this process of perception, which is “an act of

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<sup>47</sup> *BT*, 61/88

<sup>48</sup> Michael E. Zimmerman, *Eclipse of the Self: The Development of Heidegger's Concept of Authenticity* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1986), 27.

<sup>49</sup> *BT*, 61/89

<sup>50</sup> *BT*, 62/89

making determinate.”<sup>51</sup> Since knowing, as defined by Heidegger, is a process of making determinate of the nature of something present-at-hand, we just accomplished a phenomenological description of this process of knowing. Thus, knowing is to be regarded phenomenologically as Being-in-the-world that knows, and it dwells alongside entities in the world that are to be known. Heidegger concludes that knowing cannot be construed as a mere procedural act in which a subject acquires representations that are stored internally, waiting to be compared to reality on occasion. He emphasizes that perceiving what is known isn't akin to retrieving acquired "booty" and placing it within the confines of consciousness. Even in the acts of perceiving, retaining, and preserving knowledge, the knowing Dasein remains outside of consciousness and in the world, existing as Dasein. Thus, by creating Dasein and presenting a positive description of the phenomenon of Dasein's knowing, Heidegger bridges the chasm between the inner world of the subject and the outside world of objects. He destroys the encapsulation of the airtight castle of the knowing subject.

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<sup>51</sup> *BT*, 62/89

## Chapter Two: Foucault's Critique of Subjectification—Subjectivity and Truth Effect

Throughout the extensive body of work of Foucault, he has dedicated himself to probing the multifaceted discussions inherent in the concept of subject, as elucidated in his article, *The Subject and Power*, where he articulates, “my objective, instead, has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects.”<sup>1</sup>

This exploration is segmented into three distinct directions. Firstly, in *The Order of Things*, Foucault investigates how humans are shaped into speaking subjects within linguistics or philology, become laboring subjects within the economic sphere, and are simply living subjects within the domain of biology. The second trajectory he pursues emerges in his studies such as *The History of Madness*, and *Discipline and Punish*, where he scrutinizes how humans are segmented based on various criteria—such as the division between the mad and the lucid, the categorization of criminals and the virtuous. According to Foucault, this process of division simultaneously objectifies individuals and transforms them into subjects. Finally, in *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault examines how humans actively construct themselves as subjects. As he elucidates, the evolution of sexual knowledge engenders the categorization of individuals according to the paradigms established by such knowledge, thus prompting them to identify as particular subjects of sexuality. Notably, Foucault's later work witnesses a pivotal shift often referred to as "the ethical turn," wherein he conceptualizes the subject as a reflexive relationship individuals maintain with themselves. This introspective dimension underscores Foucault's evolving engagement with the multifaceted nature of subjectivity.

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<sup>1</sup> Michel Foucault, “The Subject and Power,” *Critical Inquiry* 8, no. 4 (July 1, 1982): 777, <https://doi.org/10.1086/448181>.

In this thesis, my focus revolves around the critical examination of subjectivity by Foucault and Heidegger. Originating from Descartes, the central concern in the history of Western philosophy pertains to understanding how, as knowing subjects, we acquire true knowledge of the world. The exploration of subjectivity is approached from an epistemological perspective. Heidegger traces the metaphysical root of the concept of the subject. Foucault however approached the problem of subjectivity from a different angle. He diverges from the customary approach to questioning the relation between subjectivity and true knowledge, prompting an inquiry into the effects of purported true knowledge on subjectivity and its influence on self-experience. This chapter aims to delineate Foucault's unique perspective in critically studying the concept of the subject within the social realm, with a specific focus on his analysis in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*. The emphasis will be on Foucault's elucidation of the process of subjectification through his examination of the science of sexuality.

In his discussion of the concept of the subject, Foucault articulates two distinct meanings, as elucidated in *The Subject and Power*<sup>2</sup>. In one sense, being a subject implies being subjugated to a particular power system. In another sense, subjectivity involves being shaped by a specific identity through self-knowledge mediated by external knowledge. For Foucault, these dual processes mutually reinforce each other and coalesce. This interconnectedness is notably evident in Foucault's analysis of the science of sexuality, when he explicates how humans are made subjects of sexuality through "power-knowledge." The latter is a term created by Foucault to denote the reciprocal processes in which power and knowledge influence each other mutually but also in which each actively utilizes the other. In the subsequent analysis, I will illustrate the interrelation between the process of subjectification and the process of objectification.

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<sup>2</sup> Foucault, "The Subject and Power," 781.

Furthermore, I will explore how these two processes converge in the truth game propelled by power-knowledge. According to Foucault, the truth game is “a set of rules by which truth is produced.”<sup>3</sup> That is, for Foucault, truth is not about the absolute truth, but more about the mechanism of producing truth intertwined with power relations. Finally, I will delve into how the dynamic interplay between subjectification and objectification, manifested in the truth game, shapes our identity and produces effects on our subjectivity.

In Foucault’s analysis of *The History of Sexuality*, there are three aspects of subjectification. Firstly, the incitement mechanism of discourses leads the speaking subject to become aware of themselves as the subject of desire, lust, and pleasure. At the same time, these subjects undergo scientific study, specification, and classification, consequently becoming objects of knowledge concerning sexuality—thus undergoing a process of objectification. This is also where subjectification and objectification reinforce each other. Lastly, through exhaustive scrutiny and scientific investigation, the knowledge and “truth” of sexuality claim to reveal insights about human beings. Individuals internalize these truths, shaping their self-knowledge and becoming tethered to specific identities.

Concerning the initial aspect of subjectification, the practices designed to make individuals aware that they are subjects of pleasure and desire are implemented and executed through discourse. Foucault observed an interesting phenomenon, namely, that starting from 18<sup>th</sup> century, reality deviates from what the traditional repressive hypothesis describes. Contrary to expectations that discussions about sex would decrease due to increased censorship and silencing policies, quite the opposite, there was an explosion of discourses about sex. As for the repressive

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<sup>3</sup> Michel Foucault, “The Ethics of the Concern for Self as Practice of Freedom,” in *Ethics Subjectivity and Truth ; the Essential Works of Michael Foucault, 1954-1984*, ed. James D. Faubion, 2000, 297, <https://philpapers.org/rec/FOUESA-2>.



hypothesis, it presents a historical interpretation that views power as exclusively repressive and regards the advocacy for sexual "liberation" as transcending this repressive power structure. The "hypothesis" is, further, that sexuality was "repressed" during the Victorian era and thereafter, into the 20<sup>th</sup> century period in which Foucault was writing. However, Foucault's objections note that despite stringent prohibitions on specific words and subtler limitations on when and where certain topics could be discussed, there were notable interests from the side of power, and the afore-mentioned explosion of "scientific" discourses on "sexuality." Government, university, and medical bodies sought explicit enunciation and exhaustive details in policy, discussions, scholarship, and clinical practices concerning sex. This phenomenon coincided with the invention of the term "population," which became a pivotal economic and political factor for a state. With variables like birth rate, fertility, health status, and life expectancy being critical to human resource and labor capacity, sex assumed a central role in all these factors. Consequently, it became imperative to discuss and manage sex for the collective welfare and administer it for greater utility. As a result, not only has every action to be spoken about, but every thought, every image in mind, every delectation, and every desire has to be articulated. Transforming all these subtle insinuations into discourses has two effects. Firstly, it awakens and intensifies people's awareness about their thoughts, desires and pleasures. Furthermore, through the practice of openly discussing everything, the speaking subject at the same time becomes aware of their being the subject of desire, lust and pleasure. This constitutes the first meaning of subjectification—an acknowledgement that there must be a subject to whom all these subtle psychological movements can be attributed. Every thought, feeling and elapsing imagination has to be traced back to a subject which should be responsible for them. Individuals are not merely

engaging in actions; they are now required to be aware and cautious that they are subjects of desire.

The second facet of subjectification that warrants discussion involves the process of constructing sexuality as a “form” of science and subsequently treating humans as objects of scientific knowledge. It is crucial to note that the process of subjectification is often intertwined with objectification, with the two processes reinforcing each other. Before diving into the discussion about the process of subjectification in the realm of science of sexuality, I have to give a clear account of sex and sexuality in Foucault’s system. This interconnectedness is particularly evident in the realm of the science of sexuality, where humans and human sexuality are treated as objects of investigation and scientific study. Participation in the inquiry of sexuality, conducted through clinical conversations, questionnaires, and interactive interrogations, not only subjects individuals to scientific scrutiny but also makes them self-conscious of their role as subjects of their sexuality. Looking back at history, Foucault highlights the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a period when various domains increasingly focused on and incited discourses about sex. For instance, medicine approached the topic in terms of disorders of the nervous system, and psychiatry explored its connection with mental illness. Criminal justice, extending beyond its traditional focus on heinous sex crimes, broadened its scope to include minor offences and indecencies. Particularly noteworthy is the establishment of *Scientia Sexualis*, transforming the traditional confessional ritual from the pastoral Christian context into the scientific inquiry into the truth of sexuality.

As Foucault indicates, *scientia sexualis*, firstly, transforms traditional confessional procedures into clinical steps aimed at inducing discourses. This includes incorporating confession into the examination process, blending personal narratives with identifiable indicators

and manifestations, and utilizing methods such as interrogation, meticulous questioning, hypnosis, memory recall, and free association. All of these approaches serve to reintroduce the act of confession into a realm characterized by scientifically valid observations. Secondly, *scientia sexualis* assumes a broad and diffuse causality, suggesting that sex can be the reason for various outcomes. This assumption is pivotal in transforming traditional confession into the science of sexuality. It suggests that every subtle aspect of one's sexual conduct can be causally linked to different results in one's existence. This, I contend, is the crux of transforming traditional confession into the science of sexuality. By establishing the assumption that sex possesses explanatory power, rationality is extended to human sexuality. This trend of rationalization applied to the human body, desire and sex, is intimately tied to knowledge. The process of rationalization initially attempts to elucidate these mysterious causal connections. To understand them, individuals must turn themselves into objects of knowledge, investigating the causal factors within sex and themselves to comprehend everything that transpired in their existence. Simultaneously, this assumption about the causal power of sexuality serves as a crucial justification for incorporating exhaustive interrogation of old confessions into the modern scientific study of sexuality. Thirdly, it assumes the latent nature of sexuality, embedding the coercive essence of confession into scientific inquiry. Fourthly, the *scientia sexualis* necessitates interpretation. In other words, not only is a speaker required, but a listener is equally indispensable. The listener, in this context, plays a crucial role in elucidating and interpreting the speaker's discourse, effectively transforming the discourse about sex into signs awaiting decipherment. Upon reflection on the listener's role, it becomes evident that, in the binary relationship between the speaker and the listener, the listener holds greater significance. They

wield the power to assign meaning to the speaker's discourse, determining the truth of the discourse. In essence, the truth of the discourse lies with the interpreter, i.e., the listener.

This realization prompts us to consider the nature of this truth more deeply. Is this truth akin to the neutral, objective truth or is it, as per Foucault's conception, a truth game? The latter is not about uncovering an objective truth but rather adheres to rules governing how a person can articulate a certain matter, based on distinctions between truth and falsehood. This dynamic also creates an opportunity for power relations to subtly influence the production of knowledge and truth concerning sexuality. It introduces an element of uncertainty into the science of sexuality, making the process of producing truth related to subjectification problematic, given its connection to the power regime. These issues and criticisms related to subjectification connected with power relations will be addressed in the next section. Finally, the act of telling the truth is endowed with the "medical" power of recovery. When everything is articulated, the truth is unearthed, and this initiates a healing process akin to the redemptive effect of confession. Telling the truth is seen as having a "medical" effect. Psychoanalysis enters the discourse precisely at this intersection: serving as both a theory highlighting the intrinsic connection between law and desire, and a method for mitigating the repercussions of taboo where its strict enforcement proves detrimental. In practical application, psychoanalysis undertook the task of ameliorating the consequences of repression, which the prohibition could induce, enabling individuals to articulate their incestuous desires openly.

All these factors have facilitated the transformation of confession, embedding it into the scientific study of sexuality. However, we have to examine the scientificity of the scientific study of sexuality, as Foucault indicates that “by presenting itself in a unitary fashion, as anatomy and lack, as function and latency, as instinct and meaning, it was able to mark the line of contact

between a knowledge of human sexuality and the biological sciences of reproduction; thus, without really borrowing anything from these sciences, excepting a few doubtful analogies, the knowledge of sexuality gained through proximity a guarantee of quasi-scientificity.”<sup>4</sup> To be more precise, sexuality is a historical construction for Foucault. That is, it is constructed by power interplaying with knowledge. Foucault gave several examples of how sexuality is constructed. One example he termed the “hysterization of women’s bodies,” which has led to the perception of women as primarily sexed beings as well as a fount of medical work on human reproduction. Another influential concept is the “pedagogization of children’s sex,” which characterizes children as possessing significant sexual agency and aims to shape that behavior. Indeed, this heightened perception of children's sexuality was often seen as perilous, necessitating vigilant monitoring and regulation. Additionally, the “socialization of procreative behavior” serves as another nexus of knowledge and power, emphasizing reproduction as a pivotal societal concern. Correspondingly, the notion of sex as an outcome of sexuality is a historical construct, inherently subservient to the broader concept of sexuality. By introducing the conceptual construct of “sex,” the deployment of sexuality established one of its fundamental internal mechanisms: “the desire for sex-the desire to have it, to have access to it, to discover it, to liberate it, to articulate it in discourse, to formulate it in truth.”<sup>5</sup>

This shift prompts individuals to be more cautious and self-aware about being subjects of sex. Moreover, sex is established as a significant causal factor, possessing the power to explain the mysteries within human existence and shed light on our own truth as humans. This act essentially rendered “sex” itself as something desirable. Consequently, it is this allure of sex that

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<sup>4</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (New York : Pantheon Books, 1978), 155.

<sup>5</sup> Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, 156.

binds each individual to the imperative to understand it, to uncover its regularity and its potency. We, as subjects of sex, treat ourselves as objects of scientific study, unveiling the latent truth about ourselves. This interconnection and reinforcement of subjectification and objectification are exemplified through the process of the science of sexuality. This process of subjectification intertwined with the process of objectification made the subject qua subject finally become the object of knowledge which is crucial for exemplifying how the truth game works within the interconnection of these two processes. And it is this allure that often leads us to believe we are championing the right of our own sex against all forms of power, but in reality, we are intricately entwined tighter with the deployment of sexuality.

The third facet of subjectification involves the dividing process, which is linked to the objectification of humans. This connection arises due to the increasing concern about population for a state. Matters related to sex, encompassing fertility, birth rate, and life expectancy, capture public interest. To manage sexual activities and channel them towards the productive reproduction of human resources and labor capacity for a country, during the 19th century, the public attention moves from conjugal sexuality to encompass all other sexualities outside of marriage. The medical studies engaged in the complex landscape of sexualities, empowered by the operation of power, go beyond mere prohibition. To further expound on the studies of peripheral sexualities during the 19th century, Foucault references the psychological study of homosexuality initiated by Westphal's article, "Contrary Sexual Sensations."<sup>6</sup>

A notable observation by Foucault is that the characterization and definition of homosexuality do not rely on external relations but rather focus on the inner sensibility of an individual. This internal reversion of defining the individual is noteworthy. Homosexuality is no

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<sup>6</sup> Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, 43.

longer defined solely by the external relationships of the person involved or by acts. Instead, it is explored inwardly, tracing every psychological trait and sensibility. This shift is particularly significant; starting from this point, homosexuality transforms from being a form of relationship to becoming a distinct identity connected to an individual's inner features. This transformation gains added importance when considering Foucault's observation that defined by ancient civil codes, sodomy was simply an action forbidden, with the person facing no more than punishment for the deed. Foucault highlights the shift in focus under the science of sexuality, where individuals are scrutinized for their inner psychological changes, sensibilities, fleeting thoughts, imaginations, and memories. Homosexuality evolves into an identity representing one's past, history, and even childhood. A once forbidden action is now reversed and internalized as the insidious and fundamental trait of the individual, becoming the indelible stamp on one's identity. While sodomy was seen as a certain temporary and often one-time aberrant action, homosexuality has evolved into a recognized aspect of human identity, representing a distinctive group of people.

In addition to homosexuality, various minor peripheral aberrations are assigned names, akin to entomological classifications, through psychological, psychiatric, and medical studies. Examples include “mixoscopophiles, gynecomasts, presbyophiles, sexoesthetic inverts, and dyspareunist women.”<sup>7</sup> This categorization stands in stark contrast to the repressive hypothesis, which suggests the exclusion and elimination of such peripheral aberrations. Instead, they are meticulously examined, categorized, and specified. The power regime does not seek to silence these peripheral sexual behaviors that are not geared towards procreation. Contrary to being overlooked by the law, these behaviors are now given names and elevated to the status of

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<sup>7</sup> Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, 43.

scientific realities that articulate the essence or nature of the individuals involved. This comprehensive spectrum tries to ground itself on different analytical, scientific, and enduring realities to be considered fundamental principles of comprehension and categorization. No longer neglected by the law, science, or society, a more stringent regime is in place, bringing all other peripheral sexualities under close supervision. This aligns precisely with the third facet of subjectification: the plan or tactic behind disseminating this knowledge and specifying these peripheral sexualities through the machinery of power is to scatter or embed them throughout the real world, integrating them into an individual's life or experience. Essentially, the objective is to weave these elements into an individual's reality, consequently influencing how people perceive themselves, construct their self-knowledge, and shape their identity.



### Chapter Three: The Mathematical in Heidegger and the Cartesian Moment in Foucault

Based on the examination of Heidegger and Foucault's respective analyses and critiques of subjectivity in the first two chapters, it appears challenging to identify common ground between the two. However, starting with a nuanced exploration of the meaning of presence-at-hand in *Being and Truth*, Heidegger tries to give an account and evaluation of modern metaphysics. By approaching Heidegger's critique of the Cartesian subject from this perspective, I unveil intriguing parallels with Foucault's critical analysis of subjectification in his endeavor to elucidate the history of subjectivity and truth from the lens of emphasizing the interplay between the care of self and knowledge of self throughout the history of philosophy.

In *Being and Truth*, the concept of presence-at-hand intricately intertwines with the term "mathematical." Heidegger traces the origin of the term—the mathematical to the Greek word "μαθήματα," denoting what can be taught and comprehended in the preeminent sense. To elaborate further, the mathematical encompasses knowledge that can be imparted to an individual in a way that they can comprehend independently based on their innate capabilities, which is what "the preeminent" means. It resembles the kind of knowledge "recalled" by Meno—an understanding that can be independently grasped and known from within. Another layer of the meaning of the mathematical, particularly in terms of its definition—what can be taught and received in the preeminent sense, involves a self-contained process of knowledge formation. In this sense, the mathematical possesses its own inference principles, generating the objects to be known and making its progress independently. As for presence-at-hand, it constitutes the content of the mathematical within this framework. That is, conforming to the

meaning of the mathematical and serving as the objects of the mathematical, presence-at-hand refers to something that is both elementary and unequivocally perspicuous. In other words, it denotes something that is fully disclosed to us, fitting our innate cognitive processes and allowing for straightforward comprehension through common sense and intuition.

When Heidegger delves into Descartes's process of doubt, he emphasizes that methodical doubt functions as an expression of the mathematical conception of method. This doubt systematically eliminates everything that lacks perspicuity and simplicity, leaving only the act of doubting itself and the "I" engaged in doubting as unequivocally straightforward and evident. The Cartesian "I" precisely embodies the defining features of presence-at-hand, being "known and cognized as such."<sup>1</sup> This resonance of Cartesian "I" with the objects of the mathematical forms the basis for philosophy and all knowledge, a standpoint that Heidegger rejects. He warns that the mathematical conception of method has predetermined the essential characteristics of the philosophical foundation. Heidegger contends that, by adhering to the direction set by the mathematical, the method through which philosophy poses questions and establishes its grounding has become subservient to the mathematical method.

However, the primary concerns arising from the prevalence of the mathematical method lie in the fact that the Cartesian "I," intricately connected to the human self, obstructs all avenues to apprehend the Being of the self. When Descartes ultimately redirects the human self to acknowledge the "I" as the sole certainty, this self-consciousness becomes the essence of the human self, constituting its very Being. Yet, this shift distances us from genuine inquiry into understanding the Being of the human self. The presence-at-hand of the thinking "I" carries the

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Truth*, trans. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016), 26.

characteristics of mathematical objects—being "point-like, ahistorical, and spiritless,"<sup>2</sup> which Heidegger unequivocally deems non-essential to the Being of the human self. He argues that considering Being-consciousness as the essence of the human self disregards "action, nor decidedness, much less the characteristic of historicity and of man's essential connection to those who are being-here with him,"<sup>3</sup> elements that should be integral to the approach to the self. In essence, the Cartesian subject, when equated with the self, fails to encapsulate aspects related to human existence, such as their everyday life, interactions with others, and the experience of living through time.

This critique of Heidegger draws certain parallels with Foucault's reassessment of the so-called "Cartesian moment" during his exploration of the history of subjectivity and truth. Specifically, Foucault approaches this problem by examining the historical interplay between "care of the self" (*epimeleia heautou*) and "know yourself" (*gnōthi seauton*). These are two precepts originally derived from the Delphic precepts. In *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, Foucault outlines his objective of investigating the historical dynamics between the subject and truth in the history of Western philosophy, focusing particularly on these two precepts. He delves into the reasons behind the inversion of the status of these two precepts in the philosophy of history. Looking back to antiquity, Foucault highlights the significant role played by "care of the self." Starting with Socrates, who emphasizes the importance of "care of the self," Foucault traces similar emphasis in Stoic, Cynic and Epicurean philosophies. However, over time, this precept becomes marginalized, eventually fading from collective memory. Foucault observes that know yourself which presently holds a prominent position, has been subordinated to care of oneself.

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<sup>2</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Truth*, 34.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

He notes, “the *gnōthi seauton* (‘know yourself’) appears quite clearly and again in a number of significant texts, within the more general framework of the *epimeleia heautou* (care of the oneself) as one of the forms, one of the consequences, as a sort of concrete, precise, and particular application of the general rule: you must attend to yourself, you must not forget yourself, you must take care of yourself.”<sup>4</sup>

Given this historical context, in antiquity, "know yourself" consistently manifested as a specific application of the more general principle of taking care of oneself, Foucault considers the inversion of the roles of "care of self" and "know oneself" a significant question for inquiry. He attributes this transformation to the "Cartesian moment" and emphasizes the impact of Descartes's methodical doubt, akin to Heidegger's perspective. Foucault discerns that Descartes's methodical doubt has profound consequences in the history of philosophy, particularly in reshaping the status of "care of self" and "know oneself." Foucault proclaims:

The Cartesian approach, which can be read quite explicitly in the Meditation, placed self-evidence (*l'évidence*) at the origin, the point of departure of the philosophical approach—self-evidence as it appears, that is to say as it is given, as it is actually given to consciousness without any possible doubt. The Cartesian approach [therefore] refers to knowledge of the self, as a form of consciousness at least. What's more, by putting the self-evidence of the subject's own existence at the very source of access to being, this knowledge of oneself (no longer in the form of the test of self-evidence, but in the form of the impossibility of doubting my existence as subject) made the "know yourself" into a fundamental means of access to truth. <sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Michel Foucault et al., *The Hermeneutics of the Subject : Lectures at the Collège De France, 1981-1982*, 2005, 4, <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA7349179X>.

<sup>5</sup> Heidegger, *Being and Truth*, 14.

The perspective articulated in this statement originates from Foucault's investigation into the marginalization of "the care of the self" in the history of Western philosophy. While it may seem like a departure from Heidegger's examination of Western metaphysics, Foucault demonstrates a familiarity with Heidegger's terms. Foucault underscores that the question of being is shaped by the self-consciousness of the Cartesian "I." Through the process of doubt, the Cartesian "I" emerges as the sole indubitable and perspicuous reality, laying the foundation for all other existences. In parallel with Heidegger's insights, Foucault notes that our knowledge of ourselves is determined by the unquestionable perspicuousness of the Cartesian "I," where "I" signifies the self. Uttering "I" inherently refers back to ourselves, and this self-aware "I" as the thinking entity ultimately becomes the essential being of the self. While Heidegger critiques the notion that the being of the self is determined by self-consciousness, Foucault is similarly dissatisfied with the idea that our understanding of the self is equated solely with this self-evident existence as the Cartesian subject. Now, with the Cartesian subject representing the self and serving as the certain ground for all knowledge (i.e., the Cartesian moment), "know yourself" is elevated to the forefront as the path to truth.

#### Dominance of the mathematical versus spirituality and philosophy

Heidegger places a paramount emphasis on the question of Being and beings as the fundamental concern in philosophy. Although Foucault directs his attention towards the history of truth, both philosophers scrutinize the impact of the Cartesian method on the trajectory of these philosophical investigations throughout the history of Western philosophy. An understanding of the significance of presence-at-hand within the context of the mathematical unveils a new dimension in Heidegger's critique of the Cartesian subject. This, in turn, allows us

to establish connections with Foucault's reassessment of the Cartesian moment in his exploration of the history of subjectivity and truth. As Heidegger contends that the Cartesian "I" as the indubitable presence-at-hand exactly represents the predominance of mathematical conception of method in modern metaphysics, Foucault also detects that the Cartesian moment opens a new era that spirituality—the major theme of philosophizing in Hellenistic philosophy—is completely left behind. Consequently, the relationship between subjectivity and truth undergoes a fundamental transformation.

By questioning why the foundation for philosophy and all knowledge must be something inherently simple and perspicuous as something present at hand, Heidegger sheds light on the mathematical method's influence on constructing a metaphysical system. This method, akin to mathematics, commences with something present-at-hand—knowable through intuition—and then follows its deductive laws to generate further propositions. Heidegger asserts that Descartes endeavors to construct philosophy through this methodical approach, concluding that not only is the outer structure of the metaphysical system determined by the mathematical, but its inner content is also dictated by mathematical principles.

In a similar vein, Foucault delineates the distinction between philosophy and spirituality. According to Foucault, philosophy is a mode of thinking that explores the conditions allowing an individual to attain truth. It seeks to identify the boundaries for gaining truth. To be concise, philosophy cares about the conditions of the subject in terms of gaining the truth. Conversely, spirituality, according to Foucault, focuses on the effect of truth and the self-transformation necessary to get access to the truth. Foucault highlights three features of spirituality: firstly, the subject, in its current state, lacks access to truth; secondly, the price of truth lies in the transformation of the subject's being; finally, truth always yields a rewarding effect on the

subject's existence. Foucault emphasizes the inherent connection between spirituality and philosophy. However, the Cartesian moment introduces the idea that to attain truth, no changes are needed in the self. Based on the self-evidence of the Cartesian "I," nothing needs to be known or altered about the self. Starting from the ground of indubitable Cartesian I for all knowledge, there are only requirements contained within the knowledge and extrinsic requirements for an individual to attain truth. Foucault proclaims,

I think the modern age of the history of truth begins when knowledge itself and knowledge alone gives access to the truth. That is to say, it is when the philosopher (or the scientist, or simply someone who seeks the truth) can recognize the truth and have access to it himself and solely through his activity of knowing, without anything else being demanded of him and without him having to change or alter his being as subject.<sup>6</sup>

That is, as a subject aiming to acquire truth, one only needs to adhere to formal conditions such as objective criteria and methodological rules required by the internal features of knowledge, coupled with external factors like education, diligence, and honesty. None of these requirements necessitates a transformation of the subject's being, which breaks up the connection between spirituality and philosophy.

Foucault points out, "when the subject's being is not put into question by the necessity of having access to the truth, I think we have entered a different age of the history of relations between subjectivity and truth."<sup>7</sup> In this new age, the emphasis shifts solely to knowledge as the gateway to truth, leaving spirituality behind and fundamentally altering the relationship between

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<sup>6</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1981-1982*, ed. Frédéric Gros, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2005), 17.

<sup>7</sup> Foucault et al., *The Hermeneutics of the Subject : Lectures at the Collège De France, 1981-1982*, 18.

subjectivity and truth. Now, starting from this new age, knowledge can develop itself as long as it is following its own law of development leaving the care about the being and structure of the subject all behind. Subjectivity is divorced from truth in such a way that there is no more rewarding effect of truth for the subject and the being of the subject is not transformed or enlightened by the attainment of truth. There are no more mutual, flowing, recursive interactions between the subject and truth. Subject do not change its mode of being to gain truth, and there is no rebound effect on subject's being. Knowledge now unfolds and develops itself according to its own internal logic. The subject is only the participants of the development of knowledge which will extend into the limitless realm of advancement, with an unknown culmination. The benefits of gaining truth now are exemplified through the accumulation of knowledge, which will only become apparent over time through the gradual construction of various fields of knowledge, or the psychological and social advantages gained from the diligent pursuit and discovery of truth.

However, in this new era, the focus shifts away from the Being of the subject, as Foucault concludes, "the truth cannot save the subject."<sup>8</sup> This sentiment echoes Heidegger's critique of modern metaphysics, particularly its adherence to the mathematical method and his criticism of the new beginning of philosophy as a further decline that veers philosophy away from its fundamental question about Being and beings. Foucault's analysis of the relationship between subjectivity and truth mirrors a Heideggerian concern about the Being and structure of the subject, bridging the gap between the two thinkers. Moreover, their examination of the Cartesian approach, viewed through the historical lens of the history of metaphysics and the history of truth and subjectivity respectively, also illuminates their shared concerns and similarities.

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<sup>8</sup> Foucault et al., *The Hermeneutics of the Subject : Lectures at the Collège De France, 1981-1982*, 19.



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