

THE VISUAL FORMATION OF CARTESIAN SUBJECT IN MODERN  
METAPHYSICS:  
A CRITIQUE OF COGITO PHILOSOPHY

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO  
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
OF  
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE  
IN  
SOCIOLOGY

SEPTEMBER 2006

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **THE VISUAL FORMATION OF CARTESIAN SUBJECT IN MODERN METAPHYSICS: A CRITIQUE OF COGITO PHILOSOPHY**

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September 2006, 121 pages

This thesis scrutinizes modern metaphysics through a specific reading and critique of Cartesian Philosophy. In the study, the concepts of metaphysics, ideology, modernity, subject and modern science are re-examined in their relations among them and in that the peculiarity of modern metaphysics is attempted to be revealed. At the core of the thesis, Descartes' understanding of subject is inquired to be modern subject, and its role in the transformations happened in Western world with the advent of modern age is studied. Also, the two main axes of the critique of subject, subject as substance and subject as effect, are questioned in their difference or similarity regarding in essence their matter of inquiry, by modeling the Cartesian Subject.

Keywords: Modernity, Metaphysics, Ideology, Subject, Descartes, Cogito Philosophy, Modern Science, Vision and Visuality

## ÖZ

### MODERN METAFİZİKTE KARTEZYEN ÖZNENİN GÖRSEL KURULUMU: BİR COGİTO FELSEFESİ ELEŞTİRİSİ

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Eylül 2006, 121 sayfa

Bu tez modern metafiziği Kartezyen Felsefenin özel bir okuması ve eleştirisi dolayımında gözden geçirmektedir. Çalışmada metafizik, ideoloji, modernlik, özne ve modern bilim kavramları birbirleri ile olan ilişkileri üzerinden yeniden incelenmiş ve modern metafiziğin hususiyetinin ortaya çıkarılmasına teşebbüs edilmiştir. Çalışmanın merkezinde, Descartes'in özne anlayışının modern özne olup olmadığı sorulmuş ve Batı dünyasında modern çağın doğuşu ile birlikte gerçekleşen dönüşümlerdeki rolü irdelenmiştir. Aynı zamanda, Kartezyen Özne modellenerek özne eleştirisinin iki temel ekseni olan töz olarak özne ve etki olarak özne inceleme nesnelerinin özde benzer ya da ayrı oldukları bağlamında sorgulanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Modernlik, Metafizik, Ideoloji, Özne, Descartes, Cogito Felsefesi, Modern Bilim, Görme ve Görsellik

To My Big Family

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The author wishes to express his deepest gratitude to his supervisor Dr. A. Adnan Akçay for his guidance, advice, criticism, encouragements and insight throughout the research. Above all, the author appreciates his advisor for showing sympathy in the hardest times of the study, believing in author's ability to manage the problem put into agenda by the thesis, and for his dedication to contribute to the study in a level beyond than that may be expected from his position.

The author would also like to thank Assoc. Prof. Dr. Belkız Ayhan Tarhan for her suggestions and comments, and for introducing the author to specific literature on the subject during the maturation period of the study that resulted in the widening of the scope of the author regarding the area of scrutiny.

The technical assistance and morale support of Nitsa Çukurel are gratefully acknowledged.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION: CONCERNING METAPHYSICS AND IDEOLOGY

In metaphysics reflection is accomplished concerning the essence of what is and a decision takes place regarding the essence of truth. Metaphysics grounds an age, in that through a specific interpretation of what is and through a specific comprehension of truth it gives to that age the basis upon which it is essentially formed. This basis holds complete dominion over all the phenomena that distinguishes the age. Conversely, in order that there may be an adequate reflection upon these phenomena themselves, the metaphysical basis for them must let itself be apprehended in them. Reflection is the courage to make the truth of our own presuppositions and the realm of our own goals into the things that most deserve to be called in the question (Heidegger, 1977).

#### 1 The Aim of the Thesis

In the prelude to his great work, “The Age of World Picture”, Martin Heidegger while defining reflection, explains what metaphysics is and how it grounds an age. Metaphysics is the most important discipline in philosophy since antiquity, when Aristotle himself coined the concept meaning “beyond nature”. It is the study of being (also the study of the capacity of being) and first principles. It is asking the question of *what is* and answering that question with a decision regarding the essence of truth. It is determining what is definite or exact, what is not to be argued, and what is accepted without question. It is the belief in something without any doubt and this belief establishes the ratio of an age. In an age, it creates the core of the reference system with regard to which all the things are related among them. Therefore, it is to a certain extent reflected in how all the things in that age are viewed, considered or regarded. Metaphysics is the conduct of human beings by which we create the principles of the world we live in and it is our belief in those principles.

The concern of this study is the metaphysics of modern age, how it differentiates in its essence from the metaphysics of other ages, and how this essence is reflected in the different realms of life. With this concern, the aim of this study is frankly to put forward an effort to understand and criticize modernity and the modern subject. Also, the modern subject is the matter of inquiry in this study, as when one is

concerned with the metaphysics of an age, the question of subject, i.e. who we are and how we are related to our environment, is a crucial point to be scrutinized. It is fundamental in dealing with the question of what is and deciding on the essence of truth, but more importantly the question of the subject is critical in that it is the subject through which the metaphysics of an age is created.

In this study, *modernity is* seen as a positioning change with regard to how the relationship between human beings and the world we perceive and we live in is established. It is of course a shift in metaphysics and therefore a new era in western history, which constitutes the radical reorganization of social, economic, cultural and political life in the western world, accordingly. However, the change of positioning with respect to the understanding of the subject stressed above implies something more than only a change in metaphysics. It implies a change in metaphysics in a way to deny the existence of metaphysics. It implies a change in metaphysics that denies the role of human beings or the role of the subject in the formation of first principles. It implies a change in metaphysics that reduces human beings first to an observer of the world they live in then to a sole viewer of it. And, this study tries to scrutinize the roots of such a change and its general effects, results, and outcome in the western world.

### **1.1 The First Conditions for Metaphysics and Modernity**

Human beings are *constructive beings*. We are also productive with respect to the things we create from what we are given by our environment beyond the complexity level of the produce of many other living organisms. Nevertheless, what is meant by constructive is something more comprehensive than our productivity, something unique to us. It is about setting something in logical order, into a reference group or into a ratio. It is related to the capability of conceptual thinking and language. It is in our *nature* to give meaning to anything we experience which in turn affects, constrains, and enables, or even forms, our relationship with the world surrounding us. These meanings determine who we are, how we relate ourselves to the other, and all the human conducts and human condition in general. If there is anything essential in human beings, it is this constructive mode of existing. We are constructive and this feature enables us to give meaning to what is. If there is any essence immanent to the being and non-being, we can ignore it, change it, or replace

it, and most importantly we can make truth out of it. However this ability (or symptom, some say) of human beings is not always limitless. Its boundaries are determined by the brevity of life, potency of the material existence and the direct or indirect influence of human construction itself. We are constructed as much as we are constructive and this is the very first condition for metaphysics as it is the conduct of making the truth through meaning.

We are constructed as much as we are constructive and because of this we are historical beings for sure, nonetheless our metaphysical act is beyond history. With regard to metaphysics, history is a multiple and repetitive conduct of human beings. It is neither linear nor progressive. Metaphysics, in this regard, while only possible by time, is over history and its reference is always human beings who continuously re-write the history as they metaphysically construct their own time. However, modernity is an exceptional era which caused the downfall of that fact by denying our constructiveness. By nestling the idea of possibility of a linear history and progress in its very essence, modernity made a linear history possible. Almost every aspect of modernity reflects such a historical performance. Human beings became the effect of that linear history while being its unique actor. History became a scene on which human beings play a scenario and evolve into the modern subject through that history. The metaphysics of modernity wrote its own history, as it may well be expected. However this history of modern age changed the nature of history and the position of human beings. Modernity made its own rules operate in that new history and proved those rules in the practice of it. To put it in a different way, modernity, by changing the role of human beings with reference to history, became ahistorical. In that ahistoricity lies its self-referentiality.

When we consider the limitations of the constructiveness of human beings, we see various material limitations and possibilities/opportunities; i.e. a multiplicity in human condition. Even in a surprising and odd sameness of those possibilities and limitations, we observe a multiplicity in the metaphysical creation. Modernity suppresses this multiplicity. In spite of the fact that there are many other possible ways of constructing life, modernity makes itself unique with its capacity and striving to overwhelm and dominate the rest through neglecting and ignoring it or including it by defining or translating it to its own terms. *It destroys the unknown and mystery*, which have their roots in alternative truths, *by fixing metaphysics to a*

*reference point out of human beings.* Hence, modernity and the essence of modern age, which are used here alternately as the existence of the latter is the thing that enables us to talk about the existence of the former as a new age, should be examined very carefully and criticized with an endless effort, which is clearly the aim of this study. This is also why the thesis will mostly focus on the limitations of the era, rather than its enabling capacity, which will be touched upon roughly in the section, *on modern science.*

## **1.2 The Question of Subject**

The critique of the subject has always been the most important area of study in social sciences in spite of being not the most popular one. It is possible to say that there are two main axes on which the subject is taken into account in modern social thinking. First one is the critique of the subject as substance, which dominates the arguments on the issue in the early critiques of modernity. The second is concerned with the subject as an effect and more or less central in the relatively late critiques of modernity. There are scholars arguing that the distinction based on the difference in the approach to the subject is due to a change in understanding of the subject in the western world. The dispute is that there is a rupture with regard to the subject in modernity that changed the subjective understanding radically that is also reflected in the other spheres of life. Particularly, studies which focus on the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and examining how these radical changes concentrated in that time (for instance Crary, 1990) claim that the modern subjective understanding has changed. Many others (for instance Ashley, 1997) have even claimed that this change resulted in the birth of a new era that is characterized with the famous concept of the recent times, namely post-modernity.

Here in this study it is believed that the two main axes of critique of the subject in modernity have no difference in terms of their matter of inquiry in their essence. The only difference is the level of questioning in which the subject is taken into account. Nietzsche and Heidegger, who are the two major figures of the first axis, examine the issue in a more symbolic level, whereas Althusser and Foucault, who are the leading philosophers that initiated the second critique, deal with the same subjective understanding through its appearances in imaginary level. It is obvious that there are clear differences at first sight which led these scholars to take

up the issue from different points of view. It would be naïve to think that there has not been any change in the subjective understanding in the last six centuries in the western world. Yet, here, it is believed that these differences are already immanent in the modern subjective understanding and related to its impossibility in imaginary realm as it is in symbolic realm. In other words, the modern subject already has the potential to evolve into what is criticized by Althusser and Foucault and the 19<sup>th</sup> century has mostly witnessed this evolution. What is at stake is not a rupture but an inevitable continuity. The subject as effect is a symptomatic result of the subject as substance. If this is so, then there is one thing left to be proposed, which is *what the essence of the modern subject is* to the point of view of this study. Nevertheless, before putting forward this essence and concentrating on it, there is a need for further attempt in explaining the critique of the subject, which will be done by taking Althusser's approach as a key point and locating other critiques with reference to it. By doing so, I aim at clarifying the difference in the level of questioning mentioned before.

### **1.3 Ideology and Power**

Ideology and power are the two key concepts in the critique of subject as an effect and Althusser and Foucault are the two main scholars who examine subject in this sense by using the aforementioned concepts, respectively. Here, the Althusserian theory of ideology which is based on a specific reading of Marx will be used as the frame of analysis, since it is more concrete due to the fact that it speaks from a more materialist point of view. This concreteness is expected to allow us to address the issue on a more sociological basis and help us situate how the analyses of the scholars that will be conveyed in the second book of chapter II are relevant to the critique of the subject. I am also aware of the possible limitations of the materialist analysis and with this awareness will strive to extend the Althusser's critique to Marxist theory as he opens up its closed system and breaks its self-referential consistency and uniformity. Here, I will follow Althusser's theory of ideology via his analysis in "Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatuses" and try to grasp how he sees the subject as a product of, or a part of, ideological processes that reproduce the relations of production.

As he quotes from Marx, Althusser starts his analysis with the notion that no *social formation can survive without the reproduction of its conditions of production, which include means of production and relations of production*. While the reproduction of means of production could be examined to some extent in the functioning of economical units like the firm or the factory in capitalist societies, when it comes to the reproduction of labor force the issue becomes more complicated and should be resolved in a detailed fashion as the labor of worker is reproduced outside the firm and accounts for a separate domain that needs further analysis. There are two major components of this new domain which are the long term reproduction of the labor power with the competence that is required by the conditions of production and the short term reproduction of labor force to provide the physical and mental readiness and willingness of the workers on a daily basis. The former is our concern in the first instance in that it involves not only the reproduction of the labor force with certain skills but also in a way its subjection to the existing relations of production, i.e. it involves the obedience the working class to the ruling class. The apparatuses of this subjection and the theory of it that explains the role of the subject is our starting point in this study. The latter is also our concern as it is controversial with regard to being based on the satisfaction of the needs of the workers. The need is something to be satisfied and more importantly, it is something that is possible to be satisfied. However in capitalist economies the workers are to be ready at the production unit repetitiously and day by day which indicates that they have to be unsatisfied with their existing conditions so that they are in need of working. In the capitalist societies this problem is solved with the organization of the consumption. In the chapter 2, book 2, we will study in detail of how this organization of consumption happens, and the role of the modern subject in this organization via Jean Baudrillard's theory of consumption. For now, we will just focus on ideology and the role of subject regarding it.

In mainstream Marxist theory, ideology is simply associated with false consciousness; the unawareness of the men of their real conditions. Althusser's intervention to the Marxist theory at this point is quite critical. He rejects the Feuerbachian idea that *men make themselves an alienated representation of their conditions of existence because of the alienating character of the conditions of existence*. He rather argues that it is the way men relate to their existing conditions



that lead to the imaginary representation of men's conditions. With this argument the absolute determinism of the material conditions in which men exist is denied to a certain extent, or, in other words, the way men relate to their environment is also taken into account. Althusser's proposition is important, since it gives us an opportunity to argue that imaginary representation of the existing conditions of men is a capacity, or a lack, that belongs to men, which allows us also inquiring the consequences of such a capacity, or a lack. In ideology, what is represented is not the real world in an imaginary way but the way men relate to the world surrounding them, or in Althusser's words, the imaginary nature of this relation. By this intervention Althusser simply balances the relationship between the infrastructure and superstructure in Marxist theory, if not turns it upside down.

Althusser points out to a necessity for the enhancement of the Marxist notion of ideology in order to fully grasp the reproduction of relations of production in capitalist societies. In such an endeavor, he starts his examination of ideology by locating the sphere in which ideology operates. With a critical addition to the classical Marxist theory of state, he contributes the distinction between the state apparatus and the state power with a further distinction in the state apparatus as repressive and ideological. He changes the general understanding of the state in Marxist tradition and opens up a new area by which the defined function of the state is fulfilled by different means operating with a totally distinct approach. To the Marxist understanding, the state is the state apparatus that functions according to the interests of the ruling class. Its way of functioning is repression. Althusser puts aside this body of state with what he calls the ideological state apparatuses (ISAs, hereafter). ISAs are expected to serve the interests of the ruling class, just like the state apparatus, yet rather than using repression they function by ideology. This is the major difference between these two types of state apparatuses. In spite of the fact that they both use ideology and repression, repressive state apparatus tends to use violence more dominantly, whereas ideological state apparatuses function primarily by ideology. Furthermore, the repressive state apparatus is a unified body, i.e. there is one repressive state apparatus. Although there is possibility of a temporary conflict between its institutions in certain conditions, they almost always act in harmony, unlike the ideological state apparatuses which are fairly disperse and exist in a plurality. In this plurality and diversity, ideology is the essence which allows us to

think of the ideological state apparatuses as a unified body. This leads Althusser to advance the investigation of ideology in general.

Nonetheless, before the proposition of the theory of ideology, Althusser stresses on another distinction between the ideological state apparatuses and repressive state apparatus. Despite the fact that the repressive state apparatus' public character is evident, ISAs can operate in private institutions as well. This is extremely critical in that it necessitates a revision in the conceptions of the public and the private realms and power as we know them. If for one moment we think of the public as what Althusser quotes from Gramsci; *public is where the bourgeoisie law enacts or exercises its authority*, then it is plausible to argue in Althusserian terms that public is where the state power is evident. If ideological state apparatuses operate in the private institutions functioning according to the interests of the ruling class, we can talk about an invasion of the private sphere by the public or a transformation of the private to the public. This also necessitates a new understanding of power because along with the secondary repressive character of them, ISAs predominantly operate via ideology. If we are talking about ideology, we are simply talking about a new form of power. In other words, when the definition of the state exceeds the classical Marxist understanding, the borders between the public and the private are blurred. The access areas of the state power are therefore extended which demands a new definition of power. Michel Foucault's extensive studies, which will be also utilized in the second book of second chapter, reply to the call for a new understanding of power and are crucial in the recognition of the institutional operation of ideological state apparatuses, the importance of systematic organization of the space in its operation and the role of the subject in the process. As Althusser himself supposes the need for deep inspection of how ideological state apparatuses work, Foucault goes beyond his expectations and presents a body of work that reveals a character of ideology in general even Althusser fails to mention, which we will also touch upon later on.

Althusserian theory of ideology starts with a certain distinction between ideology in general and ideologies. To make this distinction more meaningful and contribute Althusser's legitimization of a theory of ideology, we will focus on Marx's understanding of ideology, which is that *ideology is the system of the ideas and the representations which dominate the mind of a man or a social group*. This

definition is a neutral one; nevertheless ideology is a negative concept in Marxist terminology. Ideology has negative connotations in Marxist terminology because of the fact that the ideas that dominate the mind of a man or a social group conflict with their conditions of material existence. There are two critical points in this statement. One is that if the determinant character of material conditions of men is evident, why such a conflict occurs. And secondly, if such a conflict occurs why this is necessarily a negative thing. In Marxist theory the problem of material determinism is resolved by the Feuerbachian idea that the material conditions in which men exist are alienating. In other words, the conflict between the material conditions of men and the ideas that dominate the mind of a man or a social group occurs as a result of the alienating character of men's conditions of material existence. However, this still leaves us with the second question that why this conflict is necessarily a negative thing. The answer is simple for Marxist understanding: the material conditions of men are the real conditions of men and such a conflict distorts and obscures the representation of the reality. Althusser's critique to the first point is already given, which is that the relation of men to their material conditions is an imaginary one. This criticism also lets us claim that the real conditions of men may well be their existence in ideology or ideology is a determining factor in the organization of the real conditions of men. However, this does not mean that the material conditions of mankind have no importance. They are still the enabling and constraining conditions in which men live. This only means that since the reference to attain ideology as a negative concept has vanished with this criticism, ideology can be examined as a neutral concept. It is the ideologies which can be regarded as negative or positive in their context and in terms of their effects in men's lives. This leads us to the theory of ideology.

Althusser claims that it is the way the relationship of men to their conditions of existence is established that leads them to misrepresent their own conditions of existence. He calls the way this relationship is established, imaginary. We will focus on why this is so. Anything imaginary is an object of mind and mind operates through ideas. It is the relationship of idea to its object that is imaginary. In other words, it is the imperfect correspondence between the ideas and their objects that allows us to claim this relationship imaginary. Even if we accept this imaginary relationship between ideas and their objects without questioning, still the imaginary

character of the relationship of men to their conditions of existence is to be questioned because men relate to their conditions of existence not only through ideas but also through practices and effects from these conditions. Althusser's claim here leads us to two propositions that all the acts of men are motivated by the ideas and the effects of their material conditions on men are processed by men through ideas, otherwise this relationship would not have been imaginary. We may accept these two propositions as premises; nevertheless, there is still one thing left to be done which is to locate ideology and to explain how it dominates the ideas of a men or social group.

Due to the imperfect correspondence between the ideas and their objects, it is possible to talk about a distance between a thing and its idea. Nevertheless, in spite of this distance a connection between an idea and its object is evident. Regarding this connection, there are some ideas whose bond to an object is vague and weak. These ideas even do not have an object without relationship with other ideas and their objects. If we call those ideas as *relational ideas* and accept that they are only apparent in relation to other ideas we can also claim that their relation to their objects is symbolic.<sup>1</sup> By use of these ideas whose relationship to their objects is weak, other ideas are open to a systematic organization among them. We call this organization ideology, and to grasp the ideology one should examine those ideas that spring out of the relational character of human beings. To put it in a different way, there are some ideas whose connection to their objects is arbitrary and conventional. When there is agreement on the objects of those relational ideas, we can talk about the organization of other ideas through them, i.e. we can talk about the existence of ideology. Ideology is only possible so far as there is a convention on the object of some ideas and these conventions are achieved through language. Language is a system of signs, different from speech (*parol *) which is the expression of language (Saussure, 1966). In addition to that, what is expressed in the speech from language is the ideas that exist in a system of signs. In other words, all the ideas exist in a reference relationship in language, and ideology operates in language since it is where the conventions on ideas are determined.

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<sup>1</sup> Although there is a distinction to differentiate concepts in terms of the features of their objects or as a character of a feature of an object like abstract vs. concrete, I do not prefer to use this distinction regardless of the capacity of the word abstract to mean separate or distant and absence as it also conveys meanings of ideal and immaterial, and because of the fixed direction of the reference relation it has (abstraction is always *from* an object, not to an object).

Among all the ideas the ones which have an arbitrary connection to its object not only in language, but also in thought; the ones which corresponds to an absence or vagueness at best, unless they are in relationship to other ideas, the ones the convention on which is to no extent enforced by its object, are relational ideas. Due to the arbitrariness of the objects of those ideas, the structure in which they are determined is beyond history to a certain extent. As we call the process of this determination ideology; the systematic organization of ideas and their object through the relational ideas, it is ideology as a structure which is beyond history. Althusser posits this in his own words as “*ideology has no history*”, which we will try to enhance here. He clarifies this by detaching ideology in general and specific ideologies.

Ideologies, the set of ideas that are organized by relational ideas (also including them) dominating the mind of a man or a social group are historical. Whereas, ideology in general, is immutable in form throughout the history as Althusser puts it forward. However, this form is subject to change in terms of its features or characteristics historically. This is because the tools enabling ideology, i.e. the relational ideas are determined in response to the metaphysics of an age. Metaphysics, while grounding an age, also establishes the features of ideology, the way it operates and its edifice. The affiliation of the relational, symbolic ideas to imaginary ideas is the affiliation of metaphysics to ideology. Metaphysics is the barrier that protects ideology in that it is the reference point that all the ideological claims are based on. Since metaphysics is what determines the truth and not to be discussed, the operational tools of ideology are always true. In other words ideologies of an age are supported by the metaphysics of that age. Therefore, the ideologies are historical, while ideology in general is partially historical. Ideology has no history in terms of its omni-presence as a structure; whereas it is historical regarding that it belongs to a long duration, an era or an age in terms of the determination of its form by metaphysics.

At this point we should examine Althusser’s famous statement that “ideology interpellates individuals as subjects” in order to conceive the effect of metaphysics on the form of ideology and how it operates. In order to follow Althusser’s sequence first we will concentrate on his second thesis that “ideology has a material existence” which will also give us clues about the role of metaphysics in ideology. As it is

derived from Marx and mentioned before, ideology is ideas or representations that dominate the mind of a man or of a social group. In other words, it is a systematic whole regarding the relationship between ideas or representations and the domination over the organization of them in a man's or a social group's mind which is possible due to the imaginariness resulting from the imperfect correspondence between ideas and their objects. Thank to this imaginariness, ideology has the capacity to develop an understanding on the relationship between the ideas and their objects which has a direct influence on the conditions of existence of men. Marx explains this influence with misrepresentation of the material conditions of men. To a certain extent he is right in that ideology has the capacity to change, transform and adapt or even form the ideas of human beings on their conditions of existence. However, this character of ideology is not sufficient to see ideology as false consciousness without the aforementioned Marxist designation of material conditions of existence of men as their real conditions. Having seen the capacity of ideology to change (enhance or distort one may say) the material conditions of men and having overcome the idea that material conditions of men is the sole determinant of all their conditions, Althusser changed the Marxist choice regarding men's real conditions of existence. Although he made this by claiming that ideology has a material character in order to stay in Marxist terminology, what he intends is clearly to stress that men exists in ideology.

It is plausible to argue that Althusser's second thesis is also his first ideological movement by designating what is real and with this designation organizing the Marxist concepts and ideas accordingly. With this new conception of real conditions of men Marxist theory of ideology becomes a misrepresentation of material conditions of men. If Althusser had agreed with Marxist understanding of real, his understanding of ideology would have only been a representation dominating the mind of a man or a social group that contradicts with the real. This is critical for us to see that even in an effort to designate the characteristics of ideology as a structure we are still doing ideological operations. It is clearly visible that metaphysics is crucial in this process in determining *what is* real. Ideology operates through the usage of the idea of the *real* based on a metaphysical choice. Both theories of ideology involve ideological maneuvers and acts and yet they speak as if they are out of ideology, whereas any other idea or discourse is ideological. The

major difference among them is that in a visionary way Althusser admits that his theory is also ideological and he was able to grasp the structural character that ideologies have in common, i.e. ideology in general, and express this even though he speaks in ideology.

The ground on which a claim that a statement is ideological is based on the utterance of the awareness that the very foundation of the that statement is metaphysical. If there is a belief in the metaphysical construction without doubt the enabling tools of ideology are safe guarded. On the other hand, if the metaphysical construction is established in a way to deny the existence of metaphysics, as according to one of the very first premises of this study, the modern age nestles such a metaphysical construction, then in that age the ground of the claim that ideologies that are parallel with the metaphysics of that age are ideological, is in no way visible. This corresponds to what Althusser calls the ideology of ideology, which is the speaking of any ideology as if it speaks out of ideology. Althusser overcomes this to a certain extent via a concealed critique of the metaphysics of the age he lives in as he studies the theory of the ideology in general.

The role of metaphysics in the determination of the structural form of ideology in general is also evident in the interpellation of the individuals as subjects by ideology. As it is tried to be explained before, and as Althusser claims so, there is no practice except by ideology and except in an ideology. Althusser takes this proposition one step forward by concentrating on who acts or is involved in the practice and how ideology include them which leads him to end up with the notion of the subject. He claims that there is no ideology except by the subject and for the subjects and in every sense he is right in this claim. If we stick with the definition of ideology in Marxist terms, ideology is the system of organizing ideas in a way to dominate others' mind. In the core of this organization lies the aim to make others accept a metaphysical construction as a ground. Ideology simply seeks the other's consent over this construction willingly, while it is not the only way that this consent is sought. In a different practice of power one may get the consent of other against the other's will through repression or violence as it is applied in the repressive state apparatus. On the other hand the consent mentioned is critical for it embarks not only the active (insofar as inactivity is seen also as an activity) involvement of the other but also requires willful involvement. To put it in a different way, ideology is

something that manipulates the other's will. Ideology does this manipulation by means of constructing the other in such a way to correspond with the metaphysical creation it is earthed on. Althusser explains the construction of the other through ideology with the thesis that ideology interpellates individuals as subjects. It is reasonable to agree with the idea that ideology's calling is for the subjects. Nonetheless, whom or what is called by ideology and how this calling happens are deeply related to the historical form of ideology that depends on metaphysics of the era it belongs. Furthermore, what is meant by the subject is that its capacities and existence are all determined in metaphysics. Even the functioning of the ideology on the subject, its aim and the effects are settled on metaphysics. The ultimate aim of domination that we derived from the Marxist definition of ideology is also meaningless in this sense for ideology in general. Hence it is plausible to give up the Marxist definition of ideology and come up with a new one as *ideology is a structure including the processes of conveyance of a metaphysical construction to the other*. In this processes the other is also constructed as the subject and to the degree that the other agrees the role given for him/her in the metaphysical construction he/she becomes a part of that construction. The metaphysical construction has the capacity to utilize ideology as a tool of domination and this depends on the connection of ideology with power. Metaphysics of modern age is the most brutal construction in human history in terms of such a usage of ideology.

In the modern age, as Althusser asserts, ideology constitutes individuals as concrete, distinguishable, irreplaceable, reasonable subjects who consciously and freely make choices and act. He explains how the consent of the other on the conventions on ideas is taken through ideological practices in order to work domination over them, how individuals are formed as subjects in modern age via the example of religious ideology.<sup>2</sup> He also gives clues about the understanding of the subject that metaphysics establishes through ideology and in what sense it allows domination. Our concern in this study is to identify this subject at stake and the metaphysical construction it erupts from so to criticize it in terms of its effects. To

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<sup>2</sup> Although Christianity and modernity seems like two opposite metaphysical constructions, in terms of the form of ideology they have similar features. The omni-potency of God and the omni-potency and self referentiality of transcendental subject of modernity, or the way God interpellates individuals and the way science interpellates individuals as a form are quite alike. In this respect, the form that Althusser explains by using religious ideology as an example is valid for modernity.



put it in a different way in this study, I claim that the way ideology interpellates the other, the designation of the other as individuals, and the formation of the subject by ideology the way it is, are all features of ideology regarding the form of its structure in the modern age. In a totally different metaphysical construction those features may be expected to be absent. As these features of ideology are bound to the metaphysics of the modern age, the subjective understanding of modern age that springs out from the metaphysical choices of the era is our concern. We should seek for the understanding of subject in modern metaphysics or considering the crucial role of subject in metaphysics we should seek for the construction of the subject that is the essence of the modern age.

## **2 The Focus of the Thesis**

As it is laid down so far, the aim of this study is to understand the metaphysics of the modern age and to criticize the essence of modernity. Since the subject is one of the chief determinants of any metaphysical construction, the way the subject is understood and constructed in the modern age is designated as an important area of scrutiny. As a first attempt in this examination, one needs to define what is meant by modern subject. In this study, it is believed that the metaphysical roots of modern subject lie in the philosophy of René Descartes. In any study focused specifically on Descartes, it is possible to find phrases claiming that Descartes is the most widely studied, disputed and the most important philosopher of the modern age (for instance Cottingham, 1992). Nevertheless, the emphasis of the importance of his work or how widely his work is studied is not enough to legitimize such a belief because it is possible to find many other scholars like Marx, Weber, Hegel, Nietzsche, and many others whose works are claimed to be studied as much as Descartes' or to have a similar impact on modern life. What differentiates Descartes is that he is also regarded as the founder of modern philosophy and father of modern mathematics (Cottingham, 1998; Ariew, Cottingham, and Sorell, 1998). Moreover, any critique of modernity or examination of the modern age on the philosophical level or specifically in metaphysics turns its attention and focus on Descartes and his philosophy. This is because apart from the importance of his work, he is one of the very few philosophers whose ideas changed the shape of the subject. The focus of

this study is Descartes' understanding of subject and its core role in the construction of the modern metaphysics.

### **3 The Sequence**

The study consists of two centers of attention that correspond to two books in second chapter apart from the introduction chapter and the section that lays down concluding remarks. The first book deals with the original works of Descartes, and tries to draw the outline of his understanding of the subject, the visual formation of it and the inconsistencies in his theory. The second book by utilizing the enlightening theories of major scholars like Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan, Jean Baudrillard, Hannah Arendt, Michel de Certeau, Richard Sennett, John Berger, Jonathan Crary, and Martin Jay tries to illuminate the role of the Cartesian Subject in modernity.

### **4 The Methodology**

The methodology of the study depends on two major approaches in social analysis. First one is regarding the understanding of history whereas the second concerns with how theory is construed; namely genealogy as it is construed by Foucault (1977) and theory as narration as it is introduced by Baudrillard (Williamson, 1996).

#### **4.1 Genealogy**

The anonymous online dictionary Wikipedia.org defines Foucault's understanding of genealogy as follows:

Michel Foucault's concept of *genealogy* is construed as the history of the position of the subject which traces the development of people and society through history. His genealogy of the subject accounts for the constitution of knowledge, discourses, domains of objects etc., without having to make reference to a subject which is either transcendental in relation to the field of events or runs in its empty sameness throughout the course of history.<sup>3</sup>

The thesis will follow the same approach by Foucault but look for the early traces of what is introduced by Foucault and see if the rupture he and his followers display with a special emphasis on 19<sup>th</sup> century is actually a continuity from an earlier

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<sup>3</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genealogy\\_%28Foucault%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genealogy_%28Foucault%29) .

rupture, which enables us to talk about continuity in history for the first time. In other words, the thesis will follow the history of that subject which traces the development of people and society through history to an early period, but also try to explain how this subject is formed at once and turned into a transcendental one.

#### **4.2 Theory as Narration**

The criticism of the modernity in the thesis centers its attention around the ‘dehumanization’ of the world and the annihilation of the divinity and subjectivity of humanity by materialization and objectification of it. And as stated above genealogy is a way to follow, to put forward how we became the objects of one reality, while once realities were the objects of our subjective thoughts. Yet, this endeavor is also a narration which itself constructs what it claims. The only difference in this from any other scientific claim is that it is reconciled with the other ways of constructing the world we live in and strongly believes in the worth of human capacity/lack to do so.

#### **5 The Language of the Thesis**

Apart from the institutional necessity to write this thesis in English, the author is also willing to do so as the English language is a unique one in today’s world by being the instrument and restrainer of academic communication along with being the language of the lay person if at all it is possible to find the correspondence of this word. This thesis presents the ideas of the author to the criticisms of the academic community but aims at not being limited with that group of readers and English is a language that serves both causes well. While this study assures the requirements of the scientific customs of our time, it is not possible to say it is that satisfactory with regard to its way of narration. The work diversifies from the modern scientific tradition as it will avoid to a certain extent to speak the words of a transcendental subject who utters the traces of ultimate truth, or has a claim to reach such a place with the lack of the belief in that possibility. Alternately, the enabling potential of a narration speaking up the will of two or more subjects wanted to be utilized and in turn it is aimed to get through the limitations of existing scientific conventions. The author will show the courage of creating and using dialogues with Descartes in the particular parts of the thesis.

## **6 What Author Expects from the Reader**

Due to the subjective understanding that is attempted to be criticized in this study, a dialogue between two people does not mean that two people are speaking. In such a dialogue, it is actually one of them who speaks. The reason why dialogues with Descartes are used in this study is to externalize and include the reader by making two people speak. In a one way discourse the reader may deny either her thoughts or the author's. Nonetheless, if there are two people speaking, since the reader is involved as third person, with his/her changing position enables a different subjective model. That is also why the reader in general is expected to be active and personally involved in any question raised by the thesis, to follow a parallel stance with the main approach of it. Only with this way the uni-subjective approach can be broken and the author can cease to be the object of the ideas put forward. In other words, the reader should speak to the author as much as s/he speaks to the readers.

## CHAPTER II

### CARTESIAN SUBJECT AND MODERNITY

#### BOOK I: Cogito Philosophy

##### 2.1.1 Studying Descartes' Work

In the 5th section of the *Discourse on Method*, Rene Descartes elucidates why he decided not to publish the principles of his philosophy with three motives. Firstly, he did not believe in the use of any criticism and did not want to stand the time burden to answer them depending on his past experience as none of them were as serious as his own criticism to his work. Second, to Descartes, any mind with a lesser capacity than his was in no sense able to understand his work entirely and quote it to others correctly. Lastly, if his arguments were true, any mind more able than his could easily reach the same results by their own, as he did, and in the event of reading his work, achieving those answers they seek without any effort may cost them the loss of the experience of the process of searching. On the other hand if his arguments were wrong then there was no need to examine them.

To start with, Descartes' work is not anymore in progress, although his way and the method are still chiefly in use in the production of scientific knowledge and partly in philosophical works. Moreover, these three motives of his depend on him being sure about the truth and the excellence of his method, which will be the core of the critique of his philosophy in this study. Finally, in the last mark he made about reading his work as an unnecessary effort in case it is not true, he underestimates how immensely the problematic ideas could be effective on others' thoughts and how hard to reverse or resolve their effects, for eventually his work was published even though it was a half century subsequent to his death and had great impact on the development of western rational thought. Even with the *Discourse on Method* in which he explains his method to reach his principles and findings and the reason why he does not wish to publish them he had a great impact in spite of his naïve description of the effort he made as;

I am presenting this work only as a history - or if you prefer, a fable - in which you may find certain examples that are worth imitating; and if along with those you also find various others that you would be right not to follow, that doesn't mean that I am at fault. So I hope that what I am offering will be useful for some without being harmful to anyone, and that everyone will give me credit for my openness (Descartes, 2006).

With belief in the invalidity of all these motives of Descartes to deny the utility of the study of his work, the author sees it right to base this thesis on the philosophy, the works and the life of René Descartes and this thesis to be a comprehensive critique of cogito philosophy with regard to its impact on modernity. Along with this legitimization, the reason why Descartes is chosen as the major figure to examine modernity, as hinted for a few times before in this text, is the belief that his model for subjectivity lies in the core or the essence of the modernity.

### **2.1.2 The Nature of Dialogues**

The dialogues in this chapter vary in their nature. They are all between a man, the author we may assume, and Descartes himself. The very first dialogue is mostly about the ideas of Descartes that he put forward in the *Discourse on Method*, which he defines as an abstract of his philosophy, and rather a monolog except for to the point questions that lead the philosopher to express the background thoughts and experiences on which he based the principles of his method, the use of it and the rules of it. The ideas of the philosopher are almost exactly quoted from the first section and the beginning of the second section of the *Discourse* and given in *italics* in order to maintain his explanation of the events that led him to develop his method as they are. The part or pages from which the quotations are taken is provided with a list in Appendix A. The conversation is given in segments to separate the topics on which Descartes' ideas are presented. The same format is held through the second and the third dialogues, too. The following dialogue includes the philosopher's ideas and quotations from the *Discourse on Method* as well as the first one, yet they are mostly concentrated on the method he developed and the man intervenes as much as he can in order to challenge the philosopher and point the inconsistencies in his thought order. The aim of the questions in general is to intrigue the fable of Descartes, as he calls it, and try to figure out questions that can be developed from his ideas, yet he seems to leave unanswered and if possible to find his reasons for it.

With this, it is meant to crystallize the contradictions in Descartes' method and his philosophy he develops by use of it. Apart from these, the last dialogue tries to derive answers to such questions both Descartes would have agreed but did not utter and answers that would have made the philosopher shake. With passages following each dialogue or with footnotes where necessary the author makes clarifications for the grounds of some questions and the significance of Descartes' responses.

### 2.1.3 Dialogue I

René Descartes, in the winter of the year 1619, in Germany, due to the weather conditions was stuck in a place until the weather should clear. *"Finding no conversation to help him pass the time, and fortunately having no cares or passions to trouble him, he stayed all day shut up alone in a heated room where he was completely free to talk with himself about his own thoughts."* This dialogue is between a man who was wandering in the vast and misty domain of Descartes' recent dwelling and the philosopher. It is expected to be the reflection of some of the ideas he developed there concentrated around some key concepts. Two men put their ideas forward in Descartes' warm room, isolated from the harsh conditions of the nature outside.

...

**The Philosopher:** What were you doing outside in this weather?

**The Man:** I was and I am looking for a man who claims to have find the truth.

**The Philosopher:** Do you know the man?

**The Man:** Not at all, but I am sure that I will recognize him as soon as I meet him.

**The Philosopher:** How do you know so?

**The Man:** Because I know so.

**The Philosopher:** Quite unreasonable.

**The Man:** Unreasonable? What is **reason**?

**The Philosopher:** *It is the good sense; the power of judging well and of telling the true from the false.*

**The Man:** Who has it?

**The Philosopher:** *It is naturally equal in all men. I know so since everyone thinks he has such a good supply of it that doesn't want more, even if he is extremely hard to please about other things. It's not likely that everyone is mistaken about this.*

**The Man:** How about the contradicting ideas and opinions of men about almost everything in the world?

**The Philosopher:** *Our opinions differ not because some of us are more reasonable than others, but solely because we take our thoughts along different paths and don't attend to the same things. It isn't enough to have a good mind; what matters most is using it well. Sheer quality of intellect doesn't make the difference between good and bad: the greatest souls are capable of the greatest vices as well as the greatest virtues. What matters is going on the right path that depends on rightly conducting one's reason.*

**The Man:** A good way of using the mind, rightly conducting one's reason; how are they possible?

**The Philosopher:** *Ever since my youth, I have been lucky enough to find myself on certain paths that led me to thoughts and maxims from which I developed a method; and this method, it seems to me, enables me to increase my knowledge gradually, raising it a little at a time to the highest point allowed by the mediocrity of my mind (which depends on the three sole qualities that I know serving to perfect the mind, namely; quick-wittedness, sharpness and a clear, capacious or promptly serviceable imagination) and the brevity of my life.*

**The Man:** Can you be wrong about it?

**The Philosopher:** *Although there are reasons that can make me think my method does not amount much, the progress I made until now and the results of my method makes me feel extremely satisfied about it and hopeful about future. I still save the possibility that I may be wrong about its value and therefore I choose to expose my method and my experience to the others' judgments.*

**The Man:** How will you do that?

**The Philosopher:** I will write about my experience of it.



**The Man:** I would rather you tell me about it and if I am to learn your experience of this method let's start with talking about the paths that your luck drove you and in turn led you to your method.

**The Philosopher:** *From my childhood, because people convinced me that the books could give me clear and certain knowledge of everything useful in life, I was extremely eager to learn them and read all the books I could. But no sooner had I completed the whole course of study that normally takes one straight into the ranks of the 'learned' then I completely changed my mind about what this education could do for me. For I found myself tangled in so many doubts and errors that I came to think that my attempts to become educated had done me no good except to give me a steadily widening view of my ignorance.*

**The Man:** Could it be your incapacity or your failure?

**The Philosopher:** *I attended one of the most celebrated colleges of Europe and if there are learned men anywhere in the world, I think, there must be some there. There, I was not regarded as 'intellectually' inferior to my fellow students, which shows us I was intelligent enough, and I was good at my courses. Finally, the present age seems to me to be as flourishing, and as rich in good minds, as any before it.*

**The Man:** So you say that if it is your incapacity, then everyone else is incapacitated, too. Is it only the doubts and errors you came across in the books you read that led you to conclude that your attempts to become educated had done you no good?

**The Philosopher:** *With my all respect to the curriculum of the college, I also saw all the dangers of the studies and subjects along with the virtues and good in them.*

**The Man:** The languages you learned, the courses you took, books you read... are they all useless in the end?

**The Philosopher:** *It is good to have studied these subjects in order to know their true value and guard against being deceived by them. It is true that the languages are necessary to learn the works of ancients and the good books are like having a conversation with the most distinguished man of past and you can learn much from them. However, if you read too much of others' thoughts you become a stranger to yourself and lost in them. Also others' thoughts have their own inherent dangers and*

it is easy to be faulted by them. If we think of books in this sense, ***fables** and **history** are also deceiving. While, fables make us imagine many events as possible when they are not,* history on the other hand is misleading, as even in the case that it is the true reflection of the events of past, it is always a reduction.

**The Man:** Morals, theology, mathematics, philosophy, and other sciences... is there not even one study that you find useful?

**The Philosopher:** *I especially enjoy **mathematics**, because of the certainty and evidentness of its reasonings. It contains some very subtle devices that serve not only to satisfy those who are intrigued by mathematical problems but also to help with all practical and mechanical endeavors and to lessen men's labors. But I hadn't yet seen what its real use is: I thought it was of service only in the mechanical arts, and was surprised that on such firm and solid foundations nothing had been built that was more exalted than the likes of engineering, road-building, and so on. On the contrary to mathematics, though they contain many very useful teachings and exhortations to virtue, **morals** are wonderful structures built on shaky grounds. In spite of the fact that they praise the virtues, making them appear more admirable than anything else in the world, they don't adequately explain how to tell when something is a virtue, and often what they call by this fine name 'virtue' is merely an instance of callousness, or vanity, or despair - or parricide.*

**The Man:** How about theology and philosophy?

**The Philosopher:** ***Theology** teaches us the way to heaven. But having learned as a certain fact that the way to heaven is as open to the most ignorant as to the most learned, and that the revealed truths that guide us there are above our intellect, I wouldn't have ventured to submit them to my weak reasonings. **Philosophy** gives us the means of speaking plausibly about any subject and of being admired by the less learned, nevertheless even though it has been pursued for many centuries by the best minds, everything in it is still disputed and hence doubtful. Before you ask about them, law, medicine, and other sciences bring honors and riches to those who study them; nonetheless in so far as they take their principles from philosophy I thought that nothing solid could have been built on such shaky foundations and I have no interest in the honors and riches they bring.*

**The Man:** So, you renounced the books and the studies. How did this lead you to your method?

**The Philosopher:** *As soon as I was old enough to emerge from the control of my teachers, I entirely abandoned scholarship. Resolving to seek no knowledge except what I could find in myself or read in the great book of the world. I spent rest of my youth traveling, visiting courts and armies, mixing with people of different temperaments and ranks, gathering various experiences, testing myself in the situations that luck put me into, and always reflecting on whatever came my way so as to profit from it.*

**The Man:** Did you abandon the knowledge of the past scholars and present studies and turned to ordinary people?

**The Philosopher:** *It seemed to me that I could find much more truth in the reasonings that people make about matters that concern their interests than in a scholar's closeted reasonings about theoretical matters, as in the former case if a person judges wrongly he will face the consequences of his judgment.*

**The Man:** What did you learn from your travels, in the end?

**The Philosopher:** *The greatest benefit I extracted from these observations was their showing me many things which, although seeming wild and ridiculous to us, are nevertheless commonly accepted and approved in other great nations; which taught me not to believe too firmly anything I had been convinced of only by example and custom.*

**The Man:** Do you mean your travels brought you only more doubt than you had?

**The Philosopher:** *Indeed, yes, and also they led me to make a decision one day to undertake studies within myself too and to use all the powers of my mind in choosing the paths I should follow. This has worked better for me, I think, than if I had never left my country or my books.*

**The Man:** This leaves you all alone in the path to develop your method. Is not that denying the help from others in such an endeavor?

**The Philosopher:** Just before you arrived I was thinking about that *there is usually less perfection in works composed of several parts and produced by various different craftsmen than there is in the works of one man.* In this sense, my work would be

*finer and better organized* without being grounded on others' thoughts or enhanced by other people.

**The Man:** Hence, this reconsideration of your method would do no use to you in the end, would it?

**The Philosopher:** I think so.

**The Man:** Then, I would better leave you with your thoughts and trust a lucky event that may result in meeting of us for further discussing your method.

**The Philosopher:** But, the weather outside is still stormy.

**The Man:** Not for all of us, my friend. Not for all of us.

#### **2.1.4 On Dialogue One:**

In this very first dialogue we hear about the ground on which Descartes founds his method of rightly conducting one's reason and seeking the truth in the sciences. As he himself puts forward in the first paragraph of the *Discourse*, in this section we also find his various considerations regarding sciences.

##### **2.1.4.1 Doubt**

The way leading Descartes to his method starts with his skepticism. He doubts the books he read, the studies and sciences he learned; history, theology and philosophy and all the others. He doubts his teachers and the philosophers of both past and his time. His doubt is not limited with this as he is also skeptic of the traditions and the customs of all the nations and societies along with any other person's ideas regardless of whether it has a practical or theoretical base. In this first dialogue, we see the elementary state of Descartes' doubt which will later on evolve into the very first rule of his method. The reason why the background on which Descartes' method is developed, takes an important place in the first dialogue is to find out clues on the criteria on which Descartes' doubt is positioned on and the general or the eventual aim of it.

When we examine the first dialogue closely, we see that the only thing Descartes is not uncertain about is the equal share of reason in all men. As it is given in the text, what makes him so sure of this fact is that everyone thinks they have such a good supply of it. As he proposes, even if they are extremely hard to please about

other things, people do not want more of good sense.<sup>4</sup> For it is not likely that everyone is mistaken about this, reason is naturally equal in all men. As we see in this example what makes him believe the equal share of reason undoubtedly is the fact that he cannot find even one case that would contradict with this idea. More importantly, he is sure on the issue because everyone is sure about it. When we also scrutinize the way Descartes expresses his distrust on the use of the sciences or studies he learned in college, we can observe that he bases his doubt on any issue regarding the existence of contradicting ideas about them. He evaluates sciences on the ground that the knowledge they produce is certain and evident, i.e. he seeks lack of contradiction about the knowledge they produce. That is why he puts mathematics apart from all the other sciences and he is not satisfied with what is built on the firm and enduring ground the knowledge of it provides. This leads us directly to the aim of Descartes' doubt.

As Descartes declares in the first sentence of his First Meditation, what he desires and tries to achieve through his doubt is to establish or develop something firm and enduring in sciences. He calls this something in the title of the *Discourse on Method as truth*, which is what he seeks in sciences through the use of his method of rightly conducting mind. His doubt, in other words, is the first step of his metaphysics. What he ends up with in the first dialogue while he seeks truth, is himself as he doubts anything else as they are either contradictory or based on uncertain things. The last dialogue will witness Descartes' turning his doubt to himself, while the first dialogue has the traces of the process directing Descartes what he calls I, later on.

#### **2.1.4.2 Withdrawal and Belief in Self**

The very first result of Descartes' doubt is his withdrawal to the self. This withdrawal has two phases. The first phase is evident in his skepticism of everything he learned and every authority he knows. By renouncing what he read and learned and abandoning the possible contribution of the reasoning of other people in his quest of seeking truth, he is left by himself. The first phase of withdrawal causes

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<sup>4</sup> In order to put down a note for a later analysis; the grounds that Descartes is not doubtful about the equal share of reason in all men may be men's arrogance or exaggerated self image. This arrogance will also be observed in Descartes' subject construction in this study.

Descartes to question what he calls self and I, but before this questioning comes his belief in himself.

All through the dialogue one, we can observe how sure Descartes is of himself. He assesses on the reason why he found himself tangled in many doubts and errors as a result of his education and he concludes as he could not infer anything from this failure on himself in particular. When he compares himself with his peers and colleagues or the age he lives with the past eras he finds no difference at all in terms of potency. As oppose to a possible incompetence, he regards himself in one respect above the common run of people, since he claims luck directed him to paths that led him to maxims and thoughts from which he developed his method. Hence, his belief in himself is not a belief in his ability or competence to reach the truth. He believes in himself as he believes that he already found the truth with his method. This means simply that Descartes' self will endure the systematic doubt that left him with himself. The third dialogue will focus on this endurance and attempt to challenge it.

### 2.1.5 Dialogue II

In the year 1641, Descartes has moved to a new mansion outside Leiden following the tragic subsequent death of his little daughter and father. Meantime, he has already published the *Discourse* in March, 1636, about to publish the *Meditations* (August 28, 1641, Paris) and working on *The Search for Truth*; his unfinished dialog in French.<sup>5</sup> We can conclude that this is when his method had reached maturity in every respect. This dialog is between a man, whom Descartes met and welcomed to his thoughts almost two decades ago and the philosopher. Having come across in a publisher's office in Leiden, the two men continue their conversation in the garden of Descartes' house.

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**The Philosopher:** Dear friend, it has been years, since we made our little conversation. Many things have happened, since then. Even the world has changed. But little has changed when it comes to my trust in the method I developed, which I

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<sup>5</sup> Adam, C. (1963: 23).

could not find a chance to tell you all about in our last meeting. If you may join me in my house I can introduce you my dear friend, reverend Picot whose company you may like as he is a wise man. I can tell you about my method and the fruits of it, and you can tell me the story of your quest to find the man who thinks he found the truth.

**The Man:** I am honored by your invitation, but may I kindly refuse your offer, until the sun set. It is a beautiful day and you have a fabulous garden here with a spectacular view. I would rather walk with you among the trees and listen to your story about your method.

**The Philosopher:** As you wish. May I then start with refreshing your mind about what made me develop my method and how I used it in rightly conducting my reason?

**The Man:** There is no need for background knowledge as my memory of our last talk is fresh as if it happened today. Why do you not tell me about the principles of your method as an initiation? And, maybe this time I can contribute more to our conversation with challenging questions.

**The Philosopher:** So, I assume you remember that for the sake of rightly conducting my reason, neither what I learned in my youth from my teachers, from the books, from the studies and sciences, nor what I seen through example, the customs and the traditions would be in help of me. They only made me find my self in controversies, conflicts, failures and doubts. Any knowledge that takes them as foundation would be destined to be a failure like them. In order to develop my knowledge progressively, I needed to build my knowledge on a steady and certain ground. Otherwise, as soon as the base of my knowledge is shaken what I constructed above it would have collapsed, too. Therefore, I decided to develop my method to reach such ground and decided to abandon what I learned until that time. This became the foundation for the first rule of my method.

**The Man:** In our last conversation, I realized that a systematic skeptic approach grounds your eagerness to develop your method, and I am not surprised to see that this evolved into one of the principles of your method. However, I am still curious about how you turned it into a rule and how you derived other rules of your method.

**The Philosopher:** When I consider the things I learned in my youth that I accepted as true without considering in the light of reason, I am sure that almost everything I

know is doubtful. Nevertheless, I was hesitant to deny all my knowledge until I use my method for getting all the knowledge my mind was capable of having. So I dwelled upon the most reliable of the studies I learned in my youth in terms of its reasoning, namely mathematics. In the path I follow, I believed algebra and geometrical analysis would be of use to me. I also utilized logic which has many excellent principles. Nonetheless, in a close examination I realized explicit defects of these three skills, which made me decide to use certain aspects of them, instead of adopting all their rules.

**The Man:** Can you mention those defects, briefly?

**The Philosopher:** In no doubt, I can. Logic is for explaining what is known rather than for learning something new. On the other hand, algebra and geometrical analysis cover solely abstract matters and use of them for anything was a matter of suspicion. They create more questions than answers, in a way to tire the imagination and confuse the mind.

**The Man:** How did you manage to derive something useful from them?

**The Philosopher:** Simply by developing some other method by taking the good parts of these three sciences and getting rid of their flaws. I built up four rules to be strictly obeyed and faithfully devoted rather than many rules. As long as I follow these rules and reach any knowledge via them, I could accept that knowledge as a rule and continue like that.

**The Man:** Sounds logical. If you are sure of the truth of anything you can adopt it as a rule.

**The Philosopher:** In this sense, the first rule was shaped as *never to accept anything as true if I didn't have evident knowledge of its truth: that is, carefully to avoid jumping to conclusions and preserving old opinions, and to include in my judgments only what presented itself to my mind so clearly and so distinctly that I had no basis for calling it in question*. I was aware that I should always keep a high level of providence in order to obey this rule.

**The Man:** How you would achieve such truth is a matter of question itself. We can talk about it in detail. Please, proceed to the second one.

**The Philosopher:** *The second was to divide each of the difficulties I examined into as many parts as possible and as might be required in order to resolve them better.*



**The Man:** That is a well-known method for examining things. Like many other methods, it has its own defects, too. We will talk about this, as well.

**The Philosopher:** I would appreciate it, as it has been five years since the publication of my *Discourse on Method* and I can hardly say that I received any sound criticism on it. *If I may continue, the third ·was· to direct my thoughts in an orderly manner, by starting with the simplest and most easily known objects in order to move up gradually to the knowledge of the most complex, and by stipulating some order even among objects that have no natural order of precedence.*

**The Man:** That reminds me a problem I see in your trust in mathematical analysis and judgments. I will touch upon this after you tell me about your last rule.

**The Philosopher:** Not to wait you for long, *the last ·was· to make all my enumerations so complete, and my reviews so comprehensive, that I could be sure that I hadn't overlooked anything.*

**The Man:** I will challenge this rule on the possibility of such an endeavor, but I find it useful to start with the first principle of your method. As far as I know, the drive that led you to develop these rules and as a whole your method was your skepticism of almost everything you know. Now, you set a rule as never accepting anything as true unless you have evident knowledge of its truth. I cannot understand how you would find such an evidence of truth.

**The Philosopher:** I guess you got my stand here on the wrong side. I am not seeking the true things in order to find the truth. On the contrary, as you may see in the negative positing of my principle, I am seeking things that I cannot accept as true. By eliminating all the things I know as true but I am not sure of their truth, I can reach the truth as I come across something the truth of which I cannot doubt. In other words, my method operates in two-folds. Every trial that do not lead me to reach the truth will bring me closer to it.

**The Man:** Now, I see your point, yet I do not know how you decided where to start from.

**The Philosopher:** I do not know whether this will surprise you or not, but I already knew where to start from. True things must have been among the most easily known and simplest things and I was sure that I could find them by attending my interest to the things that mathematicians study. I knew that *of all those who have pursued truth in sciences only they have been able to reach any demonstrations* that is to say, as I told you many times before, *certain and evident reasoning*.

**The Man:** So, you turned your attention to mathematical sciences and their subjects of inquiry.

**The Philosopher:** As a matter of fact, no. In my attempt, I realized that I do not necessarily need to study specific sciences that are called mathematical, because regardless of the variety of objects they deal with they are alike *in considering nothing but the various relations or proportions that hold between their objects*. I thought that if I study these proportions only in a general sense, I could apply these proportions to any other object that might fit.

**The Man:** May I assume that you were seeking a structure of knowledge that is free from the object of it? A structure that is constructed by mathematical premises...

**The Philosopher:** If you want to put it in this way, yes you may.

**The Man:** If so, in spite of the evidentness and certainty of mathematical reasoning, we should question the competence of it in general. In this way, we can avoid jumping to conclusions, easily. What was your major concern about logic, once again?

**The Philosopher:** I found it mostly useful in explaining what is learned, rather than in learning new things. Why?

**The Man:** Initially, I will point to a defect of mathematics similar to the one you state for logic. You are already aware of this defect in a different level. Remember, you told me that the symbols and the figures of algebra and geometry are complex and confusing. Yet, they still tell us about simple and evident things. Am I right in that?

**The Philosopher:** Absolutely.

**The Man:** Therefore, we can conclude that mathematical analysis usually examines things in a more complex fashion than they are. In other words, they hide the

simplicity in them. While the people who have the knowledge of mathematical reasoning can easily understand and see how simple actually the mathematical formulas and symbols, others fail to grasp what is in fact so simple to understand. I am aware of the fact that mathematical analysis and reasoning are useful for simplifying and solving any complex problem, but in cases when it is mathematics that creates the problem, such an endeavor would be useless at all, unless you aim to conceal the truth itself, which is in our case is that there is no problem at all.

**The Philosopher:** I understand the danger you are trying to show me and as being aware of that, my intent is nothing more than trusting mathematical reasoning in operation.

**The Man:** Then, I strongly recommend you to be sure of that your operational means do not turn into your aim. Otherwise, you will find yourself entangled in questions that are raised by your method you developed to find answers.

**The Philosopher:** If this is your only concern, being cautious about it would save me from a possible failure.

**The Man:** We are just starting, my dear friend. You were also telling me that geometry and algebra were dealing with only abstract matters and you presented it as a problem. As the first move of your method you are also telling me that you will look upon the mathematical sciences but in a general way to abstract the knowledge of it in a way to detach it from its objects.

**The Philosopher:** But I am doing this only to attach that knowledge to new objects, if they fit.

**The Man:** The problem I see here is that as long as you detach knowledge from its object you loose serious details and in a way make an irreversible reduction. This reduction leads you to a critical mistake as you apply that knowledge to another object. You loose the certain features of that new object in order to make it fit to your knowledge. That is almost like ignoring the object you are dealing with and solely operating the structure you have. As we speak about the possibility of ignorance of the object of your inquiry, I should also warn you about your second rule. One should be very cautious when she divides the object of her inquiry into parts as it is possible in order to examine them better. Parts may not always convey the

characteristics of a whole and a whole can be more than the simple collection of its parts.

**The Philosopher:** As long as I built that features around a core gradually, by discovering a new truth about it at my each attempt, I see no problem in that, too. To be courageous, I also believe that if I find a certain and evident truth, and with the light of it look at the world, and filter whatever I see, I can even reach the true knowledge of the world. And as to the second rule of my method, there is a reason why I used the phrase as many parts as possible. It connotes that to the smallest part that carries the character of the complete entity.

**The Man:** Since you show confidence in coping with my challenge, for a while I will put aside the problems regarding the object of examination, and develop and put forward my objection in a different way. If we return to the fundamentals of mathematics we can clearly see that almost all the rules of mathematics are derived from one principle, which is the principle of equation. To put it in a simple way, all the operations of mathematics are derived from one single essence. You call this essence proportions, I call it equations since any proportion is a result of, or results in an equation. From the simplest operations like addition, subtraction, multiplication or division, to the most complex ones, they all function with reference to the same principle and in frame of an equation. Mathematical system is a referential system and no matter how much it extends its borders it is in no sense eternal. The reason for this is that this extension is an internal one, and can be explained with infinity rather than eternity. It springs out of one source, and it is in the end, different and complex forms of that source.

There are two fundamental problems in the use of mathematical reasoning in service of your aim. First, in any structure of knowledge that is based on a mathematical reasoning, anything you undertake will be considered with regard to one reference point. Therefore, in such a system, in the essence of the structure, it is possible to talk about a definite hegemonic power relationship. The internal consistency of the structure would never allow any alternative to that hegemonic relationship.

**The Philosopher:** If it is the truth itself, which stands at the reference point of the structure, I see no problem in the existence of such a power relationship and

organization of everything else according to it. On the contrary, that is what I am trying to achieve with my method.

**The Man:** Well, then. If this is so, let me raise my second objection, and we can consider both together. As I told you, mathematical domain of knowledge extends internally, and consequently it is a closed one. The certainty of mathematical rules simply results from its abstraction level, i.e. the non-existence of its real objects in the world we live in. The reason why its application area is so limited is that it is really hard to find objects that perfectly fit for the proportions of mathematics. In the book of world, it is neither possible to make a perfect measurement without a tolerance portion, nor likely to find a perfect geometrical shape like triangle. You can find resemblances, but in the essence, two triangular figures you come across in nature are never same in character. If you extend the utilization of mathematics beyond the mechanical arts, be assured that you assume a mechanical character in any new object you are dealing with. And assuming a character has a potential for imposing it, if the object of inquiry has a potential to bend or adopt.

I understand your reluctance to give up the certainty mathematical set of knowledge will provide you and your enthusiasm resulting from the possibility to build such a certainty on a base of truth. Nevertheless, my objection is that the closed character of knowledge domain produced by mathematics is almost impossible to apply in totality, to the world we live in. Because in order to apply rules that are generated from that domain, to the world we live in, there are two prerequisites. First, the world we live in should show the same closed character. Second, a reason that has the capacity to comprehend the universe, in totality should be evident. Regardless of the character of the world we live in, only an omni-potent god can show such a capacity. As long as a man devotes himself to such an endeavor, he claims to play the role of god and reduces the world he lives in to limitedness. In my opinion, neither is preferable.

**The Philosopher:** I neither claim to be God nor as you think reduce the world to something it is not. I just try to understand the order that God will, to the extent that the mediocrity of my mind allows.

**The Man:** With that, you take the existence of God and the creation of the world in an order by God, as truth. Furthermore, you believe in the capacity of men to know such a truth and comprehend it, either partially or completely. Am I wrong?

**The Philosopher:** My dear friend, do not hold yourself back in that. I not only believe the things you said word by word, but with the results I achieved by following the path my method drove me I can also clearly claim that I know it as certain as a fact. I will demonstrate it to you in a way that you will be sure of it more than you are sure of the warmth of sun you feel fading or the beautiful colors you see cast by the setting sun. As it gets late, will you be kind enough to join us for dinner tonight? We can conclude our conversation inside.

**The Man:** It would have been a pleasure for me, if only I did not have to leave. Please, forgive me for tonight.

**The Philosopher:** On one condition; only if you promise to tell me one day about the man who claims to have found the truth.

**The Man:** I am sure luck will bring us together once again to finish what is left unfinished, and that is a promise.

### 2.1.6 On Dialogue II

The second dialogue tells us the method of Descartes. The main concern is how its rules are derived and how those rules serve Descartes' aim of using the method. Furthermore, this dialogue concentrates on the question that whether the method is a path that Descartes follows to find the truth or it is something that is only possible with the truth Descartes is seeking. Notwithstanding the answer of this question, it is important that Descartes' method allows the possibility of raising such a question, because this possibility shows us the potential that the use of the method may extend the consequences of Descartes' intentions. As the third dialogue will deal with the major result that Descartes reaches via the use of the method, this question will be raised once again. For now we will focus on the method and its rules.

The first rule of the method emphasizes his famous methodological skepticism on which he develops his philosophy. In its simplest form, it means not to accept anything as true if it is possible to doubt it on any basis. In the first dialogue we have seen that through the systematic use of doubt, Descartes came to a point where he refuses any knowledge whose source may produce doubtful results. As it is

concluded before, this leads him to trust only himself and his reason in reaching any certain knowledge. He calls this certain knowledge, truth and via the use of his method he is expected to construct his metaphysics. This is critical in that until he makes himself a scrutiny object or he projects his doubt to himself, Descartes' metaphysics is on an epistemological basis. It is about the possibility of knowing the truth. Through this epistemology Descartes arrives at a point that he questions his own existence. It is plausible to argue that with the first rule of Descartes, ontology and epistemology are questioned on the same level and ontology is to a certain extent reduced to epistemology.

The second rule of the method asks us to divide the difficulties into parts in order to resolve them better. The word difficulty here should be highlighted. One cannot divide a difficulty into parts. Regarding his aim in developing the method, it may be assumed that Descartes uses this word in order to mean any difficulty that one faces in the attempt to reach the knowledge of anything. The rule is important in that it gives us ideas about Descartes' thoughts regarding the nature of things on the basis of the relationship between the whole and part. This rule tells us that according to Descartes an element of a thing reveals partial or complete knowledge about the thing itself. With this rule, Descartes determines the way to reach the knowledge of a thing that does not reveal itself immediately, which is to divide it into parts. The major problem with this rule is that the element only allows the knowledge of the whole through its contribution to the being of the whole. And the form of this contribution or in what sense it is sought is quite critical. Mostly since it is more visible than the other features one concentrates on the functional contribution of the elements to a whole, and this leads to a significant error in the effort of understanding the nature of the things through a functional reduction. Unless one is having a difficulty in understanding how a thing operates, dealing with the elements of a whole does not say much about the knowledge of the thing itself. To put it more clearly, it is nothing but degrading the thing into a mechanical understanding.

The third rule of the method is on organizing one's thoughts in a way to move from the simplest and most easily known things to the most complex ones. This rule is about assuming and accepting an order among the things. If one increases his knowledge about the simplest things, by using that knowledge he moves to more complex things. As the possibility of knowing something is tied to others'

knowledge, this rule imposes a power relationship. The power relationship arises from the order assumed as it subjects the knowledge of some things to others and this creates a dependency relationship, even in the cases that those things have no relation among them in terms of their characteristics. This rule is the one that guarantees the proportion or equation rules of mathematics to be applied to any object. For the order that Descartes desires to be established, it should be possible to regard and evaluate things in terms of others. And this is possible by quantifying the things by denying the certain qualities in them.

The last rule of the method is the most important one as the operation of all the other rules depends on this rule. The rule indicates the necessity to control everything in a comprehensive and complete way in order to prevent overlooking anything. The possibility of that depends on the capacity of the reason and the limits of the universe that is examined. If we consider the systematic skepticism of Descartes in the first rule, in the case that one overlooks a possible controversy about the knowledge of something, one can be easily deceived by the outcome of the method itself. Or, if one fails to cover all the features of a part that is to help to discover the knowledge of a whole, the knowledge arrived about the whole will not be true at all. Moreover, if one tries to stipulate an order among the things from simple to complex, if he fails to cover everything the balance of the order would be broken. To put it in a different way, if one fails to include one of the things that are simplest to know, the knowledge of others would be developed on an unsteady base. In conclusion, all three rules of the method would not work unless the last rule does. As it is mentioned before, the possibility of the last rule depends on two pre-conditions. One is that the universe of the things that one deals with should be a closed system. The second is that one has the capacity to deal with all the things in that universe in order to apply the last rule of the method. If one uses the Cartesian method, for the sake of knowing, he has to reduce the universe of the things to a closed system. This closed system is a mathematical one and Descartes hopes that in a system like that one can reach the knowledge of all the things.



The Cartesian method is the realization of a machine depending on mathematical principles in a way to have a structure that whatever the objects of it, it would work.<sup>6</sup> Descartes' will was to ground this machine, on a certain, evident, and steady foundation that it would never collapse. Nevertheless, the reason for inventing this machine was the doubt for the certainty of any foundation that exists, and the machine was developed to separate the doubtful things and truth. The core conflict in Cartesian method is that it needs to depend on the truth that only it can reveal in order to operate. This revelation is on the other hand is nothing but a construction as the method is needed to reveal. In other words, since neither the method nor the truth it reveals and depends on can precede other, both are constructed together and self-referential in every sense. To illustrate this, one can consider Descartes' claim that there is a god who created the world in an orderly manner, as a closed system and men can comprehend that order through reason. It is interesting that the comprehension of such an order through reason depends on the knowledge of the existence of god and his creation of the world in that order. When one looks at the Cartesian method, it is clearly a vicious cycle and vicious cycles are created and broken only by intervention to the course of happenings.

There is another conflict in the Cartesian method. As Cartesian philosophy asks ontological questions through epistemology, or in other words reduces ontology to epistemology, in the Cartesian method things are reduced to what is known about them. Considering that in the Cartesian method, act of knowing depends on reducing things from what they are; due to the nature of the Cartesian method what we know about the things is never a complete picture of them. In this regard, the Cartesian method disregards being for the sake of knowing. When it is considered that the aim of the Cartesian method is to know about the being, it would never achieve one of its aims. Rather than to know being, what it does is to turn it into a form and make it exchangeable.

### **2.1.7 Dialogue III**

In the years between 1649 and 1650, René Descartes has moved to Sweden, after the continuous insistences of Christine, in order to give her philosophy lessons.

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<sup>6</sup> Regarding the character of the structure, one should remember that mathematics was used until Descartes only in mechanical arts.

Meantime, in his absence, his last book, the *Passions of the Soul* was published in France (November, 1649). During his stay in Sweden, the philosopher endured Christine's never ending requests and compulsions. As a man who was used to getting up late all thorough his life, he was forced to wake up at five every morning and go to the palace to tutor her. Unfortunately, his relatively weak body could not undergo this enforcement and Descartes lost his health and in the 11<sup>th</sup> of February in 1650 he died of pneumonia. The third dialogue happens as Christine is busy to attend one of her daily studies with Descartes. In her absence, she assigns one of her guests the duty to attend the meeting and accompany Descartes. The man was surprisingly an old friend of Descartes whom he met before twice in lucky incidents, and they started having a warm conversation.

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**The Philosopher:** Once again, luck brought us together and gave us a chance to finish our discussion. Will you tell me your story this time or our conversation will be interrupted by another sudden break; I mean no offense, of course.

**The Man:** This time I will tell you about the story of my search for the man who thinks he found the truth. But before that I would appreciate it if you would tell me about the findings of your method and prove me the existence of God as you promised in our last meeting.

**The Philosopher:** It will be a pleasure for me telling the findings of my method to someone who is capable of grasping its essence.

**The Man:** I will do my best and try to match that definition of yours.

**The Philosopher:** You remember that I wanted to devote myself solely to the search for truth and seeking the ways of reaching it. Finally, I came to a point that *I needed to reject everything regarding which I could imagine the least doubt as if it were absolutely false, so as to see whether this left me with anything entirely indubitable to believe.*

**The Man:** And, you had your method to help you in this direction.

**The Philosopher:** Absolutely. Following it, I presumed that what we perceive and know through our senses does not necessarily exist as sometimes our senses deceive us. I also took for granted that I am a man who has a potential to make mistakes in

reasoning, even in the basic questions in geometry, like everyone else can do, and rejected all the arguments I had before. Considering the fact that all the mental states we are in while awake can occur in a dream, too; therefore I imagined that everything I had in my mind can be nothing more than a dream or an illusion, and have no truth in them.

**The Man:** Do you mean the life you live, everything you experience, the nature, the things surrounding us, and even your body that you feel all the time can be an illusion of a dream.

**The Philosopher:** Completely, yes. Think about the dreams you have. Do not you live a life, experience things, live in nature, and move and feel in your body, in a dream? You even wake up from dreams in a dream. There is nothing you can find in the world we live in, that you cannot come across in a dream.

**The Man:** So, everything can be a dream and doubted to be.

**The Philosopher:** Everything, but one thing. In my effort to deny the existence of anything about which I can imagine least doubt, I realized that I was doubting. As doubt was a conduct or a performance of mind, I was thinking. Everything else could be false and could be doubted, yet the fact that I am thinking was evident and I, who was thinking this, must be something. I concluded from this observation the first principle of my philosophy; **I think, therefore I am (*Cogito, ergo sum*)**. This principle was so evident that no second thought on it could be developed and in no sense it can be scrupled.

**The Man:** Then, your doubt leads you to your thought as the sole evidence of your existence. Finally with that you found an indubitable, an unquestionable truth. Tell me, what this knowledge provided you and what you derived from it.

**The Philosopher:** First of all this knowledge has provided me the nature of my existence. It told me about what I am. It taught me that *I am a substance whose whole essence or nature is simply to think, and which doesn't need any place, or depend on any material thing, in order to exist.*

**The Man:** Do you include your body when you say any *material thing*? In other words, do you think you do not depend on your body to exist?

**The Philosopher:** I, especially mean body; for *the soul (essence) which makes me what I am is entirely distinct from the body, is easier to know than the body, and would still be just what it is even if the body didn't exist.*

**The Man:** You told me in our last conversation that you were going to prove me the existence of god, however the fact that you cannot deny you think only proves your existence.

**The Philosopher:** The fact that I exist is a proof of God's being, and I will tell you how. As a result of learning more about me I realized that my being is not wholly perfect. A perfect being would not doubt but know about things, but I do. As I started about thinking my imperfection I could not find an answer to the question that how I have the idea or the thought of a being that is more perfect than me, i.e. God. When I consider regular things whose idea I have in my mind, I see that they have nothing superior to me and could be possibly depending on some perfection in me in case they are true or resulting from nothingness if they are false. However, the idea of God, which is more perfect than me cannot depend on me as neither my partially perfect side (when compared to God) nor nothingness, can produce such an idea of perfection. To help you understand my point better, I will put it like this; I am a being who has two sides. A perfect side that exists and I know this as I think, and a defected side that spawns out of nothingness that I can doubt, constitutes me. A mind and a body (also the body of everything I can doubt)... In other words, a partial perfection lies in an imperfect being like me. If I have to formulate my previous question according to this fact, what I was seeking is where this partially perfect side of me comes from. I was looking for the origin of my soul, my mind, or my essence. It is certain that perfection cannot come out of nothingness. So it is not possible that the thought of God can spring out of my defected side. Similarly, it is not possible that I derived my perfect side from myself or another partially perfect being as in such a case *I could have derived from myself all the remaining perfections that I knew I lacked, and thus I could myself have been infinite, eternal, unchanging, omniscient, omnipotent; in short I could have had all the perfections that I had been able to discover in God.* Therefore the idea of God or the perfect side in me *should be put into me by something indeed having every perfection of which I could have any idea, that is - to explain myself in one word - by **God**.*

**The Man:** I am really impressed with your reasoning, but not satisfied.

**The Philosopher:** I am eager to hear your objections to my reasoning.

**The Man:** For start, I will partially disagree with your motto or the first principle of your philosophy; I think therefore I am. My concern, in this phrase is that how you can be sure of that it is you who thinks. Imagine that you suffer from a sudden memory loss, and forget everything you know, your experiences, your knowledge, the memory of the life you had at all. Would it be still you that I would face and talk?

**The Philosopher:** The point is that whomever you would face, he would be still thinking and therefore would exist. Whatever he lost would only be the things that are most likely to be doubted and the things that can exist only in thought would survive such a lost. In other words the essence of him would not change, and be the same.

**The Man:** Still he would not be you, would he?

**The Philosopher:** He would lose the things that I am striving to deny.

**The Man:** But you are not trying to forget the knowledge you had, but attempting to classify the things according to their level of truth. You are just a man who rejects the things once he accepted as true. And in case of such a memory loss the man who was thinking would not be you in the sense you think of yourself. You were right as you prove your existence with regard to the fact that you think. Nevertheless, when you deny the existence of everything else you were faulted, because that you can doubt the existence of anything, simply does not mean it has no significance. Do not you remember a horrible dream that you feared even when you wake up, or a happy dream that made you start the day with a big smile on your face? The dreams, my friend, enhance what you are in your existence. The ideas of things that are not superior to you have such an effect on you, too. If you disregard them from your existence you cease to *be* you. Therefore instead of “I think, therefore I am”, I would rather use “One thinks, therefore one is”.

**The Philosopher:** As you assumed, I never disregard the things that I can doubt in the sense you think. On the contrary, you should remember that the reason why I started this journey was that I realized how devastating the effect of the things that I accepted as true but are doubtful in reality. What I do is to postpone dealing with them, until I find the truth itself. With that truth I am planning to look at them and

understand their true nature. What I call I is a part of that truth and is nothing but the essence in me.

**The Man:** Then, I should warn you that such a postponement can result in a failure in your endeavor to reach the truth.

**The Philosopher:** Quite contrary to yours, in my opinion it is a necessity for that endeavor.

**The Man:** Let's follow your path. You say, "I think, therefore I am". If we agree with this statement we should also agree that anything that thinks also exists. Am I right?

**The Philosopher:** As long as I am sure that he thinks, I see no reason to deny his existence.

**The Man:** Then, if you think of a man who thinks and if you are sure that he thinks, you can conclude that he exists. Can we say that in such a case both of you exist?

**The Philosopher:** If this is the case, then yes.

**The Man:** If this is reasonable, the exact opposite conclusion, that you do not exist, could be drawn from the fact that you think.

**The Philosopher:** How could it be, exactly?

**The Man:** I think of a man who thinks. I exist, because I know I am thinking. I know that this man that I am dreaming of exists as well, because I know he is thinking. In this sense, he is as real as I am. The rest of this story has a much sadder ending. I am thinking that this man, who exists in my thoughts, is in turn thinking of me. Someone, who is real, is dreaming of me. He becomes the reality while I fade into a dream..."

**The Philosopher:** I am also impressed with your reasoning, my dear friend, yet what you suggest is only possible insofar as I could in no sense doubt the existence of a man who thinks. How can I be sure of it?

**The Man:** As you are sure of the fact that someone would be thinking and in turn exist even in a case you lose your memory and forget every reasoning you developed about the nature of your existence. It will be provocative but I can even derive from this reasoning that you are dreaming of yourself in the dream you are dreaming, and waking up would end everything and blend you into nothingness. However, I will end speculation here and accept the fact that you can doubt the

existence of someone who thinks other than you. In that case you should also accept that in the case that if this thinking man exists, he can doubt you thinking and exist. If such a man exists, you have to be sure of him thinking in order to see if he thinks you thinking. You should also risk him doubting you thinking.

**The Philosopher:** I cannot figure out where you are trying to arrive at.

**The Man:** I am trying to arrive at the conclusion that in a case that thinking is the sole evidence of existence, you either end up with being alone with god or you end up with god, you and someone else in a way to risk your existence to this other's approval.

**The Philosopher:** I would rather prefer the first one as it is the case that I can on no basis doubt my existence.

**The Man:** You made a choice and you would better consider the consequences carefully. If we follow your path once again we can say that God created you from its perfection to an imperfection. You are part perfect of your thought and part imperfect of your body. Your body and your soul are distinct in character. Are they inseparable?

**The Philosopher:** Maybe the most common questions I receive are about the character of the bond between the soul and the body. You stated that they are distinct in character without even looking for certain evidence for it.

**The Man:** Actually, I am not interested in any evidence to prove this proposition for I believe it depends on the choice you made. Therefore, I am interested in the results of such a distinction rather than the basis for it.

**The Philosopher:** If you agree with me on the distinction between the soul and the body, you should also agree that the body and the soul are not inseparable, too.

**The Man:** I do agree. What I want to learn is how or when they are separated.

**The Philosopher:** The mind, unlike the human body, is a pure substance and immortal. As body can perish, my soul cannot. I can easily say that as a being whose essence is in his thoughts, I am immortal, even in the case that my body dies.

**The Man:** So we can conclude that if you die, your body dies but your soul does not. Is that so?

**The Philosopher:** Utterly, true.

**The Man:** If we think that you are imperfect in your being as you have a defected part that results from your body or your corporeal existence, I would like to think what will happen if you are purified of that imperfect side of your existence. What I think of immediately is that as soon as you die, your tie with the bodily deficiencies will be demolished. This will make you solely nothing but the essence that you think you have. You will turn into soul or mind at all and become a pure substance. You will be perfect in character. There will be only you in your perfection and God that made you perfect. Two perfect beings in their essence will exist together and face each other. They both will be infinite, eternal, omni-potent, omniscient, and have all the perfections that God would have. I guess this will be the end of everything. God will cease to be god, as there will be another god that has judgment and power over him. You will cease to be too as you will confront god's judgment and power. There will only be nothingness, and therefore nothing is left to me to say on this issue. I will only keep my promise and tell you about the man who thinks he found the truth and leave you alone with her highness that will be here soon for sure. I found that man, in my past. He was a man of honor and dignity, but never a man of acceptance and humbleness. He destroyed the only truth he found by living through it and left behind a wave of change that shook the world he lived in from its ancient foundations. He changed the world in a way to loose his kind in an orderly new world. As now he died, no one but god knows what happened to him and he is the only one who knows what happened to god. Whatever I say on his whereabouts would be nothing more than a speculation, and I know you do not regard anything else but certainty, so I will not tell anymore.

...

The Philosopher was startled with the sound made by fire and sat up in his bed, still in the mood of three consecutive dreams he had. He could not tell whether it was real or a dream for a while and after he decided that he had dreamed about all these, he could not get over the effect of what he had seen in the rest of his life.

### **2.1.8 On Dialogue III**

The core of Cogito philosophy, the formation of I, the problem of existence of God, and the distinction between the body and the soul are examined in the Dialogue



III. The issues are scrutinized with a critical approach on the basis of who thinks; third person problematic; the denial of the doubted until they are regarded under the light of truth; and the omission of time in the Cartesian subject. With this dialogue it is witnessed that Descartes finds the truth in the existence of God, which he sees as a philosophical question rather than an issue of belief as he proposes in the beginning of *Meditations*. As he finds the proof of existence of God in his thought, he also finds a god like perfection in himself. In all the four critiques Descartes' response to this discovery is attempted to be inspected.

Heidegger's primary criticism to Descartes' philosophy and his understanding of subject is the argument that Descartes construes being by disregarding the time dimension (Çüçen, 1997). This is an inevitable consequence of an epistemology oriented ontology approach. When he discovers the true form of existence in his thought and in the ideal form of God, Descartes only considers a hypothetical time moment in which he says *I am*. He neither reflects on the continuous character of that 'I', nor does he imagine what would happen to that 'I' in time. Descartes' subject is isolated not only from the physical world, but also from the burden of time. In the dialogue with the challenges raised, it is tried to be demonstrated what would happen to the Cartesian subject in its isolated existence when the time dimension is considered.

The third person problematic is one of the major problems in the Cartesian Subject since it is developed on the basis of a binary opposition. In the dialogue, it is used as a reference to the imaginary existence of the Cartesian Subject, which is a symbolic construction. Although it will be examined in detail in the next book of this chapter, here it is involved for serving the expectation to give a feeling of how the existence of third person would affect the Cartesian Subject. The Cartesian Subject is based on the duality of the mind and the body or the subject and the objects. Although it seems the combination of the mind and the body, Descartes attributes the subjective character on the mind side. What he calls 'I', is in his thoughts but not in his body. While 'I' is the subject in thought, the body is the object of it. The existence of third person as a subject undermines the binary character in the Cartesian model as in the Cartesian model mind is the god that reigns over everything else that are the world of objects. When another subject is imagined as an

intermediate category the cogito of 'I' becomes something to be doubted and the epistemological/ontological basis of the Cartesian Subject is weakened.

When the effect that the existence of a third person generates and the impact of time dimension to the Cartesian Subject are taken into account together, the question that "who is it that thinking?" arises. In spite of the fact that Descartes says "I think, therefore I am", as he imagines this thinking subject out of time, he never faces what that 'I' includes in time nor he asks the question that "Is it me, who is thinking?" If we consider the Cartesian Subject in multiple existence through time, the problem of third person occurs once again, obviously without even leaving space for doubt. Since the correct translation of what Descartes means by "*Cogito, ergo sum.*" is I am thinking, therefore I exist, it is possible to argue that what Descartes calls 'I' is something that only exists in that moment he utters this. He derives from this momentary existence the fact that he exists over time with the belief that as his existence in thought consists of a pure substance, it is immortal, unless God wills against it. This substance or the essence in him is always evident and it is what Descartes calls 'I'. However, if 'I' is considered over time, it can be clearly seen that although the thinking subject continues to exist who he is becomes a critical question. What Descartes calls 'I' always changes over time in spite of the fact that he claims that it remains same essentially. Each time Descartes says 'I' he is different than the last time he expressed that word. In other words, he automatically creates another 'I' as third person which is a challenge to his binary model.

The source of the change that 'I' is exposed brings us another problem with the formation of Cartesian Subject. While Descartes derives from the first principle of his philosophy what kind of a being he is, he ignores the possible effect of the things that he classifies as dubitable on the 'I'. Especially, when the consequences of the things that are designated even as untrue are considered on the 'I', like dreams, the substance, the essence, or the soul becomes only a part of the subjective existence. Descartes' denial of doubtful things not only results in an incomplete comprehension of 'I', but also causes faulted judgments regarding the nature of things that Descartes doubts. In a model that being is equivalent to thinking subject or defined by 'I', the existence of nothing can be proved without reference to that 'I'. The existence of everything else than Descartes and God is possible as long as they fit into the divine order that Descartes projects. Being, beyond the limits that reason

reaches is in no sense possible. In this sense, all the things are regarded on the basis of reason and open to the doubt of it. As far as the limited capacity of the method of doubt is taken into account, the knowledge that is reached about those doubted thing on the basis of reason is quite distant to their object. That knowledge would be true according to the metaphysical construction provided by Descartes, yet it would never reveal a truth that is immanent to the object of inquiry. That truth rather springs out from the method that is used and the order that is stipulated by it.

To sum up, the time dimension that Descartes avoids to include in his subject model is a key focus to criticize his subject model. It tells us much about Descartes' choices and their consequences. As Descartes discovered that he exists and the fact that he thinks is the sole basis for this, his discovery of God made him forget the brevity of his life and his existence in that brevity. Similarly, as he believed that he found the truth, he forgot the truth that he is the one who creates truth. To serve his desire to reach certainty, as he could not bear exposing the possibility of his existence to someone else's approval, he made a choice. He sacrificed the existence of everything else, in order to be, in no doubt. While he was making that choice, he never considered the consequences of the death of the 'I' that is immortal in his soul but mortal in his body. Not thinking of what would the 'I' evolve into as the soul overcomes the limitations of the body, he does not judge the results of the ultimate goal that is believed to bring Descartes perfection. The ultimate end that means not only the loss of the subject, but also the death of God...

## BOOK II: Towards a Visual World

In the first book of the second chapter, it is attempted to comprehend, analyze and make apparent the assumptions, judgments and values that underlie Descartes' philosophy, in order to achieve a reflection of his ideas and the elements or foundation on which his and many other modern thinkers' philosophy is based. The primary concern for doing this was to grasp the formation and the essence of the Cartesian understanding of subject that in this study is believed to be crucial in the construction of modern metaphysics. In this book, we will try to model and therefore concretize the Cartesian Subject on the basis of what is laid down in the previous book. Nonetheless, until now in this study a distinct definition of subject is neither made nor acquired from other scholars including Descartes. This is chiefly because 'subject' is an ambiguous concept that has many meanings some of which even contradicts at first glimpse. With an effort to clarify what is understood by subject within the scope of this work, it will be tried to make clear what should be focused in the Cartesian philosophy in order to grasp the Cartesian Subject.

Among the various meanings of subject the primary ones are (1) one that is placed under authority or control, (2) that of which a quality, attribute, or relation may be affirmed or in which it may inhere, (3) a department of knowledge or learning, and (4) the noun, noun phrase, or pronoun in a sentence or clause that denotes the doer of the action or what is described by the predicate.<sup>7</sup> All the other meanings of subject spring out from or are the variations of these four main meanings. When we examine the word subject etymologically, we see that it comes from Latin word *subjectus*. Subjectus is the past participle and noun use of *subicere*, a combination of *sub* (under) and *jacere* (to throw or to cast). Hence, the original meaning of subject is "who/what is thrown under". The meanings of subject above are derived from this foundation or origin. On the one hand, as long as it is the authority or the control of the other that one is been thrown under, subject means a citizen or a vassal. On the other hand, when it is used for the translation of Aristotle's concept of *to hypokeimenon* to Latin as *subjectum*, subject means that "which lies

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<sup>7</sup> <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/subject>, 04.06.2006.

beneath” since it is that which is thrown under what is sensed or comprehended at first sight. In the same manner, subject matter comes from Latin *subjecta materia* as it is translated from Aristotle’s *hypokeimene hyle*.<sup>8</sup> The last meaning of subject as “the doer of an action or what is described by the predicate” is a critical one in that this meaning enhances the origin of the word as “that which thrown under” with also “who throws under”. Through examining an action one can conclude that there is necessarily at least a subject who is thrown under the experience of the action or predicate in question, i.e. the doer of it. If there is an action or predicate, then there is a subject at stake. On the other hand, there may be more than one subject regarding an action for it is possible that others can be exposed to the effects of the action in question. To put it grammatically, if there is an action, it is plausible to talk about a “subject - predicate – subject” relationship. In the first book, when it is argued that Descartes has changed the shape of subject, it is meant that he disturbed the balance in this grammatical relationship. The disturbance mentioned is believed to make the existing subjective relationship evolve into, first a “Subject – predicate- object” relationship, then to a “(Subject) – predicate – subject/object” relationship. In this second book, how Descartes made this disturbance and how the evolution springing out from it occurred will be scrutinized.

### **2.2.1 The Cartesian Subject**

Following the ideas laid down in the first book of this chapter, it will be tried to grasp how Descartes gave a new shape to subject, what features we attribute to the subject are Descartes’ construction, and the immediate effects of those features in the formation of modern philosophy and modern metaphysics. As examined in the first book, Descartes initiates his contemplation with the problem of finding a steady or unshakable ground on which he can base his doubt and construct a method through which he can reach the truth. With the use of that method, he reaches the conclusion that he exists. Subsequently, by proving the existence of God with reference to his own existence, Descartes not only claims to find an indubitable truth but also argues that he can reach the order God created in the universe by the use of the light of reason. Since we want to achieve the understanding of subject in Descartes’ view, we

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=subject>, 04.06.2006.

should focus the thinking 'I' as it is the only thing that has the capacity to act and consequently to be affected by that action in Cartesian Philosophy. In this respect, it is plausible to choose "*cogito, ergo sum*" as a focal point. Understanding the Cartesian Subject with only a single phrase is certainly not achievable, yet this seems to be a good starting point in drawing a mental picture of it, step by step. By use of that picture, a larger system assumed by Descartes, in the core of which that picture is placed, is expected to be revealed.

If we imagine Descartes' statement as a process, in the first step, it is seen that the self is retracted until there is nothing present but the mind and thoughts that are envisaged at an inner condition. This inside, in which Descartes' own voice echoes continuously to remind him the fact that he is thinking, corresponds to an isolated existence. The existence of such an inside takes us one step further and instantaneously necessitates the being of an outside. Following this second step, a third step signifies the dichotomy between the inside and the outside due to the fact that there is a clear-cut distinction between them. This leads one to the last step, namely to the crucial question of how the inside and the outside are assembled, or how the relationship between them is established. To seek the answer for this question we should look how inside acts upon the outside.

To Descartes (1988a), the conduct of our life depends entirely on our senses, therefore it is through our senses that the inside acts upon the outside. The nature of this act is simply to know. In other words, the inside acts upon the outside via the senses to know. If we redefine the inside and outside as thinking "I" and the sensual world, the sentence would mean more than it appears. We can claim that in Cartesian Philosophy, it is possible to talk about the soul and the sensual world as distinct entities. While the first is a safe ground the second is respectively shaky. This is so, because Descartes does not trust his senses to reach the knowledge of outside or outer world. His many experiences taught him that senses have an incapacity that in various events made him to be mistaken about things in the external world. Hence, as the senses are the only way to reach the outer world, vagueness and ambiguity are proper words to define how Descartes constructs the sensual world. If we also remember that Descartes' quest to reach the truth, that is tried to be told in the first book, begins with the uncertainty of the knowledge of the outer world, we can once again appreciate the importance of sensual experience for Descartes. Hence, how this

experience happens, and how Descartes comprehends it are quite critical in understanding the Cartesian Subject.

When we examine Descartes' work, we see that among all the senses he distinguishes one, namely sight, to comprehend the sensual experience in general. He regards it as the noblest and most comprehensive of all senses. Presumably, this is because sight is relatively more mathematical than other senses with regard to its physical attributes. In this regard, to Descartes sight is closer than other senses to the sphere of indubitable knowledge. Since Descartes designates sight as the superior of all senses, the act of seeing is what we will concentrate on in understanding the relationship of the Cartesian Subject with the outer world. Although it is known that Descartes has made a great contribution to understanding the physiological and biological foundation of seeing, many of his ideas are disproved today. Yet, as Crary (1998) states, rather than the truth behind the act of sight what matters concerning the vision is primarily how it is conceived and understood historically. That is why, rather than the physical act of sight, how Descartes comprehends it concerns us, and we will limit our scrutiny to the Cartesian understanding of seeing.

#### **2.2.1.1 Vision and Visuality**

In the preface to *Vision and Visuality*, Hal Foster (1998) distinguishes vision as both the physical act of sight and a product of how this physical act is socially, culturally and politically conceived. Visuality, on the other hand, as Jay (1993) describes it, is 'the distinct historical manifestations of visual experience in all its possible modes'. In other words, while vision involves the act of seeing and its historically construction, visuality is the social, political, cultural and the philosophical outcome of all these interpretations. Therefore, vision is both constructed by and may construct to a certain extent the contextual and historical relationships of mankind. Since, for this study, it is the Cartesian Subject in question, the constructive power of vision has more importance than ever, considering the fact that sight is the utmost way that it relates to the outer world. Therefore, to figure out the importance of the Cartesian Subject in the construction of modern metaphysics, Descartes' ideas specifically focused on the human perception, the operation of senses and especially sight, which could be found in *Optics* and *Treatise on Human*, will be sought. Yet, before doing so, in order to see Descartes' intervention to the

understanding of vision and to locate this intervention in the course of visibility, an attempt to examine briefly how sight was understood in the western world before his age will be done.

In ancient Greece, the distinction of inner and outer with regard to the subjective and the worldly experience of individual – as we “the moderns” today recognize it – was not apparent (Senneth, 1992). The relationship of Greek people with the nature and the things in their environment was a harmonious one, based on the undivided connection they have in their experience of the world. This view was reflected and constructed by the understanding of sight, since seeing was an experience with the world, although not being the sole one. Starting from antiquity, the basic arguments about the sense of sight were based on the relationship between the eye and the thing seen. Until the 13<sup>th</sup> century these arguments were limited to the direction of the vision. As Nelson (2000) suggests in his introduction to the *Visuality before and beyond Renaissance*, the discussion was between the two schools, namely; extramission and intromission. According to the school of extramission, vision was an active travel from the eye to what is seen and back, respectively. Intromission, as the contrary idea, reversed the relationship and considered the visual rays that travel from the things to the eye.

The discussion between these two so called opposite schools are based on the difference that whether the eye is an active agent and as a sensory power extends to the perceived thing or as a passive organ the eye sees what transmits to us (Brennan, 1996). Rather than the historical shift between these two schools and the analysis on effects of the difference in their physical and psychical construction of sight, in this study significance is found in stressing and focusing on a familiar feature of them. Regardless of the different dispositions of both schools, there was one thing they had in common; in both views there is a physical bond between the eye and what is subjected to sight. In other words, both understandings were based on a connection between the viewer and the spectacle. That is why, rather than designating the development of *camera obscura* model that signifies a hegemonic shift from extramission to intromission as a historical break point, here, it is preferred to stress upon Descartes’ use of that model resulting in the invalidation of both schools with the denial of the direct connection between the eye and the thing viewed. Before



explaining what *camera obscura* is and how Descartes uses it, we will first inspect vision in Descartes' philosophy, generally.

#### **2.2.1.2 Cartesian Vision**

To explain how vision comes about, Descartes proposes an analogy between the walking stick of a blind man and the rays of light. He advises one to consider the light in bodies we call luminous to be a certain movement or very rapid and lively action, which passes to our eyes through the medium of air and other transparent bodies (Descartes, 1988a). This movement is similar to the movement or resistance of bodies encountered by a blind man that passes to his hand by means of his stick. The first proposition that can be derived from this analogy is that light is already evident in the environment between the spectacle and the viewer. Secondly, like the stick that passes the movement at the edge to the hand immediately, light does so regardless of the greater distances. Thirdly, colors are nothing but the various ways the bodies receive light and reflect it to our eyes. Also, the different colors are similar to those differences that a blind man notes between things he touches through his stick. Descartes concludes from all these propositions that sight has nothing to do with the seen thing itself. There is no need to suppose that anything material passes from the thing viewed to the eye, unlike the claims of the extramission and the intromission schools that both argues a particle from the thing in question is transferred to the eye, in spite of their dispute on the active side. In other words, for Descartes there is a clear cut distinction between the eye and the thing seen. What connects them is the light in between and in order to understand how the relationship between the Cartesian Subject and the outer world is established, one should understand how Descartes conceives the nature of light.

Descartes' ideas on sight and light are very similar to Lucretius, although there is no evidence that his arguments are known by Descartes. Lucretius was a Greek philosopher whose ideas, in the age he lived in, were not favored to the extramission theory. As O'Connor and Robertson (2002) excerpts from the philosopher, Lucretius wrote in *On the Nature of the Universe* that:

The light and heat of the sun; these are composed of minute atoms which, when they are shoved off, lose no time in shooting right across the inter-space of air in the direction imparted by the shove (O'Connor and Roberson, 2002).

With an analysis alike, Descartes claims that light was nothing but motion of minute particles, which are not possible to see with naked eye and move at an infinite speed. But unlike Lucretius or any other philosopher of intromission school, Descartes distinguishes between the sensation of light and the light as what it is in the things that produce it. This distinction is critical both for the metaphorical meaning of light and for the division between the soul and the perceived thing. Descartes' theory of sight disconnects the perceiving soul from the thing seen by denying a probable physical exchange between the eye and the object. This disconnection includes the body and the eye transmitting the effects of the light or any other stimuli that results in the sensing of outer world. In this way, the initial statement of Descartes; "I think" becomes devoid of the interference of anything physical. The thought is imagined to be free of any intervention regarding its existence. It turns out to be self-sufficient. Since Cartesian model visualizes thought as the sole testimony of existence of 'I' and externalizes anything but mind, hence, "*ego*" also happens to be self-sufficient. Yet, how this self-sufficient and untouchable 'I' achieve the knowledge of the outer world is still a question.

To construct a model of the Cartesian Subject we should understand, as a last step, how knowing is possible in a setting that mind do not get anything essential from the subject of its inquiry. As we have a second look at Descartes' argument via which he secures the distinction between the soul and the physical world; i.e. in terms of the difference between the sensual experience of a thing and the thing itself, we can get a clearer idea about the foundation of Descartes' knowledge. When we examine the sensual experience in Descartes' view, we see that if there is a lit thing, light is different than what is in that thing. Moreover, what is perceived as light in the mind is also different than light itself. So, to Descartes sensual experience is an information process. If we take any luminous thing as an example, light is reflected from the thing and goes through the eye. In consequence of a physiological process in the eye an image of the thing that reflects the light appears in mind. Hence, to Descartes sensual experience can be conceived as nothing but a mechanical process of encoding and decoding. For the senses are incapable of conveying the things

outside to mind as they are, on account of this mechanical decoding and encoding, mind is likely to be misguided about the outer world. Descartes puts forward the existence of reason as an able power to know about the incapacities and limitations of the senses and correct the defects of the knowledge they produce to solve this difficulty. Reason has the faculty to overcome the imperfection of the senses in grasping the knowledge of the outer world. This is because reason has access to the indubitable knowledge area. Through the use of that knowledge and filtering of reason one could enhance the encoding-decoding process of sensual experience and reach trustworthy knowledge about the outer world.

The enhancing at issue appears in four major phases. In the first phase the mathematical logic of the sensual experience is examined and a mechanical model of it is made. Secondly, by designating the limitations of the senses and in given conditions testing them the knowledge of sensual experience itself is tried to be achieved. Subsequently, mechanical devices and inventions to overcome the limitations of senses are made. Lastly, to attend the areas that are closed to sensual experience, the sphere of senses are expanded and varied in a way that outcome of which may be translated to sensual experience. Therefore, for Descartes the functioning of the senses and how the ideas are formed are themselves the area of scrutiny before reaching the knowledge of the outer world. For the moment, we will focus on his inquiries on this area as they tell us about the understanding of subject in Descartes. As we once locate Descartes' modeling of the subject, we will go through the following phases and try to sketch out how subject is transformed inevitably and what kind of changes this transformation led to.

#### **2.2.1.2.1 *Camera Obscura***

Descartes' mechanical examination of vision depends on a model; namely *camera obscura*, that has been used for a long time by many philosophers in their studies on sight and light. *Camera obscura* is the Latin words for "dark room".<sup>9</sup> It is a model based on the principle that when a small hole is opened at one side of a room in complete darkness, the colors and the movements outside would appear on the

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<sup>9</sup>[http://encyclopedia.jrank.org/CAL\\_CAR/CAMERA\\_OBSCURA.html](http://encyclopedia.jrank.org/CAL_CAR/CAMERA_OBSCURA.html) .

opposite wall, upside down. Robert Nelson (2000) describes the mechanism of *camera obscura* briefly as follows:

To use such a mechanism, the observer stood in a dark room –the camera- in which a single hole, covered by a lens, emitted light. The resulting image captured by a white sheet placed at the appropriate distance from the aperture (Nelson, 2000).

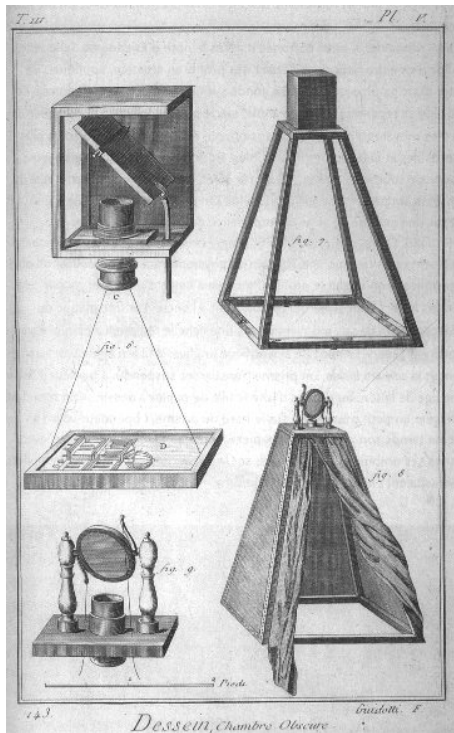


Figure 1 – Camera Obscura Drawings

Source:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camera\\_obscura](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camera_obscura)

For more than two thousand years the logic of this model has been known by many scholars from a variety of origins, like Mo-Ti, Euclid, Aristotle, Al-Hazen (Abu Ali al-Hasan Ibn al-Haitham), Roger Bacon, and Leonardo Da Vinci who illustrated and speculated about *camera obscura* vis-à-vis its adequacy to represent the nature in a realist sense (Crary, 1991).

Although Mo-Ti had discovered the principle of dark room and Al-Hazen had developed the model of *camera obscura* that gave way to the invention of many *camera obscura* devices between 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries in Europe, particularly the term "*camera obscura*" was first used by the

German astronomer Johannes Kepler in the early 17th century. Kepler intensely focused on the physical structure of the eye and believed that the eye is functioning exactly as the *Camera Obscura* model. His argument was that the eye could be cut at the back and used as a substitution for the lens in the model. Nonetheless, it was Descartes who applied Kepler's ideas on functioning of the eye, in order to understand the perception of the outside world and the formation of the ideas in human mind. Descartes uses Kepler's argument to construct his understanding of the relationship between the thinking 'I' and the outer world. In the "Discourse Five" of *Optics* of Descartes (1637), he first describes the functioning of the eye with reference to *camera obscura* principle, and then claims that the eye has the same capacity as the lens in the model to transfer the image to the white sheet in the room

on condition that the back of the eye is cut properly. With his second claim, he argues that the brain, which inhabits the soul, perceives the images formed at the back of the eye (like the images formed on the white sheet) through the optic nerves that transfer them. To Descartes, the mind or the soul is located in brain like a man in the chamber of *camera obscura*, whereas the eye is the medium used to reflect the outside world in the brain. From this reflection emerge the ideas of the outer world.

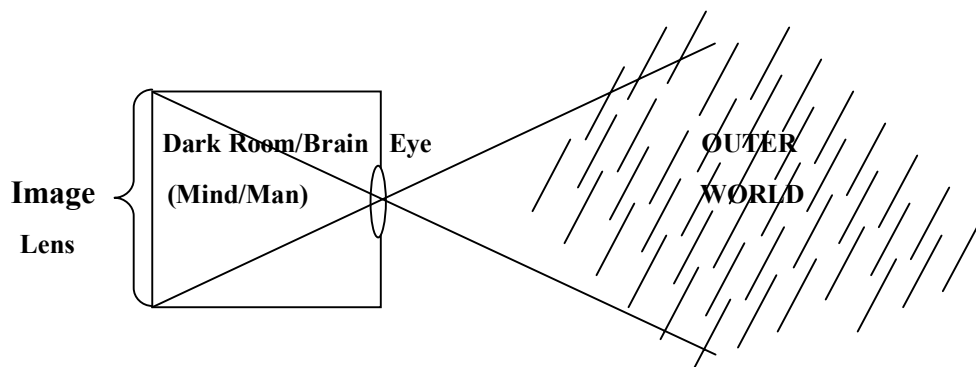


Figure 2 – *Camera Obscura* Model

This model gives us the positioning of soul and the external world with regard to each other. In this positioning, it is depicted that the eye establishes the relationship between these two distinct areas. By use of *camera obscura* how the eye does so is essentially what Descartes wants to learn. As a result of his examinations on the devices like *camera obscura* and *camera lucida* that are widely used in his time for accurate representation of the outer world he reaches the principles of the functioning of the eye. On account of his assessments, he realizes that not only the things far away from the viewer are represented smaller than they are, but also the more the distance between the viewer and any two things increase; the more proximate they are represented to each other. He also realizes that the representation of certain things in engravings should be distorted to be perceived better; circular things should be represented as ovals or squares as trapezoids to be perceived more accurately as circles and squares (Descartes, 1988a). All these were related to how things appear to the eye. The mathematical principle of this appearance is called perspective. For Descartes, to know perspective is a key to reach the accurate

knowledge of the outer world. In the same sense, it is a key for us to achieve a better idea about Descartes' understanding of subject.

#### 2.2.1.2.2 Perspective

Visually, perspective is the way in which things appear to the eye based on their spatial attributes. In graphic arts it is a way of representing the image of external world on a plain surface with reference to how it is viewed by the eye. It simply functions by putting the observer of the representation at one peak point of two imaginary symmetrical pyramids sharing the canvas as their base surface. The viewer is positioned at a focal point as if he looks at a window, whereas on the top of the other pyramid the vanishing point of the painting is positioned (Figure 2). The painting is expected to be an exact representation of the scene that the observer sees at the imaginary window. It is, in other words, a cross section of a three-dimensional scene that eye sees, on a two dimensional sheet. In perspective, things are situated on a plane with reference to each other. They are in an order and this order is represented according to one point. For Descartes, perspective is the way the eye sees and the image of outer world appears in mind. If one wants to figure out the relationship of the Cartesian Subject with the world, s/he should focus on this way of seeing.

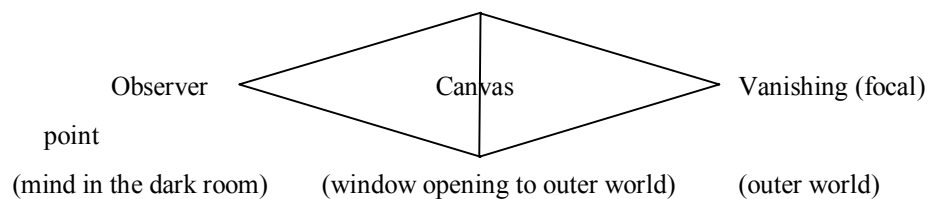


Figure 3 – Perspective Model

Martin Jay (1998), in his article “Scopic Regimes of Modernity” calls what is attempted to be presented, here, as the visual understanding of Descartes and the connection of the Cartesian Subject to outer world, Cartesian Perspectivalism. He uses this phrase to combine the Renaissance notions of perspective in the visual arts

and the Cartesian ideas of subjective rationality in philosophy, which are believed to be two hegemonic visual models in modern era. Although, in this study, unlike how Jay presents it, perspective is believed to have already a role in Descartes' subject model, Jay's explanation of Cartesian Perspectivalism tells us a lot about the Cartesian Subject and its effects. Following his lead we will try to figure out how Descartes' philosophy altered the shape of subject and we will attempt to define the Cartesian Subject by use of Cartesian Perspectivalism.

### **2.2.2 The Implications of the Cartesian Subject**

There are only two beings in the Cartesian Philosophy that is not to be doubted to have the capacity of acting. First one is God who is almighty and whose perfection is free of any interference. Everything is subjected to his will and obeys his order. The other one is Descartes. He is the one who cannot be doubted to act as he thinks and he is also the one who is affected by the consequences of his actions for he is partly imperfect. He is therefore the sole subject that is thrown under the effect of its own action. Nevertheless, Descartes' philosophy is a project to overcome the imperfection in self. That is why, at first place, it is the denial of that imperfection by the retraction of self to thought. As a result of this retraction, the Cartesian Subject becomes the thinking self. It is 'I'. He is the actor of the project of overcoming the imperfection of the being. He acts upon other things and himself through knowing. As long as he achieves certainty in his knowledge of himself and others he is to approach perfection.

As it is mentioned before, in order to know, the Cartesian Subject sees, as sight is the most trustworthy way of relating to the other things. Through seeing the Cartesian Subject conducts his relationship with the others and the nature of sight reveals the character of this conduct. Descartes wants to know about this conduct, the way it happens and the mechanical dynamics of it in order to know the limitations of it and to overcome it through reason. How Descartes conceives this conduct is our concern for it also reveals how the Cartesian Subject constructs his relationship with the world of other things. It will tell us about how he positions himself with respect to other things and what the consequences of this positioning are.

As Jay (1988) argues, Cartesian vision is external, cold, fixated, and static. It is distancing in a way to reflect the isolated character of the Cartesian Subject. Along with physical distance between the viewer and the things he sees, there is no emotional connection, neither. It is 'reason' that sees and eye is the tool for it. It is unblinking and monocular. What the reason looks at is the image of the outer world formed by the eye rather than the things out there and the eye itself. The reason looks at things through the representation of the outer world. The distance between the representation and its correspondence is due to the nature of the sensual experience and as long as this nature is revealed the distance in question could ultimately be reduced. When the reason looks at things through the representations, it takes them out of the flow of time and examines them in one continuous moment. Things are reduced to something other than themselves; to their images in mind, and what reason acquires from that reduction is the order among things. This order is present with regard to the geometrical, spatial attributes of things; their forms. Those attributes are rendered according to one reference point, which is inhabited by the viewer. The monocular character of the eye secures the uniqueness of the focus of reference. Things are seen only from one perspective.

The image formed by the use of perspective that refers to one focus is the way for the Cartesian Subject to represent and know how God sees the world and his order between the things. What is constructed in the model is the position of God to the world, yet in the representation it is man who occupies God's position. The Cartesian Subject resides in the *Camera Obscura* in a state of isolated existence with regard to the world of things. In his internal solitude he looks at the world outside, represents it as God once created it and in this representation masters the external world he perceives. However, the Cartesian Subject does not actually represent the external world, but the images of it in his mind, because it is not possible for him to know and control the world of things, ultimately as God does. Hence, he substitutes the things in external world with their representations and in those representations he seeks and constructs God's order. He simply tries to reach God's view through the distorted view of himself. Once God's position is held by man, in so far as man achieve perfection, man could equal God in his power upon the world of things.



Until that happens, man limits his vision with the representation of God's order. Perspective and *Camera Obscura* are, in other words, models for both stipulation of man's order among things through representation and mechanical analysis of sensual experience in order to overcome the imperfection in man.

The Cartesian Subject strives to represent the images of the outer world and understand through them the order among things. Accuracy in this representation brings man closer to a simulation of the order of God and establishing his own order. The more man achieves the order of things, the more he objectifies the things and takes them under his control. When an action is in question, if the condition of being subjected to that action is considered, as it is mentioned before there is a possibility that both the doer and others who are affected are positioned side by side with regard to that action. This is because they are both cast under the same action. Their position with reference to the action can have a common or similar characteristic. However, the case of being objected to an action conveys the meaning of being cast (*jacere*) against (*ob*), and in this meaning the direction of action is always fixed. Moreover, there is no reciprocity of actions if there is object in question. The relationship regarding the parties is static. Since it is order the Cartesian Subject seeks and order requires fixation, Cartesian vision objectifies everything he sees. While the withdrawal of Descartes from the external world disconnects him from the world of things, the Cartesian Subject includes that world in his existence through the objectified representations of the images of things. The accuracy of representation is quite critical for the objectification, and Cartesian Perspectivalism is accompanied by development of many techniques and devices for obtaining that accuracy. John Berger's (1986) analysis of oil painting provides us both an example for the use of one of those techniques and the nature of the relationship established between the man and the representation. The power of oil painting with its capacity to represent the things painted as solid, touchable objects with texture defines a new role for representation. First of all, with the accuracy in representation the image itself is objectified. It turns into something to be hold, exchanged or experienced. Secondly, the things represented are also objectified as the experience of the viewer with the representation converges to his experience with the things represented as long as the

experience is limited to seeing. In consequence of this double objectification, a relationship of belonging appears between the viewer and both the representation and



Figure 4 – Holbein - Ambassadors  
Source: <http://www.artchive.com/artchive/h/holbein/ambassadors.jpg>

the things represented. A connection between the representation and the real is established. The thickness of paint and the use of colors and light in oil painting enhances the three-dimension effect of perspective in representation and the outer world, as it is seen is concretized on a surface. Nevertheless, this time as Berger tells us, the surface is not a window that opens to the world of things, but it is a safe in which

valuable objects are put. As a result of this process the image gains the character of steadiness in the representation. Many things of the outer world, with which a belongingness relationship cannot be established due to their temporariness, are owned in effect by the viewer. Even so, the most shocking effect of objectification is not that the representation and the represented are sacrificed to (the bourgeois dreams of) possession, but reduction of things to their physical existence in the representation. As Berger exemplifies with Hans Holbein's painting; The Ambassadors<sup>10</sup>, metaphysical meanings of things are lost with perspective and oil painting in representation. This painting is a particular one, for it accommodates an alternative presentation of an object in order to imply its metaphysical meaning, namely human skull for death. In the painting, skull is located at the front, distorted in form in a way to conflict with the orderly distortion dominating the overall of the image. The distortion controversial to the perspective and the accurate representation in the painting prevents it to be perceived as simply a physical object. We will

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.artchive.com/artchive/h/holbein/ambassadors.jpg> .

examine this issue further in this book with reference to the ideas of Baudrillard under the title of ‘the loss of meaning’. Yet, for the moment it is plausible to say that Cartesian understanding of vision not only orders things with reference to space, but also fixes them in terms of time and meaning, which results in the disappearance of the narration in representations. This in turn results in a quantitative comparability of things in equations, common tools of which are money and photography (the ultimate form of accurate representation) that again we will return later.

In conclusion, Cartesian vision; i.e. the Cartesian Subject’s way of approaching the world, is a distant, self-centered, objectifying, out of time, fixed, spatial way of seeing that constructs a simulation of order believed to be in the external world stipulated by God. To that world, man approaches through the act of knowing and as this channel of action is asymmetrical man establishes power and ownership relationship upon the things. With this way of relating, by using means of representation, man constructs his own world as a mirror of the world God created which once he used to be a part of. Through mastering his own world and overcoming his incapacities in a quest for mastering the world of God, he demystified the world he lived in, made it known, secure, and conquered it. History of modernity is history of that man. His subjective existence resides in the essence of modernity. As this man in his disembodiment and ahistoricity, seeks the truth of God in the world, he also plays the role of God by achieving perfection day by day through a self scrutiny and self enhancement. And his existence marks the initiation of a new era in human history called modernity. This era witnessed both the celebration of the existence of this man and his impossibility to exist. We will focus on this impossibility and attempt to present the consequences of it.

#### **2.2.2.1 The Cartesian Subject in Mirror Stage**

To Berger (1986) seeing is two sided. If one accepts that she sees a hill over there, she also proposes that she can be seen from that hill. The Cartesian Subject, controversially, with its asymmetrical way of relating to the outer world and with its external existence, denies the effects of the others’ sight and takes the other into account by objectifying it. In Cartesian way of existence seeing is a one sided action. Subject acts upon objects by seeing to know and there is only one active part in the

relationship. This model is an imitation of God's relationship to his creation. God creates, orders, sees, knows and rules over everything. As it was attempted to be hinted in the first book, this one sided relationship that ensures the indubitable existence of the Cartesian Subject is shaken in two main conditions. The first one is Descartes' overcoming the imperfect side he sees in his existence and becoming divine like God. This results in the collapse of the one way relationship God has with his creation and in turn causes the death of God. The second is the existence of an other (third person) who can act, see and know in the world of the things that are objectified under Descartes' gaze. In the social condition that is enabled by the existence of the third person, Descartes' vision loses its one sided character. The relationship with the other is exposed to someone external to that relationship.

When God's gaze and rule upon the created things are challenged by the death of Descartes, which corresponds to reaching perfection as the unified existence of perfect reason and imperfect corporeality is broken, God's death is realized. With the death of God, there is nothing left behind but God's order and Descartes' ambition to know it. In the absence of God (and Descartes), to understand the existing order, *mankind* orients his conduct to understand himself and to construct a world of his own from the reflection of that order. In return, he is to rule over God's order by knowing himself and overcoming his limitations. He faces two primary conflicts at this moment. First, in order to know himself he should turn his gaze to himself and externalize the knowing and objectifying gaze from his existence. The second conflict is that the gaze at question is already evident external to man in the plurality of human condition and social existence. In both conditions, Subject (with capital S) loses uniqueness in its existence. In those cases it is possible to talk about two subjects facing and looking at each other. The effect of this condition is quite similar to what happens in Lacan's (1977) mirror stage.

In the mirror stage, the infant sees its reflection, for the first time, in the mirror and recognizes the image in the mirror as itself. As a result of seeing the self, a split occurs due to the realization of the disunity between the self and the mother or the environment. The split is between the 'I' and the other. This incidence causes the acknowledgment of the self as a distinct entity among all the other things. Moreover, it is the first step of examining the self. Here, the fact that self is examined through an external image of the bodily existence should be underlined, since examining self

by the use of a device that makes the externalized body and its limitations apparent is a pure example of Cartesian conduct. Nonetheless, these are not the only effects of the mirror stage. Looking at the mirror essentially calls for someone with equal power looking back at you. In other words, mirror-stage signifies the realization of someone observing you, along with the realization of the distinction between the self and the other, and the process of examining the self. In the mirror stage the self is seen through the other's gaze and the gaze is externalized. To put it in a different way, the disappearance of the unity with the other gives the infant the pleasure of the objectifying gaze through the experience of examining the other, yet, this pleasure is only momentary as baby's enthusiasm gives its place to a calm, inert silence, soon. The reason for this is the realization of the fact that the image in the mirror that it looks at is looking back at it. The baby becomes conscious of the condition that it has an objectified existence in the gaze of the other, in mirror stage. In other words, mirror stage is becoming conscious of the possibility of Subject being the object of the other's gaze or the availability of the knowledge of self to the other. It is possible to talk about two subjects examining each other with a way of looking that objectifies the other.

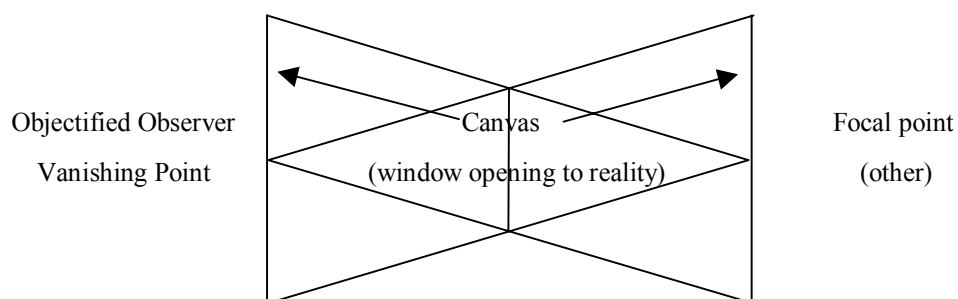


Figure 5 – Perspective Model for Lacanian Subject

In this respect, once the model of Cartesian Perspectivalism is reconsidered for mirror-stage or for two subjects facing each other, it is seen that the focal point Subject occupies in the perspective merges into the other's outer and objective world. Subject is positioned at the vanishing point of the other's vision and the transcendental and omni-potent position of Subject is lost in the outer world of things. Where the subject stands becomes both the focal point and the vanishing

point. As long as one is centered, it necessarily disappears, too. Hence, there is nothing left of the Subject in the complex mathematical system structured by the intersection of the multiple perspectivalist gazes, but the position it once occupied. A position, now, decentered... As both subjects are objectified at the other's gaze, being Subject turns out to be impossible and subject position becomes something unattainable and dissolves into the order of objects. In brief, when the Cartesian vision is socialized, its character of being one sided diminishes. Consequently, not only the Cartesian Subject but also the subject in the meaning before Descartes' intervention happens to be something impossible to be.

What is tried to be told here is a great transformation in men's conditions of existence, in the character of how mankind relates to things, in human conduct, and in the form of power. We will focus on this transformation in order to understand the implications of the Cartesian Subject through two paths. These two paths arise from the two conditions in which one-sided Cartesian vision is challenged and focuses on the core problem of decentralization of subject position. As Subject is objectified and pacified, and in turn disappears, the position once held by him still remains evident. In this respect, on one hand, if it is neither man nor God holds the position once occupied by them, what/who is holding that space, now, should be sought. On the other hand, what happens when the reference point that everything is ordered in line with is lost, is the other question the answer of which should be sought. These two questions emerging from the decentralization of the Cartesian Subject due to its impossibility are the core of this study regarding its claim that both critiques of subject as substance and subject as effect in essence deals with the same notion, namely the Cartesian Subject. The first question concerns the symbolic or philosophical implications of the Cartesian Subject, whereas the other inquires the imaginary or social propositions of it. In this respect, the view of this study also brings about a different approach to the question that if the subject of Lacan could be Cartesian. Although, not only Lacan himself sees the Cartesian Subject as the prerequisite of the psychoanalysis, but also scholars like Mladen Dolar (1998: 21) claims it so and Slavoj Žižek in many occasions (for instance in his interview with Josefina Ayerza, 1992) reminds it, there are still some (like Byrant, 2003) who construes subject of Lacan in opposition to the Cartesian Subject. Here, in

controversy with both sides of the argument, it is proposed that the Cartesian Subject in terms of its necessary ends is Lacanian in both philosophical and social levels.

Although God is dead and Descartes is long gone, there are man's desire and ambition to know the order among things and God's throne left behind. When the throne is empty and the desire and the ambition to know are without rein, the throne is taken by the method of knowing. It is what Descartes calls the philosophy of nature. It is what denies the philosophy beyond nature. It is what we call modern science as the endeavor of understanding the order in the universe, today. Among all the other branches of science, it is firstly medicine in regard to its conduct of knowing self and extending human life,<sup>11</sup> and secondly, technology with respect to its ways of overcoming the limitations in being,<sup>12</sup> And it is the substantial subject that still survives and it is what Nietzsche and Heidegger criticizes. It is what called humanity in the modern age; an essence transcendental to human being, an essence denying the human condition... It is the first implication of the Cartesian Subject. In accordance with this first implication, the second implication of the Cartesian Subject is the ignorance of human in the name of humanity, society, system, structure or the order. It is the denial of the uniqueness of each human being. It is the erasing of the subject (as fast as the momentary awareness of infant's objectification in the gaze of other in mirror stage), in the sense it is known, from the historical context. It is the rise of a new understanding of power, new institutions, new identities and new forms of organization. We will deal with the foundation that enabled these transformations, namely the decentralization of the Cartesian Subject, and its immediate historical outcome.

#### **2.2.2.2 World Alienation or the Rise of Modern Science**

The sixteenth century witnessed many events that are the beginning of a great deal of change in the western world. The most significant among all is the rise of modern science (Whitehead, 1967: 1-4). Along with the transformation of the life

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<sup>11</sup> I should remind here that Descartes proclaims his devotion in the rest of his life to medicine among all the other studies, at the end of *Discourse*.

<sup>12</sup> It should also be reminded how Descartes favors the devices and inventions that improve the sensual experience in *Dioptics*.

course through many discoveries made, the era also witnessed an alteration in the view of world (starting from the educated elite), the textual expression of which is evident in the philosophy of Descartes. Until now the reflection of this mental transformation in the western state of mind is attempted to be given. Following that attempt an inspection of the transitions that goes hand in hand and linked with the mental revision at stake will tried to be achieved. The effort is hopefully expected to enhance the revealing of the Cartesian Subject's role in the formation of the modern metaphysics with regard to its part in the foundations of the rise of modern world. As it is mentioned above, science as the act and system of acquiring knowledge took the place of God who used to look at his creation from the heights of the sky or from heavens where everything was visible to him. This happened through a series of events that led the world of things to be visible in the scientific way. The orientation of those events was to reveal the knowledge of the world and the order among things; however their effect were more than that.

The first of those events was the geographical discoveries of the unknown places in the world. The shocking unearthing of a new continent was just the beginning of a long-term quest for the discovery -the form of which is more like invasion- of the world. The invasion of the earth was not only limited to the earth, but also included human beings, plants, animals and every other thing on it. Everything became an object of scientific knowledge. The distances were defeated by speed, and everywhere in the world are reached by men. The knowledge of the earth has been revealed by the mapping of all the lands, seas and oceans (Arendt, 1994: 359). The boundaries of the earth were determined and as a place to live, the earth was reduced to a finite existence in itself. The geographical discoveries made the every inch of the earth known to us by conquering the hidden and mysterious parts of the world. Thus, world is tamed and demystified. The process started with geographical discoveries was enhanced by the invention of the telescope and the usage and improvement of it by Galileo and many others which made the examination of the universe by sensual experience possible.

With the advent of telescope, the gaze of mankind turned to the space. Before the invention of the telescope mankind had observed the sky from the earth in



reference to the world they live in. Nonetheless, after the usage of this epochal device, The Copernican ideas of the heliocentric theory of the solar system that he presents in *On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres* are in many aspects proved by Galileo Galilei and Johannes Kepler, and the earth-centered interpretations of cosmos were shaken. Metaphorically, Hannah Arendt (1994: 357) uses the phrase of “the discovery of Archimedean point”; the point in the universe, where he was supposed to put his famous lever to lift the world, in order to explain this process by which man, a worldly being until the modern age, looks at the world from a far away point in the universe. To Arendt long before going to the space, man started to judge his own world by the criteria of the cosmos, and the launching of an earth born object into the universe symbolically is the peek of the developments that enabled this judgment. It is possible to understand this process with the Lacanian decentralization of the Cartesian Subject.

As the distances are defeated by speed in geographical discoveries, with the invention of telescope greater distances become visible. With the use of telescope, the observer could see things that are utterly out of the reach of mankind in its absence. Telescope was bringing the distant objects to the observer by keeping the distance in between. In a truly Cartesian sense, the observer in his external existence to the observed thing could still attend the knowledge of it. The result was being there without physically being there. Through the image seen in the visor of the device, the observer in the Cartesian Perspectivalist understanding was moving towards the seen thing, or vice versa. The effect of being there was simulated by the device. By use of telescope, not only one of the basic deficiencies of human eye; incapacity to see the distant objects, was overcome, but also the separation between subject and the object was enhanced.

The birth of a branch of science; astronomy, that has its reference point for knowledge out of the worldly experience was not the only outcome of the process which is completed with the space voyage. Since telescope opened the secrets of universe to an empirical certainty, the human world as a reference point has lost its importance. Earth ceased to be the center of the universe and it was subjected to the grand rules of the cosmos. The shift of reference out of the world was in essence

related to the disappearance of the mystical meanings of the celestial objects. The celestial objects lost their meanings they have been attained in the worldly experience of them. They turned out to be mere things objectified in the gaze of the viewer. They became a part of the order among things. The order mankind was seeking went beyond the boundaries of the earth and the nature. As a result of this process earth also took its place in that order. It ceased to be the center of the universe.

In the Lacanian sense, the gaze that was turned to space brought about the necessity to look back at the earth. For the first time in history the earth was envisaged in a spatial unity, which could only be achieved through looking at it via externalized sight. Through the other's gaze... This other was positioned somewhere in the universe where Arendt calls Archimedean Point. From that point the world is seen and examined by the inhabitants of the earth and it was subjected to rules that do not originate from the worldly experience, the reference of which is out of the world. Men were empowered by these rules to the extent that even the nature and men's rule over it could be destroyed by that power. Yet whether men could use that power over the nature to manipulate and control or the power controls and manipulates men is an important question to be raised.

Cartesian Perspectivalism is always said to be a model that replaces God's position to the world with man. This is also supposed in the previous sections of this study and to a certain extent it is true. Nevertheless, God's position to world has a major difference than Cartesian Perspectivalist model, in that God in no sense directly relates to the world of things, unlike the Cartesian Subject which is in one respect necessarily worldly. Due to his external existence God manipulates the world of things through the king in the world. King is the embodiment of God in world who rules in the name of God and makes God's existence visible in the world. As a man he is the one according to whom everything is referred. In his absence the rule of God's order is shaken. If we have a close look at this relational model we can see that there are two actual focal points everything else is stipulated in regard to. One is where king stands, while the other is God's position. To schematize and visualize this model we can think of a cone. Cone is a three dimensional shape which is basically formed by rotating a right angled triangle around one of its short sides. The shape is useful to understand the relationship tried to be told here in that on a linear

base it is formed by the connection of each spot on a circle's surface to a point out of the planer level of the circle (see, figure 4). In the conical model there are two focal points, which reside in the two edges of the triangle's side that is turned around. This line that connects these two points is called axis. The point that is not on the bottom surface, which is also called base, of the cone is called vertex or apex. The apex of the cone symbolizes God's position to earth and the center of the base, where everything on the surface is positioned around is hold by king. God and king have a direct relationship which is provided by the axis.<sup>13</sup> This relationship was in every sense one-sided and when it was challenged everything has changed.

As a result of the Cartesian decentralization, the exact whereabouts of the focal points in the model become blurred following the dead of God and the disappearance of his vessel that corporeally stands for God's power upon the world.

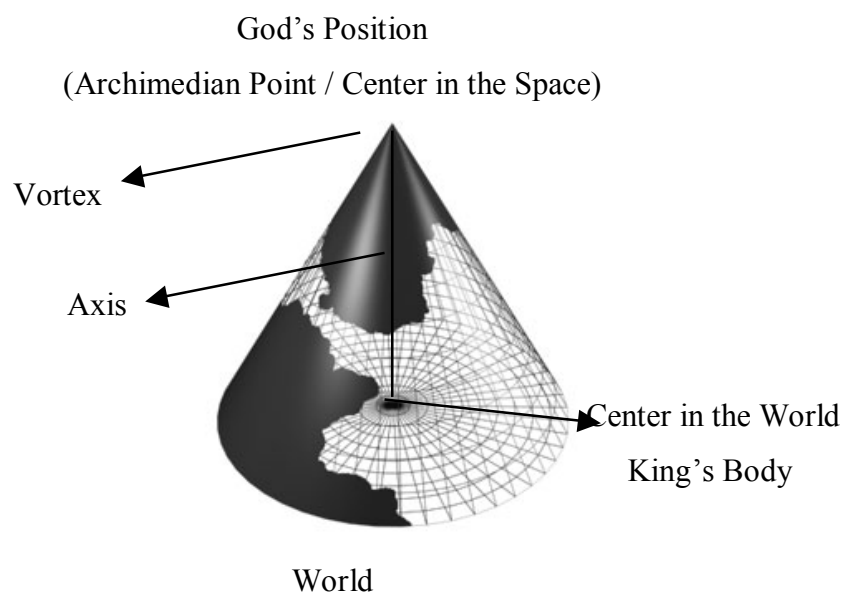


Figure 6 – Transcendental Subject and the World  
Source: <http://www.wikipedia.org>

<sup>13</sup> What makes the connection between God and king is the institutional approval of the Christian Church. For more information on how the authority of this approval is dissolved by Reformation and how it contributed the world alienation hand in hand with the geographical discoveries and the invention of telescope see, Arendt (2002) "*Vita Activa* and Modern Age" in *Human Condition*, pp. 357-389.

Due to this blurring the relationship between the things is established by the rules of the universe that is reached by scientific knowledge. As once it was the light of heavens that stipulates the order among the things, now it is done by the light of science. As the vortex of the cone is not fixed in the modern world the model turns into an ever-changing conical shape (a cone formed by a triangle without right angle) whose reference point out of the world always changes. The absence of king's body as the corporeal visibility of God also tells us the absence of God. Science fulfills this lack and takes place of God. To conceive this transition in a better way it would be useful to examine God's positioning to the lives of mankind from ancient times to modern world, with which we will turn to Foucault and his analysis of the model of Panopticon. Before, we will first focus on how the scientific gaze stipulates the order in the world and how mankind was affected by it.

#### **2.2.2.3 Disappearance of Man**

As the world is seen from an outer reference point, everything on the world is objectified and becomes a part of a grand system. In the end of this process, what Arendt calls world alienation happens, and the worldly experience that once was in the center of the mental and physical being of mankind loses its importance. While the progress of mankind is denser than it has ever been, Arendt argues that, following the hundreds of years of development that is achieved through science, mankind yields to the rules of the universe with the expense of the world they created. This in turn brought about the disappearance of man as the reference point, too. We will use first Michel De Certeau's, then Hannah Arendt's contemplations on this process in order to understand how the man disappears as the doer and the actor of his own conduct.

In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel De Certeau (1984) examines how modernity changes the practices of mankind, by moving from structure to actions and using a comparative analysis of the concepts of 'place and space'. He also focuses on 'itinerary/tour and map' as ways of narration and tries to explain the process in which space is colonized by map. He explains the role of the scriptural apparatus of modern discipline in this process and puts voices in opposition to written, as a residual and resisting, though suppressed, form of being. To begin with, in an effort of understanding De Certeau's examination of modernity, one should first understand

his conceptions of space and place; the importance of spatial in daily practices and narration; and in this narration tour and map as distinct styles.

#### **2.2.2.3.1 Space vs. Place or Tour vs. Map**

According to De Certeau, place is a geometrical existence where elements are jointly exclusive and mutually exhaustive in terms of their location in a plane based understanding. One location can be occupied by only one element and all the elements of the place are located together, orderly. On the contrary, space is the conjunction of the mobile elements in it or in other words, the union of the elements intersecting in location. In a different wording, space is only possible when a place is experienced. Unlike place, which is static in nature, space is dynamic. Rather than proximity or remoteness, it is the time variable that matters, in space. The encounter, confrontation or meeting of the elements in location is the essence of the space, on the contrary to the coexistence in place. The place turns into a space through operation; i.e. spatial needs and involves subject, while in place everything is objectified. With the scientific gaze the space in the world is transformed into place. This is visible in narration since narration is alive with spatial practices.

For De Certeau every story is a spatial practice. Unlike the famous legend on Hollywood movies claims,<sup>14</sup> in its very basic form there are only two stories; either you go somewhere or one comes to you (Ursula Le Guin, 1999). In this sense, all the stories are travel stories. But beyond this, what De Certeau means is that stories are about people and their experience in space. And the transformation of space has a reflection in narration as the transformation of *tour* to *map*. Tour is a log of travel that reveals the space through experience. In contrast, map is a totalizing stage bringing many different elements in a scene to form a concrete picture of a geographical knowledge. Despite being a product of the experience in space, map is a colonizing means that eradicate the practice producing it. Map is a collection of the products of knowledge, usually excluding the process of acquiring it. Map is dehumanized, preset, unchanging and externalizing. The map is strategic, operating through predetermined and constant rules, whereas itinerary is tactical, functioning

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<sup>14</sup> The legend is that Hollywood films are nothing but derivations of a fixed number (7-11) of certain scenarios.

supply. Tour is adaptable and ready for unexpected alternatives and possibilities. Furthermore, it is not goal-oriented in a direct manner, quite the opposite it is ready to change its aim when necessary. In brief, map is the narration manner of what De Certeau calls scriptural. In his own words, it is “*seeing* (the knowledge of an order of a place), while tour is *going* (spatializing actions). The unit of measurement in tour and map disclose what characterizes their distinctions. In tour, the distance is defined in terms of time; such as *two hours of walking* or *two days of sailing*. In practice, it may vary due to the conditions and the differences of the subjects and other existing worldly conditions. Conversely, in map the distance is defined by length, which is fixed and leaves no space for subjective practice. It objectifies the spatial experience. It takes men out of the narration. The fixation of relative length measurement units such as foot is a good illustration of this. With the modern age not only once variable foot length is standardized for certain countries but also an international foot is also determined. Considering that the length of the foot for a long time changed as it was referring to the foot of king, as the king’s body is missing, setting up a certain length for foot is not surprising. As the king is missing the distances among things can be determined by an external reference to the experience. Moreover, in map the act of traveling lose its importance as the distance between two spots is passed by without any attention to the practice of traveling. Traveling from A to B has no difference with regard to traveling from B to C as long as the distance among them is same, in a map. Scientific vision sees no difference in those distance as its ultimate aim is to overcome the distance in between. In other words, it aims to turn practice of travel an experience that is not lived, through minimizing the time that it takes. One of the ultimate forms of this is provided by telescope that simulates the travel in no time.<sup>15</sup>

Stories are not only the operations on places, but also they have the everyday role of determining the delimitations of them. They make operations of marking out boundaries, isolating and combining places. From this partition arises the structure of a space and in turn the structure determines the distinctions that separates one that experiences it from his/her exteriority. On every space there is a play of actions that produces more stories which also makes new distinctions and delimitations of space.

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<sup>15</sup> Another example will be given by utilizing Baudrillard’s analysis of television at the end of this section.

This role of stories, to open up spaces for actions, is called *creating a theater of actions* by De Certeau and it is one of the two primary functions of the stories together with building *frontiers and bridges*. As long as a story distinguishes places it also provides a space that on which different parties are connected. Those areas called frontiers, seem at first site to belong to nobody, yet actually have a mediator role among different bodies due to the fact that although frontiers are regions that separate bodies, they are also where bodies are in conjunction. They are more than cartographical nowhere. They are regions where relation between bodies is at highest level and the experience of space is ultimately dynamic. If the stories disappear this entire livelihood is lost, and there is also a loss of space. What happens to one who experiences this process is told by De Certeau as follows:

...deprived of narrations (as one sees it happen in both the city and the country side) the group or the individual regresses toward the disquieting, fatalistic experience of a formless, indistinct, and nocturnal totality (De Certeau, 2002).

And, peculiarly, he shows us how this loss of narration or in other words transformation of spaces to places (what he calls in his own words political freezing of place) happens and makes apparent the very agent that leads to this transformation, namely scriptural economy. We will first focus on De Certeau's examination of the scriptural economy, and then center our attention what happens to men in respect to the transition at question by looking at Arendt's critique of modernity.

To De Certeau, modern western culture is characterized by the installation of the scriptural apparatus of modern discipline, which is made possible by the development of printing. His argument depends on the distinction based on oral and written. He focuses on how the original voice of people is fixated, isolated, normalized, made audible as long as it is mediated and cut (or edited) by media and techniques of diffusion, and imitated. This writing of the original is defined as *the concrete activity that consists in constructing, on its own, blank space - the page- a text that has power over its exteriority from which it has first been isolated*. Through writing, the oral is collected, classified, inserted into a system and thereby transformed. Scriptural apparatus in other words appropriates the external space. In

this appropriation the interwoven stories of people that lead to formation of new spaces are pacified. The actions of the people who operate on spaces are limited and space turns into place. Western culture writes its own history and cuts its ties with the traditional with this act of writing and the narrated is lost in that action. In consequence of purging itself from the ambiguities of the world, this history written is claimed to be universal. De Certeau defines the result of this entire process, roots of which is Cartesian in every sense, as follows:

Revolution itself, that “modern” idea, represents the scriptural project at the level of an entire society seeking to constitute itself as a blank page with respect to the past, to write itself by itself (that is to produce itself as its own system) and to produce a new history (refaire l’histoire) on the model of what it fabricates (and this will be progress). It is necessary only for this ambition to multiply scriptural operations in economic, administrative, or political areas in order for the project to be realized. Today, by an inversion that indicates that a threshold in this development has been crossed, the scriptural system moves forward on its own; it is becoming self-moving and technocratic; it transforms the subjects that controlled it into operators of the writing machine that orders and uses them. A cybernetic society... (De Certeau, 2002).

For long time writing was a tool to transmit the spoken word. The importance of writing was due to the narrated story that is inscribed. Nevertheless, for more than four centuries this understanding has been eroded and transformed. The development of printing press helped the structuring of the act of writing in a Cartesian visual sense. The written text lost its uniqueness, and the connection between the writer and the act of writing is broken. The writing became something that operates through what is evident in the writing, instead of the signified that exists in the text by being absent. The connection between the writer and the story through the text is also broken. The story lost its importance and is dominated by the act of writing that manages the meaning and maps the narration. The way the story is expressed in the rules of writing surpassed the story told. To De Certeau, this is the “*measurement of being by doing*”. Doing is the practice of reality, not the practice that creates reality. It is the act of writing that is redefined with the exclusion of what is written. De Certeau exemplifies this process through the examination of the bible and how the connection between the bible and the First speaker is cut. Modernity witnessed not only the death of God; but also every speaking subject. There is no subject who creates and changes spaces by stories but the subjects/objects of a system that no longer tolerates any voice. Modernity by using the delimiting and structuring



character of narrations fixes the order among things through a special form of narration; writing, and subjects any other story or voice that contradict with that order and modern science is one of the primary agents of modernity that operates the same logic.

To better understand this universal and systematic writing of social and reordering of the subjective experience through fixed structuring of space into place, one should concentrate on the diminishing of the traditional public/private distinction and parallel with that the transformation of the form of human conduct in modernity. Hannah Arendt's historical-philosophical inquiry in her substantial piece of work, *The Human Condition*, is one of the prominent contributions to the debate of public/private distinction, which we will use here to serve this purpose. Her analysis of the public and private sphere beginning with a scrutiny of political philosophy in the Ancient Greek world and throughout the middle age and modern era is peculiar with respect to her novel conceptualization of human activity, her criticism of modernity and along with her pioneering ideas about the world alienation we utilized before.

In *The Human Condition*, Arendt is fundamentally concerned with *vita activa*; active life, which is the basic conditions on earth that we affiliate ourselves with life or establish ourselves in it, namely; labor, work and action. Labor is related to biological process of human body and its needs, and signifies a continuously repetitive and an unimaginative condition, the product of which is consumed almost concurrently. Work corresponds to a way of existence connected to the artificial world of things that men build. It structures the unnatural side of mankind in this nonvolatile, permanent world of durable products. Action, above all the others, is the only human activity that happens between men without any interference. It is only possible as long as one is freed from needs, necessities and obligations of biological life. According to Arendt, the human conditions of labor, work and action are life, worldliness and plurality, respectively.

Arendt principally constructs her theory by employing these three types of activities on the distinction between the earth and the world. She construes labor as an activity that belongs to the natural side of mankind in the life cycle; work as assembling an artificial world from the raw substances nature provides men; and action as the way to render the process-bound existence of human beings in this

world eternal. Having done such a conceptualization, she proposes an earth-originated understanding of man which is characterized by his distinctions from the other elements in nature, as well as his natural side. Hence, Arendt imagines a human condition different from human nature, since it involves both natural and artificial conditions of men. The ever-changing disposition of these conditions of men, leads to the historicity of the concept of *vita activa*, which alters as long as the world of men changes. Therefore, Arendt, seeks the roots of *vita activa* in the political organization of city-states of Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome, which she regards as possibly the most political people known. She develops her argument by examining the public and private spheres, the rise of society and each element of *vita activa*, in detail with a reference to the change in its meaning, in time. Finally, she concludes the book with her criticism of modernity and *vita activa* in modern age.

Arendt's search for *vita activa* in history starts with her criticism of Greek thinkers to reduce *vita activa* to *vita contemplative*. For Greek philosopher, the earth, the nature and all the living species were immortal in their cycle of birth, decay and death. Only the men were mortal in existence, the birth of which refers to innovation for world, since they do not live as members of a species but as distinct individuals. In order to deal with the mortality of polis and mankind, Socrates, Plato and their followers made a distinction between immortality and eternity, and designated contemplation as the way to reach eternity. This distinction equalized contemplation to *vita activa* and elevated it over the other forms of activity. Nevertheless, firstly with the rise of *homo faber* (the work of our hands) in middle age and then with the rise of *animal laborans* (laboring in complete solitude) in industrial era, this hierarchy is turned upside down. Arendt connects this process with the advent of society as a concept in modern age and its domination over the public and private spheres.

#### **2.2.2.3.2 Rise of Social**

Public vs. private distinction in the philosophy of Arendt, which she believes to be evident in Ancient Greece, is mostly shaped by her republican thoughts. She perceives public sphere as the domain of politics, which can be constructed as opposed to and together with the private realm. It is accessible by the ones capable of purifying themselves from the natural needs of mankind that are only adequate in

private sphere. Public sphere is for equals to expose their subjective existence to the multiple scrutinies of others. This exposure fixes the identity of the individual by the objective public evaluation. In private sphere, on the contrary, the subjectivity of the individual is secured from sometimes the brutal objective assessment of public. With this respect, for Arendt, fundamentally public, has two meanings as “*visible or audible*” and *common* and action as a revelatory, boundless, unpredictable and irreversible activity serves this dual meaning in public sphere. Since it happens only between men, action is by no means limited and there is no way to reverse it as if it had never happened. In public realm, it reveals the uniqueness of the individual who in private sphere only exist through the sameness with others in nature. As opposed to the double meaning of public, private also serves two meanings as *secrecy* and *ownership*. The borders of household both conceal the activities happening inside and relate the citizen who is the head of household to the world. This relation is established via the ownership of the property connecting the citizens to the world of artifacts that he lives in.

Arendt’s criticism of modernity is based on the collapse of these borders and the emergence of the society as a category between public and private. With the rise of housekeeping, its activities, problems and organizational devices in public sphere, in Arendt’s words out of the shadowy interior of household, the borderline between private and public blurred; private became visible and public turned out to involve elements of private sphere. Society is established as a big family at the scale of a nation, dominating the individuals and the other social groups with its own values. Equality is lost since it is not a necessity in the family of the private realm and the necessities of life and consumption for the satisfaction of them became the moral motivation of the life. People became masses living to assure their basic needs that are redefined everyday and never satisfied. To Arendt the rise of society has marked the end of both public and the private in the sense we used to know them. We will focus on the organization of the need with Baudrillard’s theory of consumption, nonetheless, for the moment our concern is to comprehend in this great deal of change how men, their conduct, and relations of power have changed.

For Arendt, the modern age resulted in the victory of *animal laborans* who strives only for the biological reproduction of mankind. Men turned into a species whose conditions of this reproduction extended the borders of the earth. In turn men

ceased to be a worldly being. Earth just became a habitat for mankind and is colonized by them. Science as an instinctual motive focused the conduct of mankind in progress which is possible through the elimination of the orality and the celebration of the scriptural economy. In the never ending quest for progress men's conditions of existence has devastatingly changed. We will examine this change vis-à-vis making the relationship between the divine and the mundane the center of our attention and focusing on how decentralization of the Cartesian Subject transformed this relationship.

#### **2.2.2.3.3 From Apollon to Panopticon**

In Ancient Greece, the mundane and the divine were present together in the everyday life. Gods were showing their faces and powers to the ordinary people through corporeal embodiment, with favors and by punishments of nature they control. The sun god Apollon, for instance, was always within the mundane lives of Greek people, at such close distance that whenever they raised their heads they could see him there looking at them. However it was impossible to look back at him for a long time, since his light, as the indicator of his power, could blind anyone looking at him extensively. His power was brutal and punishing, while his presence (and power) is seen by his subjects. On the other hand, unlike Apollon, Christian God was distant to his subjects and his creation. Arendt proposes “founding of a baby in a manger” as one of the most important turning points that marks not only the end of antiquity but also an unexpected and unforeseeable beginning (Arendt, 1994: 369). This is the moment that signifies, the first time in the western history, the encounter of men with the traces of a transcendental being, external to the world of mankind. This transcendental being was *the god* whose existence was promised by the miraculous birth of a baby. Christian God was invisible and his dominance over his subjects was based on this characteristic. The invisibility of God was both related to his unlimited power beyond the comprehension of his subjects and the disembodied divinity he has. He was untouchable, omni-potent and external to the world. Once he reflects his presence on a mountain as light, even his prophet could not stand it and faint. He was everywhere; even though his presence was not observable. He could see and know everything, yet could not be seen and known by others. Yet, in the social organization of the middle age, god still needed physical existence to exercise

his power. This is why the physical existence of king was needed for the operation of monarchy (Foucault, 1994: 38). The feudal lords, the kings of Europe, the holy church and its canonical law ruled over people and legitimized their sovereignty by being the vessels of god. They were the embodiment of god, his agents and his monarchs in this world, through which he exercised his power. They were the indicators of his rule and order in the world.

In the modern world, Michel Foucault (2000: 39) argues that monarch's body is replaced with the body of society. This idea of body is formed by the universality of wills, and this universality is not achieved through consensus (or "contract") but by materiality of the power that individuals are exposed to. This process cannot be explained by the simple conception of power as juristic or legal externalization, denial, prevention, rejection or deprivation. A new understanding of power that is developed from the practices and structure that almost medically protects the body of social, with techniques like prevention of contagious diseases, the isolation of patients, separation of criminals, purification of generation, etc... is needed. What Foucault revolutionarily does is to examine the preservation of the social body through the modern institutional organizations and practices, in respect to his new conceptions of power and discourse. According to his understanding, individuals as the constituting component of social body are exposed to power regarding three primary areas that scientific discourse focuses, namely reason (relationship between madness and sanity), body (health and illness, & sexuality and sexual heresy) and order (crime, deviance and punishment). To Foucault, since the late seventeenth century onwards, in the name of the preservation of social body, individual body and mind are exposed to an institutional observation, definition, separation and normalization, chiefly in newly rising clinic, prison and asylum but generally in almost every institution of social life. This led to a great transformation to take place on the basis of a new form of spatial organization and structuring. We will try to understand this new structuring in order to grasp its convergence with the decentralization of the Cartesian Subject.

In *The Birth of the Clinic*, Foucault explains the transformation of the medical practice in nineteenth century as follows:

At the beginning of nineteenth century, doctors described what for centuries had remained below the threshold of the visible and the expressible, but this did not mean that, after over-indulging in speculation, they had begun to perceive once again, or that they listened to reason rather than imagination; it meant that the relation between the visible and the invisible –which is necessary to all concrete knowledge- changed its structure, revealing through the gaze and language what had previously been below and beyond their domain (Foucault, 1973: xiii).

We will focus on a model that is developed by philosopher Jeremy Bentham<sup>16</sup> and introduced us by Foucault in his works (primarily in *Discipline and Punish*, 1977) as an illustration of power in his understanding, to grasp how the existing structure of the relationship between the visible and the invisible is changed.

#### 2.2.2.4 Panoptic Order

Bentham's model, Panopticon, was designed for providing a solution to the great need for controlling and surveillance of vast amount of populations with the limited sources of modern societies that can be allocated for such a task. The essence of the

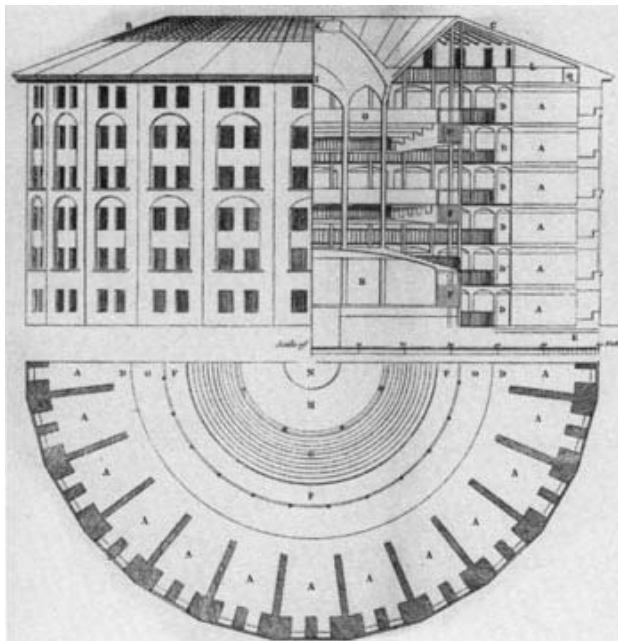


Figure 7 – Blueprint of Panopticon by Bentham  
Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panopticon>

model was widely used in many institutions of modernity which are designed to penetrate and illuminate all the dim parts of human beings and obscure areas by casting the light of the transcendental power via the operator subjects. The model is an optic procedure that makes it possible for a center and sub-centers descending from it to observe, to watch or to spy on the every unit in the model. The typical prison model is a circular

construction with a tower located in the center of the building. The large windows of the tower face the surrounding building which is divided into cells. The cells of the

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<sup>16</sup> For more detail see, Bentham, J. (1995) "The Panopticon Writing", in M. Bozovic (Ed), *Panopticon*, Verso, pp. 29-95.

prisoners had two windows, one of which looks inside and corresponds to the windows of the tower, while the other opens outside that allow the room to be lit all the time. Thus, the cells and the prisoners were completely visible to the tower. On the contrary to the cells, which are discernible, the tower was in complete darkness. Thank to the obscurity of the tower the model does not even require someone to observe the prisoners at the center of the surveillance system, because the prisoner can never be assured of whether they are observed or not. In other words, they are always surveyed by a subject that does not even exist there or is not evident. The striking feature of this model is the inseparable relationship between seeing, knowledge and power that is embodied in the form of seeing subject at the core of the model where at the same time is knowledge recording center and focus of the exercise of power. The model operates on the principle that the existence of anyone observing in the tower is unknown to the observed. The effectiveness of the model is due to the fact that it does not need a subject to exercise power upon the people to be controlled.

In this regard, if we compare model of Panopticon with Christian God, the tower of Panopticon is at the center of the structure like the king or God's vessel is in the center of the worldly experience. Everyone in the model is positioned to see it, however it is not visible. Unlike the Christian God, this invisibility is not for concealing the knowledge of a presence, but to hide something vital for the subjects who are exposed to the power mechanism. All the system is designed to cover a secret; the lack of someone observing the subjects in the system. The lack of Subject is hidden from sight in the model. There is nothing but the system and this system is manipulated by scientific gaze. To speak once again in De Certeau's terms, prisons, factories, hospitals and asylums and all the other places organized with panoptic model with their mechanisms of surveillance are the colonization of the spatial by map in material form. The model has human as subject in neither side of the sight. It is a totalizing and dehumanizing structuring.

Although the best examples of the panoptic model can be found in prison, hospital and school architecture, the re-structuring of the housing in 19<sup>th</sup> century also gives us clues about how power machine fixes individuals' practice of space and defines them as objectified units in an order of map. As Foucault (2000: 88) derives from the studies of Philippe Aries, before eighteen century, house was a space that

did not involve differentiation. Rooms were all for sleeping, eating or for welcoming guests, and they were used without any importance given to what is done. The practice itself was determining the room's function. Following the specialization of the space in late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the houses were functionally separated and they were designed on the basis of separation of the individual activities. In spite of the different modeling of the structures, the idea was still to control the visibility of the actors and their acts in the common life course. In the houses designed in that period, especially in workers' blocks, the room of parents was segregated and the access of children to the observation of their deeds, especially sex, was obstructed. Furthermore, the connections between rooms and the passages were organized in respect to the control of children. If it was possible, rooms of girls and boys were also separated. Thus, all through the spatial organization of the visible and invisible areas in the workers' houses, the sexual practices, especially copulation, were isolated and in turn sexuality was controlled.

Like every structure, Panopticon and the similar spatial models in modernity are also constructed by a story (in De Certeau's sense).<sup>17</sup> The story of Panopticon is the story of observation, discipline (later on, control) and normalization. All the institutions that use the spatial logic of this model work through separation, isolation, provision of hierarchy, and normalization. The discourse that brings the prison, the clinic, the asylum, and the institutions of education and the army into being in modern sense, define through these institutions, what healthy, rational or sane, and normal are. Then through the machine of power/knowledge of individuals are achieved, they are defined, classified and, if possible, normalized. The normalization starts with the exclusion of the abnormal. What should be made clear is that this process is the definition of normal via abnormal. The institutions of modernity employing the power machine are the creators of deviants and this creation is obtained not only by defining them, but also by transforming them. The prison's treatment of anybody is as if he/she is a criminal notwithstanding the fact that whether he/she is guilty or not. It is the possibility of committing crime that is sought not the actuality of it, therefore when an innocent goes to jail; he/she comes out as a criminal. It makes no sense if one goes to a hospital only for a check up; they still

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<sup>17</sup> Foucault uses the term "discourse" instead of story.



call him/her patient, regardless of the actual health condition. Similar to prison, in the hospital the focus is not the individual to be cured but the health of the society. The illness is the patient, and it should be segregated from the social practices in hospital and cured/normalized. All through these institutions, the disciplining power of modernity studies and compares the individuals, differentiates and puts them in a hierarchy. This stipulation of hierarchy ends up with homogenization and the exclusion of the unlike or reduction to sameness.

Until now we focused on the objectified, unified, disciplined, normalized subjects/objects of panoptic model. The subjective position that is directly exposed to the gaze of the absent other... However, in the panoptic model there is also another position that individuals can occupy, namely being in the tower of Panopticon. Subject who resides at the active side of the gaze... To Foucault power is dispersed; it can neither hold by someone or exercised upon others in its full sense. In spite of the fact that the one who stands at the tower of the Panopticon holds a position of power. Power is actually dispersed in the architectural structure that orders the relationship between the visible and the invisible. In other words, although he experiences a situation that makes the effect of him having power upon the ones whom he observes, in fact it is not him who has the power. His presence or absence makes no difference for the observed ones to be controlled. He experiences power only virtually. He does not have any connection with the people he observes. He does not touch them or affect them. His specific existence has no meaning in that he can be replaced by anyone. Nonetheless, as long as he is in the tower of Panopticon he enjoys holding power. We will further analyze the subject in panoptic tower by utilizing Jean Baudrillard's analysis of consumer society and individuals' condition of existence in the social context he defines.

#### **2.2.2.5 The Cartesian Subject in/as Simulation**

Given the dominance of Marxist production-based analysis of consumption in the epoch Baudrillard's examination of consumer society is published, his studies have the status of being a pioneering work in its questioning of the meaning of consumption and the process of it with an entirely different logic (not as an effect of production), and in setting aside the orthodox Marxist theories and allowing an alternative leftist approach. As a criticism of modernity, although not pointing out an

essential transition of modern society in the last two centuries, the study demonstrates the alteration of Western world in terms of value systems in a coherent way. The relevance of what Baudrillard calls consumer society and his analysis of it in this study is that he explains through them the transformation of the relationship of human beings with their environment in a way to correspond to the relationship of the subject in the panoptic tower of Foucault to his environment.

Baudrillard (1997: 15-18) suggests that the very initial precursor and the ground of consumer society is the multiplicity of objects, services and material goods in human environment. In Baudrillard's own words, unlike in the past when human beings were in relation to other human beings, in what he calls the age of affluence, people rather are surrounded by and relate to objects and goods which continuously proliferate under the control of exchange-value. This leads the concepts like environment and ambience to become popular while their meanings change. As opposed to their early sense, which is a state of being formed by the presence of other human beings, ambience and environment came to be understood alternatively as being fashioned by the existence of objects and goods in a meaningful order.

Baudrillard uses *profusion* and *package* as fundamental notions in understanding this meaningful order. We live in an era in which almost everywhere we look, we encounter the magical or mythical presentation of profusion stressing the marvelous victory of *surplus* over *scarcity*. In this cornucopia, objects are not juxtaposed disorderly, but assembled together in a logical manner (order). In other words, they are offered as a package, which is not merely adding up of goods, but a collection of objects that means more than their simple sum. The objects as collections are arranged as a show of infinite and dazzling prodigality. They are no more things with regard to what they convey in them, like their utility or use value, but are things that are only meaningful in so far as they are capable of signifying another object. No object has a meaning of its own, unless it is at a shop-window, in an advertisement, with reference to its manufacturer or with the enhancement of a brand name, in short only in a reference system. Baudrillard calls this, the *gamut* of objects, which should be construed as a chain of signifiers rather than a sheer sequence of substances. It is a scale that makes all the objects comparable to each other and forms a language like system of objects that dynamically and continuously produces meanings with reference to each other. This will lead the consumer in a

pathway of objects that signifies each other telling the owner which one to tend towards next.

In our contemporary society, gamut of objects is where the (pseudo) meaning rises from, yet at the same time, to Baudrillard, it is also where the meaning becomes impossible and is lost. The meaning actually arises from the living interconnection of distinct elements and in consumption society this is not anymore possible. There is nothing essential in the objects we are surrounded by, since they are reduced to sameness in order to render them calculable and measurable. They are elements that can be translated into each other with “universal” value systems like money and united by them both spatially and in terms of meaning. In Baudrillard’s own words “they are abolished in the same abstraction”.

In such circumstances, further investigation of how the signification system among objects operates, can be helpful in understanding the production of meaning through the act and process of consumption. Baudrillard illustrates the emergence of signification through objects with an example from the experience of Melanesian natives when they first encounter the planes flying over them. They knew that planes were always landing on the vast areas mostly inhabited by white people, where there were more planes; whereas they never landed on the Melanesians’ territory. The Melanesians therefore decided to simulate the planes with the intention that the flying ones would land on their ground as well. With this simulation they were actually casting a spell to bring down or conjure the plane and capture it. The simulation stands for its real object and by practicing this spell; the object itself is expected to appear. Our relationship with the objects surrounding us is very much like the one that Melanesians have with their plane simulation. We likewise construct a simulated ground for the forthcoming arrival of real. We obtain simulacra objects as the indicators of happiness and expect the feeling to follow, as if happiness is something remote and to be attained. This is the logic of both the individual and collective consumer. The small satisfactions obtained via consumption are magical practices cast for eventual happiness.

Following a direct affiliation between the happiness and objects of consumption, happiness is identified with affluence, in that, it is simply the accumulation of signs of happiness, namely objects. The more objects you have the more you are expected to be happy. Consumption is likely to bring happiness in a

miraculous way and affluence is the condition in which everyone is imagined to be happy. On the other hand, the ambivalent nature of signs composes a more complex relationship between the simulacra and the real than a scientific formula. According to Baudrillard, signs are always two-fold, since their function is conjuring. They conjure *up* something to capture it in itself, while simultaneously they are conjuring it *away*, in order to reject or suppress it: An object is embodied in its sign; nevertheless the sign also partly denies its object. It never signifies the object in its full form. While sitting at the couch and watching the springing signs out of our TV screen, objects emerge in front of us, and we live the illusion of controlling/possessing them while at the same time, we are distanced from the actual objects themselves. They are both in our living room, and farthest away that they could ever be. The signs are the transmitters of the pleasure, or happiness, as referred to above, of obtaining these objects in the comfort of our room, whereas they are also the agents that tear the same objects and pull them away from their contexts, in turn, distancing us from the actuality of the experience, leaving us only with images.

The images are thought to be perceived in the same way by everyone and in turn they are considered as universal. However what makes them universal is the capacity of signs to take away the object out of its actual context. In this way the signs are universalizing the objects and reducing them into same ground. Thus, in consumer society we construct our relationships with the objects and happenings through signs and images and without concerning their reality. Regardless of the presence of the object, what we see is its image and the meaning it conveys, which may have nothing to do directly with the object itself. When we look at a car, either in an advertisement or at a shop-window we never see a vehicle used to commute, but we feel the prestige embarked in its every detail. We do not buy things but images. We do not deal with events when we watch the news, but images. We do not act, for the sake of action, but to create images, to be connected to them, to have and give away them. This is what determines the consumer society. We react passively towards the actual objects and happenings, while we are hyper-active when the images of that objects are concerned. We are isolated from the reality of the things and surrounded or even besieged by the simulation or the simulacrum of them. This is a state of mind that keeps the human beings in their seclusion.

In this sense, contemporary media is one of the decisive aspects of the consumer society in the way it organizes and presents the images of daily life to the consumers. The peculiarity of media is that in all its premises and products it reflects the essence of consumer society.

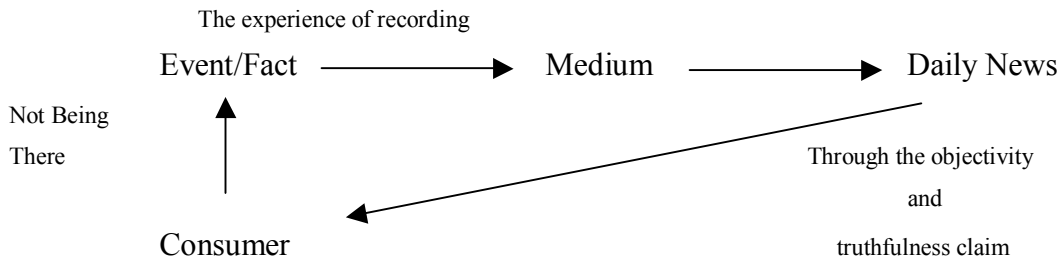


Figure 8 – Consumer and Daily News

Daily news as the main category of our magical thinking and myth is one of the operational sites of media that characterize how media message and the encounter of consumer with it both produces and communicates the resonance of consumption praxis. In daily news, events are transmitted to the consumer through the visual means in the forms of images. These images are produced via the experience of recording rather than the experience of the event itself. In this concern as daily news convey us the experience of recording, it is actually expressing a totally different incident from *in vivo*; the face to face experience. The receiver relates itself to the event on the basis of the fact that s/he is not at the place that the event is happening, yet as if s/he is there (the place does not turn into a space as it is not actually experienced). The medium translates the event into images with the claim that it is the true representation of the event and it is also transferred objectively. Nevertheless, in addition to the variation in experience that is translated, daily news takes the events out of their contexts through images. They rupture the facts from their historicity and reduce them in everydayness, which also compel them into temporariness. When combined with the secure state of being images supply to the consumer we end up with a model of subjective existence that evidently represents the actor of consumer society.

The individual in consumer society consumes with the curiosity to know. This curiosity in the insecure environment of the age of consumption is fulfilled only through the relationship constructed with the outer world via the safe images of

visual media. The individual consumes signifiers everywhere in a greedy way. The messages received from the events convey the pleasure of the happenings to the safe ground of the living room with the idea of being there without being there (phantasmagoria). Furthermore, the content of the messages has no importance separately as they are split away from their reality and they are all reduced to a sequence of messages that in the boundaries of the technical capacity of the medium altogether form the meaning. The multiplicity of the reception of such messages forms a simulacrum of the world in which withdrawn individual lives in security, purified from the historical context. This ahistorical state of existence is quite much the same as the model of the Cartesian Subject in his isolation. The subject is solitary and communicates the outer world visually. While he is the center of everything, nothing actually happens to the center as it is an inaccessible site of sanctuary. The peculiarity of the Cartesian Subject when compared to the consumer is in that he establishes his association with the outer world on the basis of a power relationship.

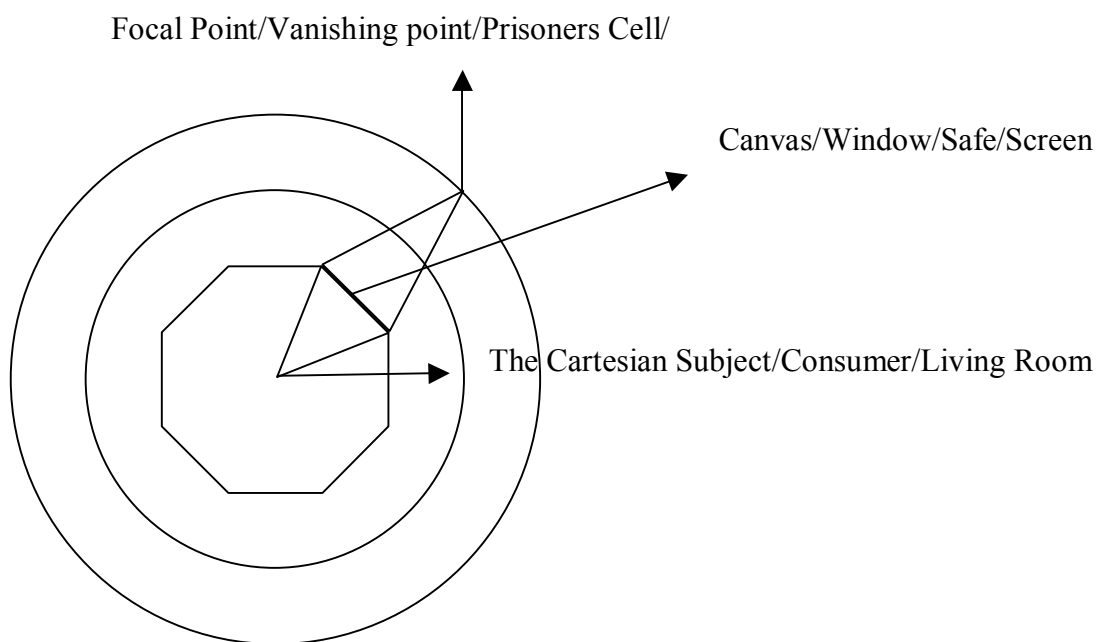


Figure 9 – Cartesian Subject in Panoptic Tower

As mentioned before, the major conflict of the Cartesian understanding of subject is the impossibility of co-existence of two Cartesian Subjects. Such a condition objectifies both subjects and decentralizes the subject position. Nevertheless, the individual in the consumer society pretty much lives in a condition which reasonably resolves this conflict. Every individual lives in a simulacrum composed of images

and symbols over which s/he has an illusionary control and power. The subject lives in a phantasmagoria in the center of which s/he is positioned as an omni-potent figure which actually does not affect the reality of the other. The individual watches the world from a distance and controls the images of the world without even laying a hand on the reality itself. For the consumer the simulacrum he lives in is more real than the reality, as it is a guarantee of her/his subjective existence.

### **2.2.3 Modern Subject**

The Cartesian Subject is a project that collapsed inside. Its promise was to bring the world close, to make it known, to control it and to master it. It was a project of self-perfection. Although to a certain extent the promises of the Cartesian Subject are realized, it happened not in the sense that Descartes has foreseen it. The Cartesian Subject was a project for individual self. Nonetheless, all its consequences were to denigrate individuals. Moreover, the Cartesian Subject failed to exist in the sense it was envisaged. It turned out to be something impossible. Nonetheless, even with its impossibility in the forms it evolved into, the Cartesian Subject has hold a central role in the transformation of men's social, political, cultural and economical conditions of existence. The human conduct, the way men relate to their environment, the way life is organized in Western world are all subjected to change in the last five centuries, thank to Cartesian understanding of the subject. Subject in the sense it is understood before the time of Descartes has been altered. The grammatical relationship of subject-predicate-object has changed to (Subject)-predicate-Object relationship. The subject that acts and in turn affected by the consequences of his/her action ceased to exist. Subject turned out to be an effect of a scriptural economy / discourse / ideology / scientific vision, in a way to be objectified by them in a fixed setting of existence. On the other hand, the promise of the Cartesian Subject is realized in the simulation of the objectified world of things where the meaning is lost but a new language arises from the order stipulated. This simulation is the factor that further pacifies the human beings and guarantees the continuation of the vicious circle that Cartesian Philosophy created.

## CHAPTER 3

### CONCLUDING REMARKS: ON THE SUBJECT AND THE OBJECT

It has been Descartes' mistrust against the world of perception due to the insufficiency of senses, and the philosophy he has established to overcome this lack that played the focal role in this study since the beginning. Considering all that is presented until this point, we can say that the Cartesian philosophy has attributed this lack in perception to an insufficiency of 'I' and in order to overcome this, it has taken refuge in the section of thought that appears to be relatively safe. The main motive in Descartes' philosophy is an endeavor based on this secure area (which is indeed an endeavor that would give birth to what we today consider science with respect to its method) and to grasp the core reality of things by adopting an approach beyond perception. The understanding of subject that appears with this kind of sense has significantly changed man's actions, material conditions and relationships with his environment. In this thesis that revolves around the age so-called modernity, in which all that belongs to human life and the world views have gone through drastic changes, it has been attempted to lay the grounds on which this transformation has taken place. This attempt is not one that merely tries to show the aforementioned, but also tries to provide a critical look towards this state of modernity. The legitimate grounds for this critical view has not yet, however, put forth. It is therefore necessary at this point to refer back to the focal point of this thesis and Descartes' ideas on the insufficiency of perception, to be able to provide these grounds and relate the matter of modernity to the human life today.

In the book, *The World of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty (2002) presents us an approach that will make us reexamine the judgments we hold on the relationship between human, perception and the perceived world. In the foundation of his approach lies the idea that the perceived world which is disregarded completely by the Cartesian philosophy regains its importance with the modern (by this he means



the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century) thought and arts. The discussion that Merleau-Ponty brings up, taken together with the claims this study encompasses, provides us a means to shed light on many concepts that are, at first, seemingly very complicated. The very first question to be asked in order to use this means is what Merleau-Ponty means when he states that the school of thought he calls the modern thought (he also includes the approach of science towards its own actions) helps the perceived world regain its respect. The answer to this question is not the state of the world as a world of objects that we seem to have arrived by means of the modernity shown within the scope of this study. The fact that the essence of modernity has an objectifying effect, let alone attributing importance to the world of objects, has been put forth since the beginning of this study. At the same time, it is claimed that the objectifying understanding of modernity is an inevitable result of the Cartesian philosophy and its understanding of subject. This suggestion, as mentioned before, is based on an impossibility that the Cartesian philosophy holds within, along with the dilemma that it creates. This very condition that stems from this impossibility actually corresponds to what Merleau-Ponty mentions as the disregarding of the perceived world. This, again, is the condition that was said to be overcome by modern thought and the arts. Has this condition really been surpassed, are the areas where this condition has been criticized really as effective, on what legitimate grounds are the criticisms such as the ones within this study laid, why are the criticized and the criticism itself take on the same name and how can an alternative conceptualization be formalized, are all questions that we will be asking respectively. However, before we ask these questions, it will be beneficial to talk about some findings within this study, apart from what has been just mentioned, and the contents of this section.

This thesis, roughly, seeks to find the place of the Cartesian Subject construction within modern metaphysics. Even though they have not been verbalized elsewhere as they are done here, the problems in the approach of Cartesian philosophy to the issue of time and being, the limitations that these problems place on being and the meanings it imposes on it, the fact that the issue of being has been examined only within the boundaries of the knowable being, and that all of these has constructed modern metaphysics in a way to deny metaphysics, are arguments that are not authentic to this study. On the contrary, all these issues have been included in

this study following the approach taken towards the subject and modernity by thinkers such as Heidegger, Althusser and Foucault. What this study aims to put forth beyond all that is demonstrated by these thinkers is that in this day and age where it is believed that the state of modernity has come to an end and we live in an age of post-modern world, all this so called change or breaking away, which is seen as an illusion according to this study, is actually a continuance. In addition to this, as mentioned above, this continuance is a result of an impossibility immanent to the Cartesian Subject. The reason for the insistence<sup>18</sup> on this continuity is to put forward that what is undertaken by the two assumed axes of the criticism of subject are dealing the same matter. In other words, subject as substance and the criticisms of subject as impact/effect are in essence aiming at the same thing; which is the Cartesian understanding of subject. Moreover, there are two things this thesis seeks to bring up. The first is to create a relationship between metaphysics and ideology, while orienting towards an alternative reading of ideology. The second is to point out to a linguistic transformation taking place in the world of things including the man, a transformation that renders the constructs such as subject and object, and regulates the relationships between things through these constructs. In the light of this entire agenda, the aim of this thesis is to create grounds to pool the critique of modernity in a broader view and to contribute to this area of criticism.

In this last chapter named concluding remarks, there will not be a repetition of findings within the thesis, as could be expected from a regular conclusion. In this section, therefore not named conclusion, in order to contribute to an endeavor too great to fit into the scope of this thesis, there will be the attempt to show the grounds for this critique and the reason why modernity is being held as problematic. Apart from this, in order to solidify the idea dealt within this thesis that the modern subject is the Cartesian Subject, Heidegger's thoughts about modern science that he puts forth in his article *The Age of World Picture*, will be displayed as he reveals thorough

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<sup>18</sup> When Foucault (2003) talks about rupture he does not make it a principle of analysis or explanation. Rather, he tries to put forward the problem that there is a tendency to erase the ruptures by stressing the continuities. He suggests by measuring all the differences, articulating them, we should try to grasp or know what is happening, what is changing, what is missing, what is replaced, transformation from one scientific discourse to another. To him rupture is not a major notion but a phenomenon of observation. The stress upon the continuity here in the same sense is not taken as a major notion. It is rather employed to reveal an earlier rupture and its affect in the changes following it.

it the foundation or the ground that feeds the essence of the essential phenomena of modern age. Although he chooses science among the five essential phenomena of the modern age we will also talk about the loss of gods in its regard to the Cartesian Subject. Hopefully these endeavors will take this thesis from the state of a philosophical claim; which is a state of questioning on what is, into a concluding judgment.<sup>19</sup>

### 3.1 Senses and Perception

The suspicion that the Cartesian philosophy holds as countermeasure to the sense-based process of perception does not necessarily require the denial of the perception world and the senses, or a rejection of the relationship of these with reality. The actual reason for the perception world and the senses to be held back is the belief of Cartesian philosophy in the ability of the mind and the method (science) as a way to overcome the deficiencies of the senses, and to surface the hidden knowledge of the perceived world as it is. The transformation of the perceived world into a seen world that hides what stays behind the view as it appears is based on this belief. The thing that science and Cartesian understanding seeks to reach by overcoming this illusion is the reality behind that which can be seen. It is interesting, however, to see that the thought, which unmistakably lays the grounds for scientific struggle, has to turn to the very senses that it questions, as the main tool for reaching this reality. The mind would overcome the lack in senses and the reality of things would come forward. However, the critical point that is not calculated in this claim and which is shown by Merleau-Ponty, is the impossibility of the main belief of Cartesian philosophy, even if all methodological routes work perfectly as hypothesized and the senses can perceive way beyond their capacity. That is, even though the doubts against the senses lift off, the human will never reach the knowledge of something completely. Merleau-Ponty explains this idea with such reasoning:

The analysis that science brings to the data presented us by experience is an analysis that cannot be expected to conclude, because there is no limit to experience, we can always think

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<sup>19</sup> For more on the distinction between the scientific and philosophical endeavor, see, Whitehead, A.N. (1966) "The Aim of Philosophy" in *Modes of Thought*, The Free Press.

of an experience more complete or more perfect than that of any given moment. The work that the concrete and experiential attributes to science is an endless act of explanation; therefore contrary to what is classically believed, we cannot account for the concrete and experiential as an external appearance that science will sooner or later surpass. The data from perception and the events in world history in general cannot be inferred by deduction from some laws said to constitute the universe's unchanging face; on the contrary, that law itself is a close expression of the actual physical event and does not eliminate the turbidity of the physical event (Merleau-Ponty, 2002).<sup>20</sup>

It is important to be able to grasp what Merleau-Ponty points out here in two dimensions. The first is that the depth that the eye does not see but could be opened to the domain of perception corresponds to a closed infinity and that science will never reach the scope of power to fully cover this infinity. The second is the strengthening of this impossibility due to the fact that even if there were this aforementioned scope of power, it would be impossible for the observer to hold the infinite points of view in time and space that one can have.<sup>21</sup> The fact that a thing can be looked at from infinite points in time and space, results in that the knowledge of a thing can be reached by scientific method only through ignoring many features of that thing. This is simply reducing a thing to measurability and a limited scope of its relational character with other things, and presenting this the thing as such or the truth of the thing. Scientific knowledge, with its claim to reach the knowledge of something in its own and its belief in the possibility of this through its method, presents things as different from what they really are. By doing this, it changes and transforms the relationship between people and things, and things themselves. In other words, while science claims to lift up what it alleges to be the curtain of perceived world that supposedly veils the truth it actually creates another kind of veil right before our eyes.

The main conclusions to be extracted from this account is as follows; (1) the method based on Cartesian philosophy is wrong in its claim of finding the truth, (2) scientific knowledge only makes things separable from other things, (3) this separation still does not account for the real difference between things. Following

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<sup>20</sup> By translation from Merleau-Ponty, M. (2002) *Algılanan Dünya*, Metis Yayınları.

<sup>21</sup> Even in the condition where this problem may be overcome, the entering of human as an observer within the practice of seeing and the effect that this practice has on the observed seem to remain similarly problematic. Beyond this problem, the impossibility of objective observation that is proved by Heisenberg uncertainty principle and quantum physics enhances the propositions of Merleau-Ponty and others who criticize the scientific claim of certainty.

these conclusions, it could be stated that the Cartesian method can only show us what something is not, rather than what it is and it does this by taking shelter behind the claim to demonstrate the things themselves. The judgment of itself and its past that modernity presents us could be evaluated following this point; and in the section to follow, this kind of an assessment will be attempted following Heidegger.<sup>22</sup> Until this assessment, let us put aside science based on Cartesian methods and go back to Merleau-Ponty's main argument, which is the denigration of the perceived world by Cartesian thought.

What does the Cartesian idea of reality fundamentally present us? The short answer to this question is the chance to grasp the world within certain predictability and the possibility to control the past and future as part of this. Let us leave the possibility for Cartesian philosophy to realize its suggestion for later and focus on what it costs to put forth this suggestion. What does the belief that there is a reality beyond what can be seen tell us? To explain this by following Nietzsche (2002) this belief tells us three main things. The first, following the idea that there is an unknown world, rises the belief that this world (the perceived world) is known. According to this, the effort to seek the reality beyond what is seen intrinsically leads to the assumption that we know what is seen, we do not suffice with it and we try to exceed it. The boredom with the familiar leads to a curiosity about the unknown behind. The infinity of this curiosity is due to the unattainability of the unknown. This, as Nietzsche proposes, is a danger, and in the core of Merleau-Ponty's question lies the occurrence of this danger. This danger is the reduction of this world (or within our scope, the perceived world) down to known and therefore disregarding of it. Secondly, the idea that there is a reality beyond what is seen tells us that the reality beyond is different from what is seen. An idea of dissimilarity comes to play. Skimmed off from the illusion we are placed in by what is seen, in that world, things are themselves. This takes us to the inevitable third conclusion, which is the idea that the world beyond what is seen is in fact a better world than this one. Because, as quoted from Nietzsche: "...the true world must also be a truthful world, one that

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<sup>22</sup> For another dimension of science in practice, to look upon the objectivity claim of science, please see, Latour, Woolgar, and Salk (1986) *Laboratory Life: the Social Construction of Scientific Facts*, Princeton University Press.

*does not deceive us, does not make fools of us: to believe in it is virtually to be compelled to believe in it”.*

The idea and belief that there is a true world beyond which the human being lives in and experiences is not an idea specific to modernity. On the contrary, it is related to what is presented at the very beginning of this study in a manner which may seem too forward to some as being an innate part of the human being, that the human is a constructive being. Even though man lives in a world that simply imposes its beings onto him, he has the attribute / deficiency to disregard this. The whole issue is whether or not there is an equilibrium between that which is superimposed on man within his relationship with his surroundings and the reality he believes exists independently from this superimposition. In man's world, things find their places according to a choice regarding what is and a belief in truth. Man, instead, takes his place in the world of things based on the limitation of this superimposition of things on the human being. The effect on one another of these two coexisting worlds has long been a conundrum. Within these circumstances, if we need to contemplate on the birth of the idea of the existence of a true world, the very core conclusion that could be reached would be the devastating effect of the one-sided termination of this coexistence. This termination is the ending of presence in that world, which is what the human sees as the biggest superimposition in the world of things. This termination pushes man towards being constructive on what comes after death. The human who pushes back the world of things in which he himself exists, relates this constructed world to truth/reality. However, there is also place for the world of perception within this construction in a way not to bother Merleau-Ponty. The perceived world can be understood sometimes as a part of the other world, sometimes coexisting with the other world, sometimes as a preparation to the other world, sometimes a shell that contains the other world within itself, etc... Therefore, what has changed with Cartesian philosophy in the humans' approach to the world of things they are a part of that leads Merleau-Ponty to such a serious critique towards this philosophical approach? The clearest answer to this question is the denial of the human's constructive feature by the Cartesian philosophy. To make this denial clearer, Cartesian understanding does not only doubt perception and that which is perceived. It externalizes all that contains doubt in perception by turning them into mediators. The basic way to do this, as mentioned before, is to detach the body from

the perceiving mind. This understanding, which externalizes the substance constructed regarding human from the body and the world of things, makes the human not be able to exist in the world of things. Above all, the constructed substance is only valid and possible for the 'I'. This is so, it denies any other as existence of other would involve it in the world of things. However man inevitably has a presence within the world of things. Nietzsche (2003) reminds us of this with these words; *"...when the house burns down one forgets even one's dinner. - Yes: but one retrieves it from the ashes."* Even though the existence of human in the world of things is deniable, this deniability has its limits, and therefore the world of things is restrictive for man.

Under these circumstances, a human-constructed world beyond the world that is seen by the human is not possible. However, there is still a world beyond what is seen because the world that the human perceives is open to mistakes in perception. At this point the Cartesian construction acquires a different character than any other construct. According to Cartesian construction, the unseen world has a reality independent from the human. In its order which is built with the human in its center, the human can only exist without his intrinsic constructive/speculative quality. Considering this, the perceived world, when compared to the real world, can only be seen as an illusion, not part of reality. The world of things, instead, becomes an insipid world of objects, because the rich meaning that the human inflicts upon things via his constructive nature disappears completely with the denial of the historicity of human construct. From then on, things only differ from each other, and nothing beyond that.

The rejection of the denigration of the perceived world, which Merleau-Ponty demonstrates happening via modern thought and the arts is related to the disclosure of this long story told hereby. The denial idea, bases on Cartesian philosophy and the classical science, that there is a true world independent of man and the possibility of the certain conclusion regarding that world by an external sight is argued to make this possible. While this study does not share Merleau-Ponty's conceptualization,<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> What Merleau-Ponty calls the modern thought, considering the age he lived in, is actually a critique that has been formulated against an understanding that has been prevalent from a few centuries before to his day, and can only be called contemporary within its time period. The fact that his thoughts constitute some of the most prominent criticism of modernity that surfaces out of itself is of course

there is also a suspicion as to whether or not this kind of a rejection of authority has actualized. It is obvious that while with the advancements in science and the critical views in the philosophy of science resulting from these advancements in the first quarter of his century seems to shake the foundations of scientific approach Merleau-Ponty calls classical science, these foundational principles still exist in a position to shape all human life today. The power of criticism is obvious and within almost each part of this study, different focal points of this criticism has been used, however, unfortunately, the target of this criticism is science, not the essence that makes it exist in its modern form. To be able to pull back this critique to the focus it should orient towards, this study shows that in the essence of modern metaphysics lies the understanding of the Cartesian Subject. In a situation where this subject construct is not solved, it is regrettably not possible to give back its respectability not only to perception as Merleau-Ponty suggests but also man in general. The return of this respectability in the effectiveness that Merleau-Ponty proposes could only be expressed in arts, while science, no matter how firmly it admits to said lack, still pursues its actions with all the necessities of its classical method. This, in turn, shows us that the essence of modern metaphysics has been preserved, rather than the claim that modernity has tailed away. The word post-modern demonstrates us this situation by the paradox it carries. To name the age lived in can only mean, an effort to define and separate even time from the other by objectifying it, in short, can only result from a modern endeavor. Modernity faces the strongest challenge stemming from within itself, with the illusion that it does not exist anymore. In this thesis, this illusion is denied and it is advised to redirect this critical look developed against modernity to the essence of modernity.

### **3.2 Man, Things and Experience**

The universe has a two-parted being, because everything is both mental and physical (Whitehead, 1969). This is valid even when the partialness of the human within the being of the universe is considered. Following Nietzsche's wisdom, it is possible to say that compared to a day in life, the substance of human within the history of the universe only amounts to about as much time as we would spend drinking a cup of

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undeniable, however to call it modern would be as far away from what it seeks to express as the word post-modern in its conceptualization today.



afternoon tea. However since mental actions are valid for the past and future when the human does not exist, the universe obtains its two-parted being with the first indication of human existence. With modernity, one of these two intertwined parts has suffered damages. When the human has pulled himself off the physical world and tried to organize that world according to himself, both the role of the mental within the physical world and the physical within the mental world has altered. The fact that the history of the universe has been written in reference to the substance of human, that the human puts himself in the center of everything, has resulted in a transformation that has been attempted to demonstrate here in full scope with all its effect. As previously mentioned, in the core of this transformation lies the Cartesian reliance on science and reduction of the relationship of the human being with things to knowing. In this brief section, we will look at the two basic results of this focus. To begin with, the reliance on science of the interaction between the human and things has transformed the foundations of human experience into a knower/known or a subject/object relationship (Whitehead, 1969). This transformation is critical for the following reason; the human has started to live in a setting where the emotional basis of his experience has been disregarded. This not only caused a major dimension of human action not to be taken into consideration, but also brought forth the extinction of the importance of knowledge that the humans could previously obtain via the excluded parts of experience (intuition, for instance). The human has become incapacitated because he was left void of the real character of experience. Secondly, while the human reduces his relationship with things down to knowing, he also assumes an external reality for himself as the main pedestal of the possibility of knowing and an order within that reality. This assumption has marginalized the non-repeatability of human action which makes free will possible. This marginalization happens because the human is expected to obey the rules set for the world of things. According to this, humans are also to be known just like things, and therefore are beings whose actions can be appraised. According to Bergson (1960) the existence of human is what gives meaning to writing the universe's history, because due to the unpredictability and irrationality of humans, the order in the universe is disturbed. No matter how much the Cartesian understanding tries to separate the human from the world of things, because of the intrinsic impossibility it nestles, it surrenders the human to the laws of that world. Due to this surrender, the commanding and

voluntary existence of the human in the universe becomes limited, or even extinct. This is the most dreadful result of modernity and the Cartesian Subject understanding is what takes us to this conclusion.

### **3.3 On the Essential Phenomena of the Modern Age**

At the beginning of this study, the importance of understanding of subject in the metaphysical construction was mentioned. At first approach to issue, that subject understanding has a central role in metaphysical construction in terms of its determination of the relationship of 'I' to other, was meant. Nonetheless, when it is considered that here it is presented as one of the major findings of this study that correspondence between 'I' and subject has appeared with modernity and is a result of the Cartesian understanding of subject, the necessity to revise this first approach arises. Our concern is why subject is important in the metaphysical construction. When it is considered with its original meaning raised in this study, subject grammatically comprises both the actor of a predicate and those whom are affected by it. Thus, it is subject that makes a predicate possible. Subject is the ground on which a predicate can occur. It is what precedes the predicate and occasions it. Beyond its grammatical meaning, subject is *subiectum* as translated from Greek *hypokeimenon*, meaning that-which-lies-before. It is, as Heidegger (1977: 128) reminds us, that which gathers everything onto itself as ground. Any change on that ground results in the comprehension of what is as a whole to change. Since metaphysics is a specific interpretation of what is subject has a critical role in metaphysical construction. If this is so, then how the Cartesian Subject lies at the essence of modern metaphysics? To answer that question, one needs occurrences that are specific to modernity in order to seek the ground on which they are predicated. In *The Age of the World Picture*, Heidegger puts forward five essential phenomena of the modern age; (1) modern science, (2) machine technology, (3) art's moving into the purview of aesthetics, (4) human activity conceived and consummated as culture, and (5) loss of the gods. Among those, he takes up science and tries to reach the foundation for it as a modern phenomenon. In case he succeeds, he expects that the entire essence of the modern age have to let itself be apprehended from out of that ground. What he reaches is the Cartesian subject model as it is tried to put forward in this study; man as the only and real *subiectum* and his way of conceiving and

grasping the world as a picture. First we will examine his analysis of modern science in detail, and then we will try to touch upon how the Cartesian Subject as the essence of modernity grounds the other phenomena of modern age.

### 3.3.1 On Modern Science

The essence of what we today call science is research. In what does the essence of research consists? In the fact that knowing [*das Erkennen*] establishes itself as a procedure within some realm of what is, in nature or in history. Procedure does not mean merely methodology. For every procedure already requires an open sphere in which it moves. And it is precisely the opening up of such a sphere that is the fundamental event in research. This is accomplished through the projection within some realm of what is – in nature, for example- of a fixed ground plan of natural events. The projection sketches out in advance the manner in which the knowing procedure must bind itself and adhere to the sphere it opened up. This binding adherence is the rigor of research. Through the projection of the ground plan and the prescribing of the rigor, procedure makes secure for itself its sphere of objects within the realm of Being (Heidegger, 1977: 118).

What we should comprehend from Heidegger's writings on modern science is roughly that with modern science, knowing has become an active striving to create a closed sphere. Research holds the laws that create the foundation of the sphere it exists in, and renders those laws possible. To be able to take its place within that space and become the subject of a research, any given thing has to abide by the defined rules of that space. To follow the example given by Heidegger, in order to physically question anything in nature, it has to fit within the foundation and rules that are assumed to have already existed within nature. If the findings of a research conflicts the foundations of the sphere they move in, they are either ignored or they take their place within that research only to the extent to which they can be explained by the laws of that space's foundation.

We mentioned that the foundation or ground in which the procedure moves is determined in advance. The critical question here is according to what this determination is done beforehand. The answer is simple; according to what is already known. In this regard, Heidegger calls modern physics mathematical as *mathemata* actually means that which man knows in advance in his observation of whatever is or in the intercourse with things. When Descartes laid doubt on the experience of man

to other things and the sensual experience, *mathemata* turned into the exact categories of mind that are true indubitably. Modern science depends on such an understanding of in advance determination. To understand this we can follow Heidegger's example. If we consider that nature is the sphere in which the procedure moves in and physics as the knowledge of nature (or material corporeality), then what is the ground plan of nature? Heidegger's (1977: 119) answer to this question is the self-contained system of motion of units of mass related spatiotemporally. The term indicates five basic rules; (1) Motion means change of place, (2) no motion or direction of motion is superior to any other, (3) every place is equal to every other, (4) no point in time has preference over any other, (5) every force is its consequence in motion (in magnitude of change of place in the unity of time). In order for any event to enter the sphere of nature it should beforehand defined as spatiotemporal magnitudes of motion. The question here is that how a thing can be regarded as spatiotemporal magnitude of motion. To Heidegger such a definition or regarding is accomplished through measurement. In order to simplify it, we can put it forward as the criteria to enter the sphere of research for an object is defined in advance and if the criteria are satisfied is inquired via measurement. Since modern physics is mathematical, it seeks exactitude in measurement and precision in measuring devices is a necessity. However, as we touched upon this issue with Merleau-Ponty this precision of scientific claim is impossible.

There are two critical conclusions we can reach through Heidegger's analysis of science as research. First, in modern science, knowing serves to two ends; to reach unknown through known and to prove known with the unknown. In this regard, modern science is tautological and self-referential. Second, through measurement, knowing as research represents things. In this representation things are determined what they are in regard to the ground of the sphere of research. And as in Heidegger's words;

Knowing, as research, calls whatever is to account with regard to the way in which and the extent to which it lets itself be put at the disposal of representation. Research has disposal over anything that is when it can either calculate it in its future course in advance or verify a calculation about it as past (Heidegger, 1977: 127).

That brings us the essence of modernity, which is seeing/known things through a representation that is stipulated by a ground plan. If this essence is considered regarding how the world is conceived and grasped, we reach Heidegger's concept of world picture; world regarded as a representation. This is exactly the model of the Cartesian Subject, presented in the second book of chapter two.

### **3.3.1.1 The World Picture**

How does man become a part of the world that is conceived as a picture? Although Heidegger comes up with only one answer to this question, in this study, two possibilities are suggested. Man first takes his place as the foundation and then a texture/tone in this world picture. The prior case is the one where the human becomes a reference point as *subiectum* within the totality of the picture. This situation upsets the two-parted equilibrium of the universe, because until modernity, the *subiectum* had included both the things and human together. The latter, instead, is what overthrows the prior; that is the transformation of the human from the reference point within his universe into a determined effect in it. The emergence of this second situation happened with the attempt of modern research to make the man its object and include him in its representation. Man, along with other things in nature, has become a part of the picture of nature. At first sight, there is not such a big drawback in this, since man already has a being in the world of things. However, in a deeper analysis, this process of knowing that man becomes subjected to proves to disregard the human being outside this world of things. To explain in other words, the human is both a natural and historical being. The knowledge of the nature is represented by the precise measurements required by modern research, and nature, in the end of this representation, is organized and controlled. The human, however, is not a being that this approach can be implemented upon. Because of this, the knowledge of human via representation is impossible. Despite this impossibility, modern science incorporates the human with his measurable side into the world picture, therefore formulates the human as a predictable, controllable being. Due to the above, the human has lost his being as he was first introduced into the picture, that is, where the world picture was organized according to himself. Just like nature, history has also become part of representation. The organizing, controlling human does not exist

anymore, he is lost within the picture, and all that is left is the structure of the picture.

So then, what does being as part of the representation stands for? What Heidegger tells us at this point about the state of “being against” created by representation is critical, because this *being against* demonstrates us the existence of things within the representation as objects. Walter Benjamin (1936) tells us that the representation serves the function of bringing closer that which is represented. This approximation could mean breaking something off of its time and space, and it could also mean objectifying it and turning it into a state in which it can be owned and controlled. The fact that the world has transformed into such a state to include also the human means that the mental world of man would be disregarded and man would be objectified. There is one last critical point that has to be made here. When “whatever is” does not get comprehended as a world picture everywhere, it becomes impossible for the world to make its way into the picture. It is a fatal prerequisite for the existence of the world picture that everything and everyone be included in this world picture. When looked at from this point of view, we see that the understanding that comprehends the world as a picture has to take a position against all other kinds of understanding in all different geographical settings that may comprehend it differently. This attitude is not only limited to geography; it is also valid retroactively, since the world picture includes and interprets history the same way it does the nature. This also constitutes the reason why the Western thought actively or theoretically conquers the world and the history of the universe.

### **3.3.1.2 Man as the Measure of Everything**

It appears strange to Heidegger that this phrase be said by a Greek philosopher, Protogoras, in the Antique age. In Ancient Greece, differently from our perception today, things open up and reveal themselves. Man understands and knows in this way, not by piercing the supposed shell around things. Things do not exist based on the reality of self exploration through a representation based on subjective perception. On the contrary, it was man, who is looked at by the things that open up and in this way brings the other to presence. It is difficult to understand how the phrase that designates the human as the measure of everything could be formulated in this state of existence and the process of knowledge based on such a state. It is

necessary to bring up the two-part nature of the universe once more to be able to understand this.

Besides the world that the human himself constructs, the human also lives in a world of things that impose themselves on him. What the world of things imposes on the human do not carry a negative quality aside from the context, in fact this is one of the fundamental pieces of the human's experience in that world. Cartesian philosophy seeks to first disregard then eliminate this imposition. It promises the human immortality by standing against the crudest projection of this imposition, which is the eradication of the human existence in the world of things. Therefore by means of representation of the world according to man, it reorganizes that world as controllable and pulls himself (man) out of this representation. The Cartesian Subject acts as if he does not exist within the world of things. On the other hand he declares medicine as the noblest action that would provide the body, which carries the human's existence within that world, with its immortality. In other words, however much it strives to deny its two-part existence it still has to admit to it within the world of things via the importance it gives to the extension of the bodily existence. Following this admission, in order to overcome these impositions in the world of things, it denies an understanding where things demonstrate themselves. It reduces its relationship with things down to perception and a single sided state of knowing within perception. It seeks to abrogate this possibility of opening up and imposing themselves, by objectifying things and pacifying them. However this state of knowing, since the human has a mandatory existence in the world of things, turns also the human into its object. When these grounds are considered, there seems to appear a serious gap between what this phrase represented when said by Protogoras and what it would have represented coming from Cartesian philosophy. According to Antique Greek thought, man is the measure of everything only as long as his own construction is regarded. This state of being the measure of everything shows us the role of human in his metaphysical existence. Today, in the Cartesian understanding and construct, what we understand from this is the man being the measure of the existence within the world of things. It is the Cartesian philosophy that constructs and applies this, and as shown above, the result of this application proves to come to a point where all the promises underlying this idea are rendered void. The point reached is not a framework where man is the measure of everything but instead a

construct in which man becomes a measurable entity. The motto of modernity has become one in which man, as everything else that exists, becomes measurable; “Man is measurable”.

The representation of the world of things where the human is placed in the center and controls the world, and becomes the sole ruler of that world is born with modernity. To perceive the world as a picture and to paint that picture according to the human’s subjective perceptions is in fact nothing but placing a real world beyond the world of things in which the human also exists. The claim of science that it can render that real world attainable through its own method is bluntly impossible. In fact, science actually tries to avoid realizing this kind of a claim, since its own existence depends on the impossibility of this claim. A science and technology built on crossing borders can only continue to exist by finding a new border beyond all the ones they cross. In the case of the world being perceived as a picture, when there is a closure, it is not possible for science to leap forward towards the external. That is, for science to exceed the limits of the universe it has painted, makes all the laws it assumes to have existed within that universe become invalid. Therefore science moves towards that closed universe and tries to overcome the boundaries it encounters within that universe. This is what provides the permanence of modern science and proves the impossibility of its claim. The comprehension of the world as not being infinite towards the exterior and the effort to make it known towards the interior despite its limitation is futile, because even the limitation of things contains an immeasurable infinity. Science and technology consequently search continuously to create new limitations within that infinity and overcome them. The reference point for this state of limitations is again man, and the problem to overcome is the deficiency of his body. The human body is continuously constructed as defected. Even if it was rendered immortal in the world of things in its current state, it will always be expected of it to demonstrate a performance beyond that which is possible, such as to fly, to run faster etc. This is because the body is only a machine and every machine within the perception of modernity can be improved.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> On the subject of how human is seen as a machine based on Cartesian philosophy see, La Mettrie, J.O. (1996) *Machine Man and the Other Writings*, Cambridge University Press.



### 3.3.1.3 On the Capacity of Science

In spite of its incapacity to realize its promises to mankind, the illusion it created with its claim of truth, and its denial of every other metaphysical constructions regardless of the fact that it is based on metaphysics -one of the essential features immanent to mankind-, does science and the Cartesian construct that it is based on serve in any sense to mankind? As a response to this question it can be argued that what scientific thought brings us lies in its objectification of the man and his experience and its denial of metaphysics. Regarding anything or any event, since it denies any other approach than its own, science makes the opinions about the things converge to sameness. As its metaphysical reference, in the end, seems to be out of man (objectiveness), it undermines the foundation that in the beginning Descartes bases his doubt, which is the conflict regarding the ideas about things. So as to remind it once again, Descartes believes the equality of good sense in everyone just because of the fact that no one asks for more of it and have the same opinion/view about it. This is what science provides us; the fixation of the role of the things that have in the world of ideas and creation of a common opinion about things. Thank to science's doing the power play and controversies resulting from the inexact correspondence between world of things and the world of ideas diminish. Moreover, as long as what is lost about the things as a result of scientific fixation is not considered science can supply us with mediums of communication that shows maximum efficiency. What science presents us regarding the commonness of opinion and a foundation to share that opinion in the most efficient way brings all the men on world together and renders world as a homogeneous place in itself. Yet, at this point, before applauding science's doing, the richness that is lost with the scientific should be underlined and the fact that medium dominates the message it conveys should be reminded.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> For more information on the relationship between the structure and the content see, McLuhan, (1967).

### **3.3.2 On Loss of Gods**

One of the essential phenomena of modern age, as Heidegger proposes, is the loss of gods. The phenomena that Heidegger mentions and the death of God raised by various means in this study are two different things, though their essence is grounded on the same foundation. Gods loss is a phenomena related to the existence of God as an omni-potent being. God's existence denies the existence of a pantheon of Gods. Yet, it is not possible to explain loss of gods simply with their impossibility of co-existence with Christian God as a figure of an alternative metaphysical construction. We should first inquire how gods come to presence to understand their loss. When we consider the Greek gods, we see they are simply the manifestations of ideas and essences of natural existence. It is interesting that they have two-parted presence as man does. They both exist in man's creation and the world of things. However, unlike man they have respectively more control over the events of nature and are less limited by the world of things, especially when the natural events in their portfolio are considered. Through them men has also control over those events. In other words, men are always in negotiation with gods over the nature. In such a setting, all men, gods and nature has a divine character and the very basis for this divinity is the dual existence of the world of things and ideas. When this duality has demolished, in Heidegger's words, gods fled. As man now believes that he has control over the world of things through science and the ideas are fixed and subordinated to the scientific truth derived from world of things, gods no more are in our lives. On the other hand the death of God is a different story.

Until now, in this study, what is meant by the death of God, symbolically, was that since the human asserts a right in the absolute sovereignty and position that he formerly attributed to god, god ceases to exist as a reference point. The idea that is tried to convey beyond this is that at the end of this claim, the human also ceases to be a reference point and becomes a part of the method and understanding which is one that seems, at first glance, to be mediatory and to have empowered him to the point of destroying god's power. Man, as a reference point, has vanished. Within a world that is constantly mathematicized, written and most importantly visualized, the man has lost his command over his life and the act of regulating his relationships

with the other. Even though nature seems to be conquered with this struggle in the name of humanity and by use of the rules of the universe that scientific knowledge equips the human with, both the fact that this conquest is mostly illusional and that it also contains the human are subjects that need careful consideration.

In all this construction, the problematic core is the omni-potency of God and man's desire to reach it. Descartes could never accept being created by something that is not more perfect than him. The base for this rejection was the idea that God is unique and his belief in this uniqueness results from his confidence on the work of one to produce perfection when compared to the effort of multiple bodies co-existing. It is plausible to argue, in this respect, Cartesian philosophy relies on the falsifiable idea that perfection comes from uniqueness. It can also be argued that taking this falsifiable idea as the base, the fundamental Cartesian motive is arrogance. Descartes was considering himself as the most perfect existence in the world and in this sense he was closer to God than anything in the world of things. He was distinguishable with the fact that he thinks. Due to reason man was closer to God and semi-divine in character, while the other things were imperfect at all and mundane. Ironically, in his striving to reach God with the metaphysics he developed he made man as mundane as other things. On the other hand, he also killed God as a result of their confrontation.

### **3.4 Towards an End**

In this study, the grounds that create Cartesian philosophy are not presented to the reader as such. The main reason for this is that these grounds are far too broad to fit in the scope of this study and has to be included in a much bigger analysis. On the other hand, not including these grounds that create Cartesian philosophy in this study does not constitute a lack in the integrity of this study. Descartes' philosophical text brought up without this foundation carries a peculiarity on its own, since it creates a reference point that makes most states of modernity possible. Otherwise, this would be an attempt to build a causal relationship on top of a pastless

understanding, which is not.<sup>26</sup> Naturally, an idea such as the occurrence of the state of modernity because Descartes puts forth its philosophy is not handled here. However, it is obvious that the dynamics that reveal this state of modernity have been declared within Descartes' text. This text, when taken as a referential starting point, carries a significant importance as it makes modernity's historic experience possible. Therefore it is believed here that it is not possible to eliminate many symptomatic and problematic results created by this historicity without eliminating the understanding that embraces its meaning in Descartes' text. The need for this can be seen in the case of metaphysics in that in order to reintroduce metaphysics as part of human action, there is first the necessity to abolish this subject construct. Considering that modernity had pushed metaphysics away from philosophy and with Descartes' construct of metaphysics, metaphysics has become the occupation of the world that stays behind what the human can grasp with his mind; that is, the world of the unreal, we can say that in the modern world metaphysics has a new meaning. In this new meaning that came to represent the exact opposite of real meaning, metaphysics have been played down and reduced to an endeavor not worthy of consideration. In this study, there has been the attempt to emphasize the need to eliminate this Cartesian understanding that takes for granted one of the most important basic human actions (metaphysical construction) and to restore metaphysics as a branch of philosophy. Only when this effort prospers can there be mention of freedom for all other sciences trapped within the limits of the mind. And again, only when this is realized it is possible to talk about, once more, a balance in the dual presence of mankind in the world of things and world of ideas.

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<sup>26</sup> Even though modernity forms its history in this manner, this study questioning concerning it is aware of the foundation that enabled Cartesian philosophy.

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## APPENDIX

At the book I of chapter I, the dialogues with Descartes includes certain quotations from a specific work of the philosopher, namely the *Discourse on Method*. In order to keep the internal integrity of the dialogues the reference list is given in this appendix, below. While the first number of the references indicates the page number and of the quotations, the numbers in the brackets shows the line of the quotation in the thesis. The numbers following the colon shows where the quoted text appears in the referred work. Since there are many different publications of the *Discourse*, online version with notes by Jonathan Bennett (2006) is preferred for means of accessibility. The reason why not the *Meditations*, the most referred and mature text of Descartes, but the *Discourse* is chosen for the quoted text is that the *Discourse*'s character is believed to be more suitable to be included in a dialogue.

### Dialogue I

p.21 [8]: p.5 – p.21 [25]: p.1 – p.22 [1]: p.1 – p.22 [6]: p.1 – p.22 [16]: p.2 – p.22 [24]: p.2 – p.23 [4]: p.2 – p.23 [13]: pp.2-3 – p.23 [22]: p.3 – p.23 [27]: p.3 – p.24 [7]: p.4 – p.24 [21]: p.4 – p.25 [3]: p.4 – p.25 [12]: p.4 – p.25 [17]: p.4 – p.25 [23]: p.5 – p.25 [30]: p.5

### Dialogue II

p.30 [22]: p.8 – p.30 [30]: p.8 – p.31 [5]: p.8 – p.31 [11]: p.8 – p.32 [4]: p.8 – p.32 [10]: p.8

### Dialogue III

p.40 [19]: p.13 – p.41 [24]: p.13 – p.41 [29]: pp.13-14 – p.42 [14]: p.14