CHAPTER 1

THE QUESTION OF FINITUDE:
KANT, HEIDEGGER AND FOUCAULT
A. SUBJECT AND FINITUDE IN KANT

Kantianism is a philosophy of finitude. In Kant's philosophy, knowledge and consciousness are no longer self-evident. Kantian discourse concerns itself with their conditions of possibility. The result is that in order to have representations, the subject must be a finite being. It follows that finiteness no longer looks like the sign of a lack, but rather the very condition of knowledge. Kant's transcendental philosophy attempted to demonstrate the validity of certain basic theoretical assumptions we make about the world. He had shown that these very assumptions had to hold if empirical knowledge itself was ever to be possible. His argument was that we are constituted as subjects only under certain a priori conditions of order.

The philosophy of Kant provided us the distinction between man as a transcendental subject, constituting the objects of his experience and man as himself an empirical object of that experience. The switch in perspective from the Cartesian standpoint of demonstrating the truth of a specific form of knowledge to the Kantian one of investigating the conditions of its possibility is central to Foucault's theatre of thought.

Kant consistently treats the formal conditions of knowledge as formative activities constitutive of experience. Kant's categorical schema is not so much a structure as process, in which form implies formation. However, the forms of experience
indistinguishable from constitutive acts, the analysis of experience necessarily presupposes an agency that engages in these acts. Kant attributes the conditions of experience to faculties. Every formal structure that Kant identifies is described as some kind of synthesis. The overall unity of experience is attributed to an act of self-consciousness. These problems are nourished by the interests of human reason in general which are intimately interwoven with them. In particular, the interest of reason in the completeness and unity of its comprehension generates a natural disposition to metaphysics as the means of serving and ultimately satisfying this interest. Kant says:

"Our knowledge of the existence of things reaches, then, only so far as perception and its advance according to empirical laws can extend."¹

Kant denies that experience can be predicated of the subject in such a way that the existence of objects in space outside us becomes either doubtful or impossible. At the same time, Kant does not deny the subject's role in the constitution of experience. But the constitution of experience of the subject does not entail that the objects of experience are units of subjective substance. Infact, Kant draws no metaphysical consciousness whatsoever from the existence of objects. Kant says:

"Thus external things exist as well as I myself, and both, indeed, upon the immediate witness of my self-consciousness."²
The assertion that "external things exist as well as I myself" signifies only that external objects and the empirical subject appear among my experiences. The assertion of existence implies that something is a possible experience not that it possesses some metaphysical property - substantiality, being or whatever. Both external and internal objects are "nothing but representations". The claim that objects are nothing but representations is intended to deny that they are things in themselves. It is not intended to assert that they are mere appearances. To be real is simply to be something that is present in space and time that displays various determinate properties. This real world of experiences is the sum of what we can know.

Kant's Copernican revolution reverses the traditional relation supposed to exist between knowledge and objects. Instead of knowledge conforming to objects, Kant conjectures that more might be achieved "if we suppose that objects must conform to our knowledge". According to him, knowledge or experience of objects is to be possible, objects must be commensurable with the subjective conditions of experience. In order to experience an object, we must first be able to identify that it is something to experience. The Copernican revolution is therefore simply the assertion that experience forms a whole and that objects of knowledge and the subjective conditions of knowledge are part of this whole. This again merely asserts that there is no object experienced without a subject to experience it and that all of the experiences of a subject form a whole.
The conception of the subject as a unity giving activity that constitutes experience is the substance of Kant's critical theory of subjectivity. The crucial issue here is Kant's claim to have transcendental knowledge. He disingenuously describes it as

Knowledge which is occupied not so much objects as with the mode of our knowledge of our objects in so far as this mode of knowledge is to be possible a priori.

However, described transcendental knowledge is in fact knowledge of the pure activity of the subject. This means that the subject while it transcends experience does not stand outside it. The transcendental subject therefore be characterised as an object of thought rather than as an object of knowledge. Description of the transcendental subject as an unconditioned being has embarrassing consequences. These consequences follow from the nature of human understanding and the experience to which it gives rise. Understanding cannot represent unconditioned being among appearances, for understanding deals with possible experiences, "the knowledge and synthesis of which is always conditioned". All appearances are conditioned by other appearances, their existence is never self-grounded but always conditioned.

All empirical consciousness presents appearances in a serial order such that earlier members in the series are the conditions for later members. As experienced the existence of each
appearance depends on the prior existence of its conditions. The intelligibility of each appearance depends on an exploitation of its conditions or causes. This serial ordering is the constitutive feature of all possible experience without which experience would not be possible at all. The synthesis of appearances " is necessarily successive, the members of the series being given only as following upon one another in time ". Unfortunately, the transcendental subject as a purely spontaneous being cannot be thought discursively (i.e. by concepts) or by mere predicates. The notion is necessitated by the basic design of the critical system. This means that Kantian project needs an active principle to supply the foundations of experience. For the absolute autonomy of the moral law that Kant demands requires an autonomy legislator.

For Kant, however, autonomy constitutes the principles of reason and authority. He says:

Reason must in all its undertakings subject itself to criticism, should it limit freedom of criticism by any prohibitions, it must harm itself, drawing upon itself a damaging suspicion..... Reason depends on this freedom for its very existence.

According to Kant, Reason has no transcendental authority. He assures not from Reason to autonomy but from autonomy to reason. Critique itself is at bottom no more than the practice of autonomy in thinking. Autonomy does not presuppose but rather constitutes the principles of Reason and their authority. The
theoretical or practical reasoning is not possible without autonomy. Reason grounded in autonomy presents itself to us an imperative. Hence finite rational beings can reject autonomy occasionally. Kant always sets the case of human agency in the framework of a wider spectrum of possible types of agency. This is why Kant writes:

It could well be that some other planet is inhabited by rational beings who have to think aloud - who, whether awake or dreaming, in company with others or alone, can have no thoughts they do not utter.

This note and in many other passages Kant is preoccupied with the thought that human beings may not be the only sorts of finite rational beings, which provides some evidence of his understanding of finite rationality. Kant clearly shows that finite rational beings means finite beings who are rational. Reason here like understanding is replaced by a faculty of thought. Its function is to think that which escapes common sense. Kantian critiques presume the existence of good sense and common sense. It is through the contradictory experiences that a critical examination of the mental faculties is made possible. What allows an intuition of the faculty of sensibility to pass through the schemata of imagination and to be assimilated to a concept of Understanding is the common functioning of faculties. This common functioning of faculties works under the legislative control of a single faculty: Understanding.
In this sense we can say that "Critique of Pure Reason" is a critique of pure finite reason. Finite intuition is what characterises the essence of knowledge. Thought in order to be thought must first of all hold to the finitude of the intuition that is proper to it. Finite intuition requires a mediation that alone can universalise the immediate contact and transform it into knowledge: Understanding. As Nathan Rotenstrich observes:

To limit knowledge is to limit man: the limitation of knowledge is but the manifestation of man's fundamental limitation, that is, man's finitude.¹

Finitude essentially characterises the domain of origin in which the regress to the foundation of transcendence is carried out. It also radically characterises the very foundation towards which the regress moves. Kant says:

We have a pure imagination as the fundamental faculty of the human soul which a priori serves as the foundation of all knowledge.²

It is the imagination that is the very happening of the transcendental synthesis, the very occurrence of transcendence: "Transcendence is finitude itself". What Kant transmitted to later philosophers was a new refined set of problems. The question of transcendence calls upon the self to question itself for the roles, routines and practices in which this capacity is channelled. This questioning does not bring to light a Cartesian self, a self of reason completely purged of body and feeling, a self without shadows, a self totally transparent to itself,
totally certain of itself. On the contrary, the self which responds to this question is an "embodied", "very empty", "very much alone". In Heidegger's words "a self in fragments", "a self in the fury of Being". Heidegger takes up this "problem of finitude" in his interpretation of Kant:

How is the finitude in Man to be examined? Is this in general a serious problem? Is not the finitude of man evident always, everywhere, and in a thousand different ways? 

B. FINITUDE AND OTHERNESS

Heidegger's work is crucial to understand the current debates between those who emphasise a responsibility to act and those who emphasise a responsibility to otherness. But his relationship to these debates is complex. The attempt here is to show the specific ways in which Heideggerian discourse does this. Heidegger’s comprehension of the responsibility to "otherness is in many ways unequalled. It embodies the specific impulses of contemporary philosophical thinking.

On the face of it, Heidegger’s "A Dialogue on Language" has nothing explicit to say about ethics or politics. And yet behind the beauty of this dialogue one can sense what gets lost in Heidegger’s thinking. The dialogue in its published form was occasioned by conversations between Heidegger and a visiting Japanese professor. But in the text the participants are only identified as a Japanese and an inquirer. The identities of Heidegger and his partner are washed away. The stage directions,
both explicit and implicit, imply that it is the inquiry, "the matter of thought" that is more important than the participants. The resulting tone is a reverential coming in the neighbourhood of thinking and language. Heidegger always seeks to distance himself radically from the everyday clamour of contending voices.

Total attention to the inquiry, to the "matter of thought", is the only proper "response" of human being to the "claims" of being. Any emphasis on the participants in a dialogue like "the much discussed I - Thou" relationship merely reinforces that disease of subjectivity - calculating, claiming, and wanting - that is at the root of modernity's problems. The thoughtless willing and wanting of everyday life is that from which essential thought must preserve itself. The clamour of the "they", of "everydayness" is the morbid water that Heidegger always fears will inundate his path. These voices are attuned only to language as a "means of trafficking". It is a "tool" for mediating our claims and actions not as the highest mode through which we participate in being. There resides in everydayness the supreme threat of "forgetfulness" of being and the essence of human being. Thus Heidegger consistently pushed the sphere of everyday "face-to face" relationships out of his focus. He explored the face-to face relationship with "a more distant origin", the one with being. Heidegger teaches us that we must follow Nietzsche in exposing the conventional character of all such unifying, legitimating first principles in their different historical epochs. Heidegger thus hoped to undermine the solid
sense of presence, unity and legitimacy an epoch might seem to derive from its fundamental principles of order. And yet for Heidegger being is not simply a parade of discontinuous, historical orders of presence. Across these discontinuities, Heidegger found an elemental continuity of presencing: "a force of purification and dissolution" that is always "other" to any order. "Appropriating event" is the term he used to refer to this "event like distributing of presence - absence" out of which any possible order of presence solidifies. The intention of all of Heidegger's later work was to find a way of appropriately attending to this character of being. The thrust of this argument is that it does not reinscribe itself within a grasping, technologising attitude. He referred to his way as "an other thinking: a posturing of consciousness that constitutes a kind of face-to-faceness with such presencing".

Heidegger thought of the political domains as an opening in which "words, things and deeds come into a definite historical arrangement" and thereby constitute a "world". It is at this most basic level that the modern political "world" - the "world " underlying all particular political practices and institutions is today coming into question. And it is only on the basis of this new arrangement of words, things, and deeds that a new politics can arise.

Heidegger spoke of a mode of relating to being that he called " releasement" or "letting be". He offered this as the
proper way of responding to the character of being as presencing.

Heidegger thought of this posture as overcoming the normal way of dichotomising activity and passivity. It is in this sense that releasing or complying was intended as a broader concept of action. Since Aristotle, the western thought has dominated by the restricted concept of action as being guided by reason and sustained by the will. The other general intention that Heidegger embedded in the notion of releasement is the theme of finitude. Releasement means a giving up of delusion of infinitude. Compliance and letting be mean orienting ourselves to let things in the world to appear us in ways that do not simply cut them up as potential standing reserve for our projects and systems of knowledge.

Beyond these general intentions associated with the concept of releasement, Heidegger did little to clarify what such a reorientation implied. The interventionist side of releasement would seem to be acknowledged in the Archaeological/Genealogical studies taken up by Michel Foucault. In his theatre of thought there is a refusal to be a face-to-face participant in the discourse of modernity. It has been argued that all of Heidegger's work tended toward one central concern: "remembering the finitude of being." In Being and Time, the analysis focuses specifically on individual Dasein and Death. The everyday world of thought and action holds our attention in a way that makes us forget our finitude. But that finitude cannot always be kept submerged. "It reemerges suddenly and in ways we cannot control. We become gripped by anxiety (Angst) about our
own death, a mood which overcomes us and within which the hold of all our projects seems to give way to the "floodwaters of nothingness". The proper response to finitude is for Dasein to confront it and learn to will itself resolutely.  

In the later work, however this sort of quasi-heroic picture largely dissolves and is replaced by a much more subtle set of sketches. These sketches suggest what it would mean to posture ourselves in a way that quietly lets the "ubiquity of the finite into life". This change intersects another which expands the question of finitude from the individual to the social-historical level. This is the level on which it must be asked: what do we do now when our everyday life is dominated by the infinity of a will to will? The two levels of finitude cannot be divorced. But on the social-historical level, the questions become more complicated. Moreover, they must be answered in ways that are more historically mediated and directly related to collective practice. What Heidegger was grappling with is the possibility of a collective learning process in regard to finitude that makes sense only for us as historical beings.

Heidegger's "other thinking" should not be feared as something which irrationally threatens all that the west has learned. But it is that which seeks to grapple with its unacknowledged costs. The sort of learning toward which Heidegger wants to turn us is not cumulative. It does not dispose over more powerful complexes of knowledge, allowing us to solve more rapidly the problems that confront us. Rather it
is "a becoming aware ... that remains a listening, a recollecting of all that is showed aside and forgotten in modern consciousness." However, it is not a learning that depends on a leap into some sort of mystical attunement with being. To him, learning sensitivity to otherness remains reflexive.

Then the philosophical question : what is this posture of gesturing which is not pure attunement but rather always recognises that it muffles the sound of otherness? Heidegger speaks of it as a kind of responding to being that keeps our finitude before us. It is a way of taking up the responsibility to otherness. Responsibility in this sense has a rather different meaning than in the sense of responsibility to act. In the latter domain, our action and reflection are bound up with giving an account before a court of rational appeal. This is the domain of responsibility from whose closure Heideggerian thought wants to flee. Michel Foucault expresses it succinctly when he speaks of the "blackmail" of the Enlightenment and the police mentality that is always demanding "to see that our papers are in order. At least spare us their morality when we write." (AK: 17).

It is interesting to see that how Heidegger conceives this new posturing of human being that somehow complies with the character of being as presencing and continually bears witness to our finitude. At the heart of this posture is an attentive concern for otherness, for all precedes, exceeds and succeeds
our purposes and projects. The posture Heidegger wanted to elaborate had an unusual face-to-face quality. For all his admiration of Heidegger, Derrida has always seen him as too deeply wedded to an entire metaphysics of proximity. He says:

In Heidegger's discourse, the dominance of an entire metaphysics of proximity, of simple and immediate presence, a metaphysics associating the proximity of being with the values of neighbouring, shelter, house, service, guard, voice and listening.

We end up, he says:

Is not this security of the near what is trembling today, that is, the co-belonging and co-propriety of the name of man and the name of Being, such as this co-propriety inhabits and is inhabited by, the language of the west, such as it is buried in its oikonomania, such as it is inscribed and forgotten according to the history of metaphysics? But this trembling - which can only come from a certain outside - was already requisite within the very structure that it solicits."

Derrida is wrong here and his failure makes it impossible to see a distinctive facet of Heidegger. Heidegger wants to elucidate a sense of face-to-face experience but not one which slides into all the old metaphysical traps. Derrida however, sees him as simply wanting to distance himself from the constituting by edging into a nearness to being. Nearness is indeed a counter-concept to constituting. But Derrida fails to
understand what is at issue. The one dimensional image of man nearing being radically misconstrues nearness. From the lectures on Holderlin, until the end of his life, Heidegger emphasised the complex and non-one dimensionality of nearness. He speaks of a "refusing withholding nearness" in these works. Similarly, he speaks of "being at home" as "the becoming at home is not being at home". Clearly there is something more going on here than the elaboration of a simple "metaphysics of proximity." Heidegger is trying to sketch the contours of a mode of experience that has a face-to-face quality. Heidegger's distinctiveness resides in his attempting to think out a face-to-faceness that answers to the responsibility to otherness.

With his concept of nearness, Heidegger wanted to delineate a way of experiencing otherness. He conceived of a mode of posturing the self which "lets the other be" in its difference. At the same time, such a posture could not be expressed in the idea of simple nearness to the other. Nearness is rather a complex concept. It implies a better grasp of something or "having potentially better control". Near and far do not function simply as spatial opposites but rather as two sides of a playing back and forth in relation to the other. Attentive concern for otherness means that the gesture of nearing, bringing into one's presence, into one's world must always be comprehended by a "letting go", "an allowance of distance", a "letting be" in absence. Hence it bears witness to our own limits, that is, our own finitude. We get closer to the sense of this experience, as we turn our focus to what he says about language and moods.
Heidegger's effort to respond to otherness go hand in hand with his view of the essence of language as "world-disclosing". Our capacity to bring things into speech, allows human beings to participate in the event of being in a unique way. But not just any naming complies with the character of being as presencing. In fact, naming is typically a bringing into speech that merely serves a preparatory function. Then the task is to prepare a set of parameters within which we can coordinate our actions to achieve our purposes and objects.

What fascinated Heidegger about poetry is the way in which poetic naming calls into language or into presence. At the same time, it maintains a distance from what is called and preserves the sense of otherness. It is something we cannot grasp and of absence out of which a thing is called. This can be seen clearly in his discussion of the Poem, A Winter's Evening by George Trakl. The poem speaks of the tolling of a vespert bell in a snow fall. The poem calls these things toward our world. He says:

The calling here calls into a nearness. But even so the call does not wrest what it calls away from the remoteness, in which it is kept, by calling these. The calling calls into itself and therefore always here and there - here into presence, there into absence. Snowfall and tolling of vespert bell are present in the call. Yet they in no way fall among the things present here and now in this lecture hall.

This play of nearness and distance and presence and absence is reflected in the moods that Heidegger associated with the
experience of other thinking. In *Being and Time*, the mood is associated with the experience of finitude is anxiety. Its message of finitude has an unalloyed, piercing quality that can be authentically answered only by individual resolution. Anxiety does not disappear in Heidegger's later work but its role seems to change. It becomes important as that "helpless anxiety" which we feel under the ever present threat of nuclear death and the "living nightmare" of an ever expanding planetary domination. The roots of nuclear death and planetary domination have a historical collective dimension in that their roots emerge from the technologising attitude of en-framing. Anxiety now is at best a mood that starts us on a long process of realising how deep the problem of adequately gesturing finitude lays. The full emergence of this realisation and the learning of such gesturing are accompanied by moods rather different from anxiety. The moods that accompany nearness do not have the sort of unalloyed quality of Angst. Rather they carry within them an indissoluble ambiguity. This ambiguity mirrors the playing back and forth of nearness and distance and of presence or absence. Heidegger spoke both of a "grieving joy" and of "shyness" or "awe". This Heideggerian response to otherness takes the form of resettling everyday life with a new mode of experience. One faces the world differently.

The promise of Heidegger's later work resides ultimately in the hints about how to situate ourselves in the seam between the aesthetic and the "care of the self". The seam is the "other
hinking" into which flow both experiences with the world-
disclosing or poetic dimension of language and the concern with
finitude. But Heidegger's hints in regard to "ethics" remain
immensely problematic. In the dense tropical jungle of
heideggerian discourse they are like small plants overshadowed by
huge ones of a very different sort.

FOUCAULT AND THE ANALYTIC OF FINITUDE

Let us return now, with these provisional cautions, to the
original problematic: analytic of finitude. Foucault's position
can be seen as based on two explicit criticisms:

a. The idea that we can base our knowledge of the world
on a knowledge of ourselves as subjects of experience is one that
Foucault's theatre cannot accept. Kant's philosophy made a
significant move in the direction of denying privileged status
do our self-knowledge. By doing so it freed us from the
dominance of the Cartesian model. But his philosophic method
still allows certain privileged access to our mental functioning.
Denying primacy of our own knowledge of ourselves as subjects is
central to Foucault's philosophy. The assumption here is that
what a certain age counts as knowledge entails a specific view of
the human being are for that age.

b. Another major divergence from Kant is that Foucault
does not accept the idea that there is a single, fixed set of
principles that determine our basic assumptions about what
constitutes an order of nature. Foucault writes:

These relations are established between institutions,
economic and social processes, behavioural patterns, systems
of norms, techniques, types of classification, modes of
classification; and these relations are not present in the
object, it is not they that are deployed when the object is
being analysed ... . They do not define its internal
constitution, but what enables it to appear, to juxtapose
itself with other objects ...." (AK : 49).

Foucault's arguments here points to hidden values behind our
current sense of orderliness. He clearly states that discursive
relations, the sort of relationship that articulates the
knowledge claims, need to be viewed as having a social framework.
This view of discursive practices or knowledge is one that is
able to show that, "its role among non-discursive practices is
extrinsic to its unity, its characterisation and the laws of its
formation" (AK : 68). This is indeed an attempt to provide an
alternative to the Cartesian assumption of privileged
subjectivity and fixed rationality. The emphasis on
discontinuity has special importance as a current strategy for
writing the history of thought. Foucault's investigations of
knowledge and social institutions need to be seen as resulting
via two-stage argument :

(a) "The order of things " demonstrates that the human
sciences are constitutive of a particular sense of what it is to
be a human being.

(b) This sense of humanness is central to our acceptance of
certain social institutions as involving rational modes of
handling human beings.
Heidegger's dialogue with Kant is perhaps co-extensive with his philosophical activity as such. Heidegger's exposition of the ontology of Kant takes the form of a meditation on "Critique of Pure Reason". Being is neither a thing, nor the quality of a thing. It is rather a positing. Positing in this context is representing.

Heidegger writes:

Kant's thesis that being is not a real predicate cannot be impugned in its negative content. By it Kant basically wants to say that being is not a being. In contrast, Kant's positive interpretation—existence as absolute position (perception) being as position in general—turned out to be unclear as well as ambiguous and at the same time questionable when suitably formulated.81

In criticising Kant, Heidegger notes that Kant connects positing with perception. He then accuses Kant of having made a fundamentally psychological analysis of perception. He criticises the Kantian project by opposing it to an existential analytic of Dasein. In contrast, in Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics, he stressed the continuity between the project of the Critique of Pure Reason and his own project of constructing a fundamental ontology of finitude in Being and Time. Heidegger writes:

The problem of the origin and the truth of the categories, however, is the problem of the possible manifestation of the Being of the recent in the essential unity of ontological knowledge .... Rather, the question
Juris is only a way of expressing the necessity of an analytic of transcendence i.e. of a pure phenomenology of the subjectivity of the subject and furthermore of the subject as finite.  

Here, the attempt is not to discuss the differences in Heidegger's early and late Kant interpretations. In the latter works, the difference between the enterprise of Kant and his own work is stressed by his insertion of Kant's philosophy into the history of onto-theology. The movement from the philosophy of Kant to Hegel revolves on the notion of finitude. In Heidegger's early writings on Kant it appears that this movement is a "retrogression". Hence Kant's discovery of the essentially finite character of "human knowledge is forgotten". Heidegger writes:

What is the significance of the struggle initiated in German idealism against the "thing in itself" except a growing forgetfulness of what Kant had won, namely, the knowledge that the intrinsic possibility and necessity of metaphysics, i.e. its essence, are at bottom, sustained and maintained by the original development and searching study of the problem of finitude?

He then proceeds to characterise the philosophy of Hegel as one of infinitude. He cites Hegel's famous line where he refers to his logic as "that this content shows forth of God as He is in his eternal essence before the creation of Nature and finite spirit." But Heidegger discusses Kant's inability to fully elaborate all of the implications of his doctrine of judgement.
According to him it is essentially lodged in the shadow of finitude. He writes:

Hegel alone apparently succeeded in jumping over this shadow but only in such a way that he eliminated the shadow, i.e. the finiteness of man and jumped into the sun itself. Hegel skipped over the shadow but he did not, because of that, surpass the shadow.

Heidegger concludes his discussion about Kant's thesis of Being with an analysis of the postulates of empirical thought:

(a) that which agrees with the formal conditions of experience is possible,

(b) that which agrees with the material conditions of experience is actual,

(c) that which in its connection with the actual is determined in accordance with the universal conditions of experience is necessary.

He carries out this analysis for the purpose of showing that Being and its modalities - possibility, actuality, and necessity "do not say anything about what the object is but rather about the how of the relationship of the object to the subject".

However, in the Critique of Pure Reason the subject remains a finite subject.

Throughout Foucault's early works, Being and Time occupies a central position as an implied object of criticism. Many key passages show that Foucault is attempting to transcend what he takes to be philosophy of our time. Foucault's earliest critical allusion to Heidegger occurs in the preface to The Birth of the
Clinic. The target of the discussion is the hermeneutic methodology of interpretation, which Foucault calls "Commentary". Foucault writes:

Commentary questions discourse as to what it says and intended to say; it tries to uncover that deeper meaning of speech that enable it to achieve an identity with itself. 

Commentary rests on the postulate that speech (Parole) is an act of "translation", that it has the dangerous privilege images have of showing while concealing and that it can be substituted for itself indefinitely in the open series of discursive repetitions. (PF:xvi-xvii).

Foucault goes on to say that such an approach depends on an implicit contrast between the signifier and the signified. Then the original text being interpreted contains only the former, but does not exhaust the latter. Exhausting the signified becomes the task of commentary. This procedure can be compared explicitly to the task of "hermeneutic interpretation" which Heidegger sets himself. In the introduction to Being and Time, Heidegger discusses the possibility that a phenomenon can be buried over so that it does not manifest itself directly to intuition. He links this possibility to the phenomenon being communicated as an assertion. The source of the assertion may well lie in a prior intuition. But it is characterised inadequately. Heidegger writes:

It gets understood in an empty way and is thus passed on, losing its indigenous character and becoming a free-floating thesis.97

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From this, Heidegger goes on to conclude that a proper phenomenology will be "directly opposed to the naivété of a haphazard immediate and unreflective beholding". To avoid this naivété, phenomenology must have recourse to "interpretation". Thus the analysis of Dasein becomes the reading of a text. At the same time, while it "says" everything it has to say, does not show everything it "means". That is, while our pre-ontological understanding of Being and Dasein does really reveal these phenomena. But it requires a commentator or a phenomenologist whose interpretation translates our every day interpretation properly. Heidegger's explicit use of the term hermeneutic in this context is very significant. Heidegger writes:

The phenomenology of Dasein is a "hermeneutic" in the primordial signification of this word, where it designates this business of interpreting. But to the extent that by uncovering the meaning of being and the basic structures of Dasein in general we may exhibit the horizon for any further ontological study of those entities which do not have the character of Dasein, this hermeneutic also becomes a hermeneutic in the sense of working out the conditions on which the possibility of any ontological investigation depends.

This sense of "hermeneutic" is very close to Schliermacher's meaning of the term as the "deciphering of Scripture to yield its real" as opposed to its manifest meaning. Sundara Rajan describes the project of *Being and Time* thus:

As a philosophical text, *Being and Time* is itself
hermeneutic in the sense that the earlier Division can be understood only in terms of the interpretation made possible by the later Division II ... But this double hermeneutical structure is not merely a feature of the textuality of Being and Time. .. it is human existence itself which exemplifies this double hermeneutics. 

In contrast to this method, Foucault argues that there is no signified in excess of the signifier. Moreover, there is no meaning beyond that which is manifestly present in the texts, practices and entities under question. There is no deep truth waiting to be uncovered. In Division Two of Being and Time, Heidegger claims to move beyond the everyday to an interpretation of what Dasein really is, i.e. being-toward-death. This core of our being is intended as a historical feature of Dasein which must enter into any of its compartments. For Heidegger, it is meant to be the transcendental conditions for human experience. Foucault analyses the manifest discourse on western medicine, and claims to show that Heidegger's interpretation of death as the hidden truth of our nature is itself ahistorically conditioned event. According to Foucault, prior to the 19th century, the concept of death radically excluded from the concept of life and nature as a counter-force. This conceptual structure made medical pathology an unintelligible enterprise. Foucault writes:

It is when death became the concrete a priori of medical experience that death could detach itself from
counter nature and become embodied in the living bodies of individuals. (BC: 196).

Once this structural shift occurred it became possible to establish through pathology a new form of knowledge, a science of man qua finite individual. Foucault does not claim that this new experience of the body and its capacity for death originates within medicine and spreads to other areas of culture. The point is that the medical experience is representative of a changed perception which occurred globally in western culture. This conclusion undermines Heidegger's analysis in Division two in a two fold way. Foucault writes:

So much so that contemporary thought, believing that it has escaped it since the end of the nineteenth century, has merely rediscovered, little by little, that which made it possible. In the last years of the eighteenth century, European culture outlined a structure that has not yet been unraveled, we are only just beginning to disentangle a few of the threads which are still so unknown to us that we immediately assume them to be either marvellously new or absolutely archaic, whereas for two hundred years (not less, yet not much more) they have constituted the dark, but firm web of our experience. (BC: 199).

The peculiar interpretation of death that Heidegger gives has been implicit in our self-understanding for at least a century before Heidegger gave it explicit voice in Being and Time. Moreover this experience of death is itself historically
contingent beginning as it does "in the last years of the eighteenth century.

Foucault's critique of Heidegger is subsequently deepened in his next work, The Order of Things. Again, Being and Time is implicitly treated as representative of our modern self-interpretation which begins with Kant. However, the experience of death is no longer the sole focus of concern. Foucault sees the shift into the modern philosophical paradigm as a change from the "analysis of representation" to the "analytic of finitude". Under the rubric of the analysis of representation, which Foucault situates as the form of philosophy from Descartes to Kant provided discourse a transparent medium of representation. The linguistic elements of this representation corresponded to primitive elements in the world. Dreyfus and Rabinow describes thus:

Human beings happened to have the capacity to use linguistic signs, but human beings as rational speaking animals were simply one more kind of creature whose nature could be read off from its proper definition so that it could be arranged in its proper place on the table of beings**.

However, he for whom the representation exists is never found in the table himself. With Kant, however, man as both subject and object of knowledge appears for the first time. The fundamental task of philosophy after Kant thus becomes to show how a finite individual, man can serve as the foundation for the possibility of all knowledge. This very knowledge comes from the sciences
reveals man to be conditioned by all sorts of empirical factors. Language as revealed by hisotrical philology loses its transparency as a medium of representation, instead it becomes an alien conditioning force. The representing function itself becomes problematic. The task of making it possible shifts from language to man. Foucault writes:

In contrast, the analysis of man's mode of being as it has developed since the nineteenth century does not reside within a theory of representation (OT: 337).

The Pre-critical analysis of what man is in his essence becomes the analytic of every thing that can in general be presented to man's experience. (OT: 341).

The analytic of finitude that begins with Kant reaches its "Consummate expression" in Heidegger's Being and Time. Heidegger's project is implicated in these "anthropological" assumptions is clear from the very beginning of Being and Time. Heidegger makes this explicit:

So whenever an ontology takes for its theme entities whose character of Being is other than that of Dasein, it has its own foundation and motivation in Dasein's own onticical structure, in which a pre-ontological understanding of Being is comprised as a definite characteristic.

Therefore fundamental ontology, from which alone other ontologies can take their size must be sought in the essential analytic of Dasein. Dasein also possesses - as constitutive for its understanding of existence - an
understanding of the Being of all entities a character other than its own. Dasein has therefore a third priority as providing the ontio-ontological condition for the possibility of any ontologies. Thus Dasein has turned out to be more than any other entity, the one which must first be interrogated ontologically.42

For Foucault, this very assumption of Dasein's primacy creates insoluble paradoxes, which are representative of contemporary philosophy. Heidegger is forced to claim an identity and a difference between finitude as limitation and finitude as the source of all facts. This leads to three paradoxes:

1. Man is an ontic fact to be studied empirically and yet the transcendental condition for all ontic knowledge.

2. Man is obscure to himself and yet is the source of all intelligibility.

3. Man is the product of history and yet the source of that history.

In Kant, these problems are avoided by essentially bifurcating man into an empirical self and a transcendental self. But such a bifurcation is itself unintelligible. Hegel attempted to overcome this difficulty by identifying the word with one divine transcendental self. Heidegger's approach will be to insist that the two dimensions are aspects of one undivided being, Dasein.43
For Foucault, the primary self-assigned task of Modern philosophy is to try to make each of the two terms in each of the three “doublets” coincide. Foucault writes:

Nevertheless, the analysis of actual experience is a discourse of mixed nature; it is directed to a specific yet ambiguous stratum, concrete enough for it to be possible to apply to it a meticulous and descriptive language yet sufficiently removed from the positivity of things for it to be possible, from that starting point, to escape from that naivete to contest it and seek foundations for it. (QT: 321)

It is the very ambiguity of this "stratum". The experience of what is given and experience of what makes experience possible makes Heideggarian project fundamentally incomplete. The very open-endedness of phenomenological (Heideggerian) experience guarantees that we will be constantly confronted with new experiences. These experiences stand in need of a phenomenological foundation in experience. It seems, however, that precisely the ahistorical apriori character of Dasein's constitution would rule out this difficulty. Furthermore while phenomenological experience "tokens" may form an open-ended series there is no reason to assume that the types of phenomenological experience may not be finite. It is thus finitely described. History becomes the primary empirical mode of human self-understanding. Then the transcendental question arises: What about human nature which stands as the condition of the possibility of all historical understanding? Since human nature is conceived as intrinsically historical, the answer
itself will lie in our historical origin and development. Heidegger's answer to the question of what the transcendental condition of historical understanding is lies in his analysis of temporality. "It is our engagement in practical projects which allow us to understand (a) ourselves, (b) the worldly circumstances we find ourselves in which demand practical responses and (c) the tools we reach for to implement those responses as "already-there" or inherited from the past. Our practical compartments bring about that there is time, and thus history. Foucault writes:

"So it is in him that things (those same things that hang over him) find their beginning: rather than a cut, made at some given moment in duration, he is the opening from which time in general can be reconstituted, duration can flow and things, at the appropriate moment, can make their appearance. (QT: 332)."

However this solution leaves us at the Kantian level of separating the transcendental from the flow of history. The question that arises then for Heidegger is that when these transcendental practices began within the actual flow of history. At that point "in time", the transcendental aspect of history and the empirical aspect of history would be identical, thus fulfilling the basic project of eliminating the distinction between subject and object.

If the classification of any historical practices lie in the practices which immediately precede it then we will be driven
back a temporal stage to look at its historical background. This background stage will itself be unintelligible unless subjected to further clarification in terms of its historical background. Foucault calls this process "the retreat of the origin". At the time of the point of origin (the adherent of pre-socratic philosophy) there can be no historical background to ground the origin's intelligibility. The origin of time becomes a "holy gift from Being" itself. The attempt to understand the origin thus collapses into unintelligibility. Heidegger can only say that we are not yet ready to understand our origin. This problem structure suggests a bold unearthing of our past and tentative patience towards a future:

The origin, becoming what thought has yet to think and always afresh would be forever promised in an imminence always nearer yet another accomplished. In that case the origin is that which is returning, the repetition towards which thought is moving, the return of that which has already always begun, the proximity of a light that has been shining since the beginning of time. Thus, for the third time the origin is visible through time; but this time it is the recession into the future, the injunction that thought receives and imposes upon itself to advance with dove-like steps towards that which has never ceased to render it possible... (Ot: 332).

For Foucault, the self as object/subject engaged in the types of "self-clarification" is not a real entity, but a regulative concept which emerged during the paradigm shift.
inaugurated by Kant and concluded by Heidegger. This concept is part and parcel of an ontology which has dominated western thought for one hundred and fifty years. This ontology is haunted by an interminable succession of paradoxes and problems. The "last" great representative "anthropological" ontology of Heidegger is collapsing precisely because it has exhausted its resources for dealing with the problems it has created. If it collapses, then the concept "man" will presumably cease to find employment. What will or ought to replace him in our "ontology" remains an unanswered question. What concept of the self does Foucault suggest as a replacement of Heidegger's account is none. In his later works, he does attempt a kind of account of "who we are" in terms of amorphous political forces which do not individuate into persons. A discussion of these views is beyond the scope of this thesis. The challenge Foucault throws down is this: for a hundred and fifty years we have attempted to understand ourselves as "selves" and have failed to produce a satisfactory account. Isn't it time we gave up?

Foucault writes: As the archaeology of our thought easily shows, man is an invention of recent date. And one perhaps nearing its end. " (OT: 387).

Notes
2. Ibid, pp. 346 - 347, A 371
3. Ibid, p. 59, A12 = B26
5. Ibid, p. 445, A500 = B528
6. Ibid, p. 593, A739 = B767
17. Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology" in


In his lecture on “The Principles of Reason”, Diacritics, XIX (Fall 1983), pp. 17-18, Derrida explicitly endorsed Heidegger’s analysis of the sameness of two “techno-scientific super powers” and stated that it would be necessary to find a new foundation for community to escape from the totalitarian tendencies of Power Politics.


In Being and Time, concepts like “everydayness” and “They” are of interest primarily for their inauthentic thoughtlessness. They do not yet have the specific negative historical meaning of unbounded calculating, willing and wanting which Heidegger attaches to the everyday world and “average man”, as his sense of the crisis of modernity grows.


22. This is the drift of Habermas’ criticism of Heidegger in The
Habermas has provided what is arguably one of the most powerful learning processes of modernity. Moreover, he gives us some useful ways of beginning to think simultaneously about our unlearning processes. But from within an intellectual project pursued under the sway of the responsibility to act, Habermas cannot fully come to terms with this unlearning. For Habermas, we learn only in so far as we can bind ourselves to rationalisation complexes in which there is an "accumulation of knowledge”.

24. ibid, p. 209.


26. Martin Heidegger, Poetry, Language, Thought, pp. 165-166. For Heidegger this movement is also a "putting on the way" in the sense of an orienting of our experience from a technologising attitude.

27. ibid. pp. 198-200.
28. ibid, p. 186.
29. The "ethical" dimension is problematic because of the uneasy relation that exists in his work between the two faces of every day life. The first face is the every day life of subjective claims and inter subjective structures of expectation. The second face is the mode of experience within which we gesture our finitude and the place of otherness.

30. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 504. A598 =B626. In this context, it is meant to show that the type of analytical argument employed by Anslem and by Descartes after him, to prove the existence of God from the concept of God is necessarily invalid "a miserable tautology". Heidegger points out that Kant's thesis contains both a negative and a positive statement. It first denies that being is a real predicate. Thus it asserts that it is "merely the positing of a thing".


33. ibid, pp. 252-93.

34. ibid, p. 253.


37
38. Idem.
39. ibid, p. 82.
42. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, pp. 33-34.
43. In *Being and Time*, Dasein is described as follows: The Da is the clearing and openness of what is as which human stands out. Theodore Kisel writes "The term proclaims on the one hand that the question of what it means to be is to be appropriated through the human being or better through the question first arises and in the ways in which it arises, as a very human kind of question. On the other hand, in its explicit reference to a place rather than an entity and to the verbal rather than the substantive sense of being, it hints at a movement which goes beyond man toward the being in which he is implicated. For Dasein is more than man; it refers at once to the experimental process in which man is implicated; it is both the occurrence of revelation and its frame of reference". Theodore Kisel, "Toward the topology of Dasein" in *Heidegger: The Man and The Thinker*, ed. Thomas Sheehan (Chicago: Precedent, 1981).