

# The Cave, the Lifeworld and the Tradition: The Transcendence-Immanence Contrast Perspective

Abdul Rahim Afaki

**Abstract** This paper focuses how Heidegger, owing to his project of truly apprehending the Being of beings, reinterprets the Platonic narrative of the cave (*το σπήλαιον*). It does not attempt to completely reinterpret the Heideggerian reinterpretation of the cave-narrative, but rather it expounds certain metaphors construed in the narrative for the elaboration of Heidegger's concept of the lifeworld (*Lebenswelt*) in relation to Gadamer's notion of tradition. That is to say, both Heidegger's world and Gadamer's tradition are reinterpreted in the nexus of the Platonic metaphor of the cave as portrayed in the allegory of the cave. The task here is to find a semiotic mutuality of the cave both with the lifeworld and the tradition in the nexus of the transcendence-immanence contrast which is to be expounded with reference to Husserl's transcendental phenomenology and Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics. Submitting its principal thesis to the hermeneutical critique, I shall take Heidegger's work, *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit: zu Platons Höhlengleichnis und Theätet* (*The Essence of Truth: On Plato's Cave Allegory and Theaetetus*) as a reference and a guide for construing my argument. The other major references for this construing are Plato's *Πολιτεία* (*The Republic*) especially Book VII, Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* (*Being and Time*) especially *Einleitung* and Gadamer's *Wahrheit und Method* (*Truth and Method*) especially Part II.

Drawing upon 'the problem of difference'<sup>1</sup> as a useful nexus for the analysis of various philosophical theories, this paper identifies the transcendence-immanence difference or

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<sup>1</sup>Jeffrey A. Bell's identification of the problem of difference as a philosophical framework used throughout the history of western philosophy is a particularly valuable technique of analysis and mutual and comparative study of various theories. He notes: "In the history of philosophy, one finds many examples of a fundamental distinction forming the cornerstone of a philosophical theory. There is Plato's distinction between knowledge (reality) and opinion (appearance); Aristotle's form/matter

A.R. Afaki (✉)

University of Karachi, Pakistan

e-mail: abdul\_afaki@yahoo.com

contrast as a perspective to account for the phenomenological interpretation of Plato's narrative of the cave. The prosaic structure of my reanalysis of Heidegger's phenomenological analysis of the narrative along with the pertinence of Gadamer's hermeneutics as an additional context in this regard remains metonymic, as the most pertinent way of interpreting the 'unsaid' of a metaphorical narrative may be one whereby the symbols and their references lie mutual in the interplay of meanings. Two poles of the difference namely transcendence and immanence are so dependently interrelated that the semantic space between them becomes a framework for not only Plato's original depiction of the narrative but also for how it is interpretable in the nexus of contemporary phenomenology. My whole argument in this regard is bipartite. Part I consists of illustrating the perspective of the transcendence-immanence contrast bridging three major phenomenological theories namely Husserl's transcendental idealism, Heidegger's hermeneutic-phenomenology and Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics. Part II deals mainly with how one may find lacunae in Heidegger's interpretation of the cave-narrative if seen in the context of the transcendence-immanence contrast, and how this dissatisfaction further prevails if one also incorporates into one's analysis Gadamer's theory as an extension of the Heideggerian philosophy.

## The Transcendence-Immanence Contrast Perspective

The Husserlian transcendence and the Gadamerian immanence are like two half boundaries of a conceptual space which potentially affords us with a field as a perspective for appropriating the relationship of the cave, the life-world and the tradition. In what follows I will first take up Husserl's notion of transcendence as he expounds in *Cartesian Meditations*.

"Transcendancy in every form is an immanent existential characteristic, constituted within the ego."<sup>2</sup> The Husserl of *Cartesian Meditations* made this statement in the way of explaining his project of transcendental phenomenology as a form of "idealism." At first glance the statement, if taken out of the context, appears to be paradoxical, as transcendence and immanence, if taken in terms of their traditional senses, are 'mutually exclusive.' The former traditionally refers to something from without while the latter to something from within. This within-without or exteriority-interiority distinction strongly forces a bipolarity which does not allow any element to permeate from one pole to another. Husserl's transcendental idealism eliminates this mutual exclusiveness or impermeable traditional bipolarity between transcendence

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distinction; Descartes's mind/body distinction; and Kant's *a priori/a posteriori* distinction. But the challenge of these theories, the problem that calls for the creativity and intellectual inventiveness of these thinkers, is to show how the two sides of the distinction are nevertheless related to and dependent upon each other. This is what I call the 'problem of difference,' and it is this problem which accounts for the most interesting and important aspects of the above mentioned theories. See Jeffrey A. Bell, *The Problem of Difference: Phenomenology and Poststructuralism* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1998), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Edmund Husserl, *Cartesianische Meditationen (Cartesian Meditations)* (The Hague, Martin Nijhoff Publishers, 1960), pp. 83–84.

and immanence by introducing the porous structure of ‘transcendental subjectivity.’ The open horizon of the transcendental subjectivity makes such an act of cognition possible which penetrates the line of demarcation between transcendence and immanence. If one puts Husserl’s statement, as cited above, in the context of his transcendental phenomenology, one will find the paradoxical bipolarity diluted in the all encompassing domain of transcendental subjectivity.

Husserl does not state the terms, ‘transcendancy’ and ‘immanent’ simply and straightforwardly in their traditional senses. Rather both the terms have the typical Husserlian connotations. Transcendancy here does not refer to a human self’s deliberation to be a knowing subject intending to cognize the objective world on the plane of factuality (*Tatsächlichkeit*). It is an experience of the subject to acquire the status of an actively cognizing agent demarcating his self from the world as something objectively cognizable. In the Husserlian terms transcendence is not an experience of an actual subject in relation to a factual world as an object. Rather all transcendence takes place in the sphere of ‘fantasiableness.’ It is not ‘actuality (*Wirklichkeit*)’ but rather ‘unactuality’ or ‘possibility’ wherein all transcendence whatsoever happens to be.<sup>3</sup>

The exploration of the true meaning of transcendence here requires the nexus of Husserl’s phenomenological attempt to make the transcendental subjectivity available for the act of cognition. Following the Cartesian footsteps unerringly, which even Descartes himself could not make aptly, Husserl discovers the genuine form of radicalism. His emphasis on radicalism is more intense than that of Descartes’. He is not content to have simply ‘the ego cogito’ in the Cartesian terms rather he accepts it on his own terms in the guise of transcendental subjectivity. As a prerequisite to make the latter available I have to experience first the *epoché-reduction* simultaneity. Descartes’ methodic doubt, according to Husserl, is not a genuinely radicalist approach towards experiencing the true ‘parenthesizing of the objective world’ including I-myself leading towards the phenomenological *epoché*. This is the state of ‘universal depriving...of all positions’ taken towards objectively given world. The *epoché* is not the denial or doubt (as in case of the Cartesian method) concerning the existence of world. Instead, it is a ‘bracketing’ or ‘suspension’ ‘which completely bars’ the beginners of philosophy ‘from using any judgment that concerns spatio-temporal existence.’<sup>4</sup>

But this deprivation of knowledge or the presuppositionlessness *at par* does not lead me to “nothingness” rather to the unlimitedly rich sphere of the pure ego. The act of *epoché* namely the bracketing of the existence of world being an all inclusive sphere reduces me to pure ego again all inclusive, as it not only

<sup>3</sup>Roman Ingarden Comments on Husserl’s phenomenology: “The existence of what is perceived (the perceived as such) is nothing ‘in itself but only something’ for somebody/for the experiencing ego. ‘*Streichen wir das reine Bewusstsein, so streichen wir die Welt*’ (‘If we exclude pure consciousness then we exclude the world’) is the famous thesis of Husserlian transcendental idealism which he was already constantly repeating in lectures during his Göttingen period.” Roman Ingarden, *On the Motives which led Husserl to Transcendental Idealism*, trans. Arnor Hannibalsson (The Hague, Nijhoff, 1975), p. 21.

<sup>4</sup>*Op. Cit.*, Husserl, pp. 1–6.

makes me 'apprehend myself purely' as ego but also makes me understand how I am 'belonging to the world,' which is to say, how I experience the world, how perceive it, 'remember it, think of it, judge about it, value it, desire it' as it shows itself as it is in itself.<sup>5</sup>

All such experiences take place within the domain of transcendental subjectivity which being pure ego incepts this process of having epodictic evidences and then continue with this flowing stream of imaginative acts of cognition and constitution of the *Lebenswelt* (lifeworld) including I-myself. That is to say, whatever happens through the processing of phenomenological method, it happens immanently within the sphere of transcendental subjectivity. Even the act of transcendence takes place within the domain of consciousness, as it is the transcendence of ego from the actuality of I-myself and the factuality of the world which in order to be so requires the plane of possibility or 'unactuality' that again lies immanently within consciousness. In that sense Husserl pronounces that '[t]ranscendence in every form is an immanent existential characteristic, constituted within the ego.' So the Husserlian immanence is characterized by the within-ness of all acts of cognition-*qua*-constitution in the nexus of pure consciousness or transcendental subjectivity. In contrast to this, the Gadamerian immanence is characterized by the within-ness of all happenings in the nexus of lifeworld or the historicity of tradition. That is to say, in contrastive terms in case of Husserl's immanence all is cognized and constituted within pure consciousness while in case of Gadamer's immanence all is situated and cognized within the lifeworld.

The foci of objectivity and subjectivity are 'distorting mirror[s].'<sup>6</sup> This statement aptly underlies the orientation of Gadamer's hermeneutics of tradition. It denies the factuality of cognition determined by the modality of the subject-object bipolarity. It dismisses on the one hand the Husserlian model of subjectivism that takes the immanence of transcendental subjectivity to be the only field of all cognition in absolute terms. On the other hand it suggests that all methodologies advocating an objectivist account of the meaning of lifeworld be recognized as distorting structures of how man belongs to the world. Gadamer critically undertakes the project of Enlightenment as such an account that excavates the objectivity of human reason free of all subjective prejudices while cognizing the world. Gadamer not only criticizes the Enlightenment's critique of prejudice as having a 'negative value' but he has also deviated from it in expounding his notion of tradition. The tradition is not, for him, a dead past, instead, it is a living continuity, a flow of 'effective-history' which encompasses not only the past but also the relevant present. So the functionality of human consciousness cannot in any way transcend this procession of

<sup>5</sup>In the nexus of the *Lebenswelt* Husserl says that 'Wir wollen auf die "Sachen selbst" zurückgehen (we must go back to the things themselves).' Edmund Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen (Logical Investigations)*, vol. 2, Trans. J.N. Findlay (New York, Humanities Press, 1970), p. 252.

<sup>6</sup>I have stolen the phrase, 'distorting mirror' from Gadamer's statement: "The focus of subjectivity is a distorting mirror." He makes that statement while justifying the plausibility of 'prejudices' as the constitutive elements of man's being as an 'historical reality.' Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode (Truth and Method)* trans. G. Barden and W.G. Doerpel (New York, Crossroad, 1975), p. 278.

history, on the contrary it is constituted through the very process. Thereby whatever is produced by human mind as a form of knowledge also owes to the historicity of tradition in this regard. It is the 'effective-historical consciousness' that has given rise to the human sciences as they are and as well as to the social structure as it exists. It is in the living process of tradition that we acquire our prejudices leading towards understanding a text, and again the text is to speak of the tradition that has already objectivated in it. This is what Gadamer calls 'hermeneutical situation,' that is, 'a situation in which we find ourselves, with regard to the tradition that we are trying to understand.' 'Effective-historical consciousness is the consciousness of the hermeneutical situation' that makes us realize that we are not standing outside the situation 'and hence are unable to have any objective knowledge of it.'<sup>7</sup> Instead, we are always within the situation and the 'illumination' of it is a task which 'cannot be completely achieved,' as we exist as historical beings and all of our knowledge 'proceeds from what is historically pre-given.' The concept of situation is essentially concerned with the 'concept of *horizon*.' The hermeneutical situation, as shown above, determines the limits of the possibility of understanding the tradition in which we always find ourselves. 'The *horizon* is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point.' Moreover, one's horizon makes one know 'the relative significance of everything' that is included within the horizon whether it is 'near or far, great or small.' When one acquires a horizon, one becomes able 'to look beyond what is closed at hand—not in order to look away from it, but to see it better within a larger whole and in truer proportion.' If we relate the notions of situation and horizon to that of prejudices as discussed above, we can say that it is our prejudices that, on the one hand, determine the hermeneutical situation in which we find ourselves. On the other hand, 'they constitute...the horizon of a particular present, for they represent that beyond which it is impossible to see.'<sup>8</sup> As the hermeneutical situation, as discussed above, is determined by the effective-historical consciousness the operation of the prejudices in the horizon of the present is a continuous process. The significant aspect of this operation of the prejudices in a hermeneutical situation or within a horizon of the present is the encounter with the tradition which relates the horizon of the present to the historical horizon. 'Understanding...is always the fusion of these horizons.' It means that in the process of understanding, the historical horizon is projected to be fused with our present horizon and so it is no more there to be 'solidified into the self-alienation of a past consciousness.'<sup>9</sup>

The prejudice-tradition relationship is an indicator of the view that the beings of effective-historical consciousness and the lifeworld the consciousness is situated in are historical realities. Thereby the situatedness of functionality of the consciousness immanently within the historicity of the lifeworld implies the dismissal of transcendence in any form. This is to say, the bipolarity defined by the subjectivity of human consciousness and the objectivity of the lifeworld lies immanent

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 268–269.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 272.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 273.

correlative within the sphere of tradition. If one compares this with Husserl's phenomenology one may find that the subject-object immanent correlative lies within the structure of intentionality. Drawing from a Greek term, *νοῦς* (mind) Husserl calls this immanent correlative of intentionality the noetic-noematic correlative wherein noetic shows the subjective pole of consciousness and noematic is its objective correlate.<sup>10</sup> This implies that the processions of cognition and constitution take their place in case of Husserl in the structure of intentionality lying mutually immanently within pure ego or transcendental subjectivity, whereas in case of Gadamer in the sphere of lifeworld lying immanently within the historicity of tradition. Thus, the intentionality-traditionality distinction defines the way of experiencing transcendence and immanence as two contrastive modes of cognition in the nexus of two different philosophical methodologies namely respectively Husserl's phenomenology and Gadamer's hermeneutics. In case of the former one is preconditioned to transcend the prejudicedness of tradition if one is to cognize the truth (*der Wahrheit*) within the *a priori* structure of intentionality<sup>11</sup> while in case of the latter one is predetermined by the process of historicity to remain immanently within tradition to experience the truth.<sup>12</sup>

Gadamer illustrates the phenomenon of one's finding one-self with regard to tradition or the historicity of the lifeworld<sup>13</sup> through at least two major themes namely life and language. As regards the concept of life in Gadamer's *Truth and Method*, it illuminates in the light of Husserl's phenomenology. But the illumination of this concept should be considered distinct from the light which illuminates it. Referring to the phenomenological concept of the lifeworld Gadamer argues that the poles both of subjectivity of human consciousness and objectivity of the world dilute in the solvent of the lifeworld, as he conceives of it as 'the whole in which we live as historical creatures.' In this sense the lifeworld is always a 'communal world'

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<sup>10</sup> *Op. Cit.*, Husserl, pp. 36–37.

<sup>11</sup> Discussing the universality of transcendental experience and description being absolutely unprejudiced, Husserl writes: "This description is then called on to be the foundation for a radical and universal criticism. Naturally everything depends on strictly preserving the absolute "unprejudicedness" of the description and thereby satisfying the principle of pure evidence, which we laid down in advance. That signifies restriction to the pure data of transcendental reflection, which therefore must be taken precisely as they are given in simple evidence, purely "intuitively", and always kept free from all interpretations that read into them more than is genuinely seen." *Op. Cit.*, Husserl, pp. 35–36.

<sup>12</sup> "Consciousness of being affected by history (*wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewußtsein*) is primarily consciousness of the hermeneutical *situation*. To acquire an awareness of a situation is, however, always a task of peculiar difficulty. The very idea of a situation means that we are not standing outside it and hence are unable to have any objective knowledge of it. We always find ourselves within a situation, and throwing light on it is a task that is never entirely finished. This is also true of the hermeneutic situation -i.e. the situation in which we find ourselves with regard to the tradition that we are trying to understand...All self-knowledge arises from what is historically pre-given,...because it underlies all subjective intentions and actions." *Op. Cit.*, Gadamer, p. 301.

<sup>13</sup> The way Gadamer conceives of the life world suggests that he is not alone in this line of speculation rather he finds himself aligned with a group of scholars like Ludwig Landgrebe, A. Schütz, G. Brand, U. Claesgens, K. Düsing, P. Janssen, and others. See n. 151 of Part II of *Op. Cit.*, Gadamer.

in which one always finds oneself in the nexus of other people. The inevitability of this togetherness of one with others in the lifeworld makes it implausible to abstract a transcendental subjectivity from the shared life world and then to take the 'validity' of the lifeworld as 'an achievement' of that pure subjectivity. Thereby 'the constitutive acts of transcendental subjectivity,' 'the Ur-ich (the primal I)', validating the life world hold no attraction for Gadamer. The functionality of the concept of life as it is performed in Husserl's phenomenology, Gadamer argues, appears to be a permanent threat to his framework of transcendental idealism. For, Husserl conceives of life as 'the transcendently reduced subjectivity that is the source of all objectifications' whose 'productivity' consists of revealing 'the unreality of the long-standing epistemological controversy between idealism and realism' as well as of thematizing 'the inner co-ordination between subjectivity and objectivity.' In other words man's 'comportment to the world' does not take its place 'in conscious experiences and their intentionality but in the anonymous "productions" of life.' So far so good but when Husserl has to solve the problems of intersubjectivity and definition of "Thou" as the other "I" or 'the alter ego' rather than simply an object of conscious experience, his framework of transcendental idealism seems to burst asunder. According to Gadamer, when Husserl tries hard to define Thou as something 'understood in terms of ego' and simultaneously 'detached from it' being independent like ego, the whole discourse remains 'oriented to the interiority of self-consciousness and fails to orient itself toward the functional circle of life' which goes 'far beyond consciousness.' The import of meaning of life remains undeveloped in Husserl's phenomenology whereby Gadamer owes to the referential fruition of Count York's fragmentary posthumous work while venturing into the meaning of life. Criticizing the fruitlessness of philosophical thinking within the sphere of a transcendental consciousness, York emphasizes the demand of philosophizing methodologically attached with rather than detached from the life comportment. He interprets human consciousness as a life comportment which shows constitutive traits 'in the area both of somatic and psychic articulation,' as the psychical processes of seeing, feeling, imagining, willing cannot 'exist without the existence of objects.' This psycho-somatic co-ordination cannot however be plausible if consciousness is seen detached from the life comportment. So the immanence of life affords us an historical or traditional abode wherein the human consciousness and the lifeworld appear to be the psycho-somatic co-relates that guarantee all acts of cognition and constitution.<sup>14</sup>

Like life, language also functions through vicissitude of the referential imminence of the historicity of tradition. Gadamer believes in the equation of life, language and tradition. The equation is a broad-brush sketch that depicts a grammar common to the illustrations of life, language and tradition in connection with hermeneutical experience. When one experiences understanding, as discussed above, in a hermeneutical situation the effective-historical consciousness finds its present horizon fused with the past horizon on the plane of tradition. This experience of

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<sup>14</sup>For Gadamer's articulation concerning the concept of life as a critique of Husserl with the help of York see *Op. Cit.*, Gadamer, pp. 235–245.



'belonging (*Zugehörigkeit*)' of consciousness to tradition unfolds hermeneutically 'from *language as a medium*.'<sup>15</sup> The realization of the effect of history as the constitution of consciousness is not only a traditional procedure but a linguistic process as well. As regards the language-tradition equation it appears so obvious in Gadamer's philosophy that if one replaces tradition with language or the vice versa in the remarks he makes about either there will be no change in the overall meaning of that remarks except the replacement. For instance, he in Part III of *Truth and Method* cites about language a remark drawing from Humboldt as follows:

...every language has a life of its own vis-à-vis what is said at any given time, so that in it one vividly senses "the way in which the distant past is still connected with the feeling of the present since language has passed through the sensations of earlier generations and has preserved their inspiration."<sup>16</sup>

In this citation the word, language appears twice. If one replaces the word of language with that of tradition the same citation will read as follows:

...every [tradition] has a life of its own vis-à-vis what is said at any given time, so that in it one vividly senses "the way in which the distant past is still connected with the feeling of the present since [tradition] has passed through the sensations of earlier generations and has preserved their inspiration."

If one reflects on this citation with a presumed replacement of language with tradition one will find that the meaning of the latter is like an image of the former in the context of Gadamer's hermeneutics. This is to say, Gadamer conceives of language as something traditional<sup>17</sup> and tradition as something linguistic. Hence the historical effect on human consciousness is a hermeneutic phenomenon of unification wherein linguistic form and 'traditionary content cannot be separated.' This implies that as the cognitive and constitutive acts of human consciousness are bound to the referential immanence of traditionary content they are as well immanently bound to lingual form. But my emphasis here on the language-tradition

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<sup>15</sup> *Op. Cit.*, Gadamer, p. 453.

<sup>16</sup> *Op. Cit.*, Gadamer, p. 438.

<sup>17</sup> Gadamer's concept of language as tradition may be compared to that of the later Wittgenstein's notion of language. The latter conceives of language as an activity or game with certain rules which are set and can be learned in the context of conventional and cultural life form. In this regard Habermas attempts to relate Gadamer to the later Wittgenstein. He appreciates Wittgenstein's deviation from positivism by bringing to awareness the fact that one cannot master the grammatical rules on the symbolic plane of language itself. Instead, one can learn the rules in the cultural life form. At the same time he criticizes Wittgenstein for his positivistic shortcomings of neglecting the hermeneutical aspect of mastering the rules of grammar. Wittgenstein's language game is, for Habermas, a sealed and 'opaque' bundle of rules which allows nothing to pass through and so the practice of the game is an ahistorical mechanism. Habermas, opting the hermeneutical dimension of language from Gadamer, transforms language from a 'monadically sealed' oneness into a 'porous' unit which is developed hermeneutically and historically in the making of tradition. See Jürgen Habermas, *Zur Logik der Sozialwissenschaften (On the Logic of the Social Sciences)*, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen & Jerry A. Stark (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1988), pp. 148–150 and also see Abdul Rahim Afaki, "Habermas' Hermeneutical Project of Intersubjectivity: The Pragmatic-Analytic-Hermeneutic Approach to the Empirical-Analytic Sciences of Action," *Phenomenological Inquiry* 36 (October 2012); pp. 101–124.



equation does not of course diminish the pertinence to life, as all process of the linguistic-traditional constitution of the life world is plausible by a persistent appeal to the magnificence and immanence of life.

Gadamer's triadic structure of immanence defined by the life-language-tradition equation is based upon Heidegger's phenomenological hermeneutics. This part of the essay explores how the superstructure of hermeneutic of tradition, as Gadamer expounds, is grounded upon Heidegger's project of hermeneutic phenomenology apropos of the issue of Being-as-time (*sein qua zeit*). Certain issues however do recur. In general terms, the argument here concerns the significance and location of *Sein* in Heidegger's phenomenological hermeneutics, its relation to the life-world, his reflection on language, the relationship in his philosophy of Being and time, of referential understanding of meaning of reality. If these issues appear germane, it is because Heidegger is at the center of contemporary discourse of continental philosophy and because a large measure of contemporary theories of phenomenology and hermeneutics derives from his thought. In the Heideggerian scheme of hermeneutic phenomenology, *Sein* (Being) is taken as phenomenon, as something that shows itself as it is in itself. But since Being is always the Being of some entity and every entity is a being-in-the-world (and so its Being is always the Being-in-the-world), it is therefore necessary to choose the most appropriate entity to attain this task. In this regard, the most appropriate entity is Dasein, the human self which can take the question of Being as an issue for it. It is the way of Dasein, the ontologico-ontically preferred entity, that Being shows itself as it is in itself, and this indirect showing of Being as it is needs to involve in the process of interpretation in order to make Being aptly known to human understanding. The most important aspect of Heidegger's phenomenological method inquiring into the question of Being it is that he takes both Being and Dasein as time or temporality. He does not take time as an entity or its character, that is, as something to be concerned with 'the what' of the entities rather he takes time as something to be concerned with 'the how' of the world. This is the same way as he conceives of Being. This equivalence of Being (as Being-in-the-world) with time or temporality is highly significant regarding the possibility of interpretation of tradition, as owing to this notion Gadamer attempts to interpret tradition in the nexus of life and language as we have already discussed above.

While exploring his project of hermeneutic phenomenology,<sup>18</sup> Heidegger tends to formulate the question of the meaning of Being as the most fundamental question in a transparent way. He designs the structure of the question of Being as an 'inquiry' being a 'seeking (*Suchen*).' Attaining the transparency of the structure of the question of Being, he finds three constitutive factors of this inquiry as seeking namely 'that which is asked about (*sein Gefragtes*)', 'that which is interrogated (*ein Befragtes*)', and 'that which is to be found out by the asking (*das Erfragte*).' The third constitutive factor of the structure of the question of Being is its meaning, the goal of the inquiry that the Dasein intends to attain as a result of its seeking,

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<sup>18</sup> While pursuing this study of Heidegger's I shall take the *Einleitung zu Sein und Zeit* as a major reference and guide and other minor sources will also be referred accordingly.

which is to say, what is to be found out by the asking lies in what is asked about to be discerned by the Dasein (that which is interrogated) as a goal of the inquiry.

Dasein is an entity and it is ontically (i.e. on the ground of being an entity) distinct from other entities in terms of its very Being that 'is an issue for it.' When Dasein takes its Being as an issue for itself, it does not mean that Dasein is to develop a theoretical inquiry which aims at explicitly exploring the meaning of entities rather it simply signifies that Dasein is being such a way that it already has an understanding of Being. The important aspect of Heidegger's treatment of the question of the meaning of Being this way is 'to show that the central problematic of all ontology is rooted in the phenomenon of time.' In the procedure of conceiving Being in terms of time, temporal does not mean simply 'being in time', '[e]ven the 'non-temporal' and the 'supra-temporal' are 'temporal' with regard to their Being.' This Being-time equation may become more transparent if one focuses it in terms of the Dasein-time equation.

Drawing from his day's development of research in the field of physics particularly Einstein's relativity theory,<sup>19</sup> he focuses 'the destructive side' of the notion that '[t]here is no absolute time, and no absolute simultaneity either', i.e., time is nothing, it instead 'persists merely as a consequence of the events taking place in it.' The fundamental problem with this physicist conception of time it is that it takes time as something measurable leading it to be necessarily 'uniform' and 'homogenous.' Out of this uniformity, Heidegger draws the arbitrariness of time in terms of 'now'. This is to say, time is to be measured in terms of two different 'now-points' coming one after another. This arbitrariness of now-point shows that if one is to come across an event with a clock, it does not indicate how-much is the duration of the event rather it 'makes the event explicit...with respect to its unfolding in the now.' He then questions taking the experience of now as experience of I am. So the question of now-I am equality points the Heideggerian inquiry into time 'in the direction of Dasein...the entity that we each ourselves are, which each of us finds in the fundamental assertion: I am.' Dasein's determining itself as "I am" is as fundamental as its being-in-the-world (*In-der-Welt-sein*) or its being-with-Others (*mit Anderen sein*) having the same world there with others.<sup>20</sup>

The tone of this description of the meaning of Being in the nexuses of the world and the others suggests a distinct trait of Dasein of having an 'ontological determination' to be concerned with language. It reminds us of what we have already seen in case of Gadamer when he related the hermeneutic experience of life and tradition to language. The primary structure of Dasein to be in the world as having world shared with others is the verbal form or *sprache*. Speaking a language determines one's incorporation into life with others and Dasein's engagement in the dialogic process is not only an involvement in the discourse about world but it is also a

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<sup>19</sup> According to Heidegger, Aristotle perceived time in the way Einstein would later conceive of it. Heidegger cites from Aristotle's *Physics IV*, ch. 11, 219a, in which time is described as something "within which events take place." See Martin Heidegger, *Der Begriff der Zeit (The Concept of Time)*, trans. William McNeill (Oxford, Blackwell, 1992), p. 3E, also see translator's n. 5.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3E–5E.

process of ‘self-interpretation of Dasein...which maintains itself in this dialogue.’ This is to say, ‘in all speaking about the world there lies Dasein’s speaking out itself about itself’ and ‘so all concerned dealing is a concern for the Being of Dasein.’ The most important aspect of Dasein’s self-cognition in the nexuses of the world and the others is to say: ‘I never am the Other.’ Thereby Dasein cognizes its own death (rather than the Other’s) as ‘the most extreme possibility of itself.’ Drawing from the concept of death as the most extreme possibility of Dasein, Heidegger extends the delineation of the Dasein-time equation. He thinks of having one’s own death as ‘Dasein’s running ahead to its past, to an extreme possibility of itself that stands before it in certainty and utter indeterminacy.’ He conceives of the different phases of time, past, present and future in terms of ‘how’-‘what’ distinction. The past is not a ‘what’ but a ‘how’ in the sense that ‘it uncovers my Dasein as suddenly no longer there; suddenly I am no longer there alongside such and such things, alongside such and such people, alongside these vanities, these tricks, this chattering.’ ‘This past is...indeed the authentic ‘how’ of my Dasein...to which I can run ahead as mine.’ The authenticity of Dasein’s past also uncovers everydayness in its ‘how’, as Dasein’s running ahead to past is also running up against death that makes it come ‘back to its everydayness which it still is.’ Hence the authenticity of past again guarantees the authenticity of its existence as being temporal, as Dasein’s running ahead to past is also running up against future through present and so ‘Dasein is its future, in such a way that in this being futural it comes back to its past and present.’<sup>21</sup> This is the way past is ‘experienced as authentic historicity...something to which one can return again and again’ and this phenomenon gives rise to what Heidegger calls the first principle of hermeneutics that states:

The possibility of access to history is grounded in the possibility according to which any specific present understands how to be futural. This is the first principle of all hermeneutics. It says something about the Being of Dasein, which is historicity itself.<sup>22</sup>

The significance of Heidegger’s conception of Being in terms of time is its concern with how- rather than what-nature of temporality that may have compelled him to seek such a method of investigation that too characterizes the how rather than ‘the what of the objects of philosophical research.’ Heidegger’s Phenomenology is such a method. He does not borrow the conception of phenomenology as defined by his predecessors, instead he develops his own version of it which, on the one hand, ‘comprehensively...determines the principles on which a science is to be conducted’, and on the other hand, it is ‘primordially...rooted in the way we come to terms with the things in themselves.’ The historical or temporal orientation of the Dasein and the world illustrates the fact that all acts of cognition of self and world are to take their places immanently temporally, as the inquiry concerning *what* the self and world are transcendentally in themselves is reduced by Heidegger to asking *how* they show themselves immanently *qua* time.

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6E–19E.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20E.

It is the all-encompassing temporality or historicity of the Heideggerian phenomenology which takes the form of overwhelming structure of tradition in Gadamerian hermeneutics. These thoughts mutually define human consciousness as a historical reality necessarily situated in the temporal lifeworld, which defines an immanence of finding both poles of reality coordinately existing *qua* time or tradition excluding every possibility of transcendental cognition or constitution of these co-ordinates.

## The Sun to be Dragged into the Cave: Phenomenological Interpretation of Plato's Narrative of the Cave

Acts of consciousness and the lifeworld are, as discussed above, the coordinates of time in the context of Heidegger's phenomenological hermeneutics, and the immanence of time stands in an essential relationship to the *a priori* of Being-in-the-world. Being-in-the-world is a complex doctrinal fold in Heidegger's philosophy, forming various significant notions and alluding to the signature of the Heideggerian thought which marks the genesis of the new movements in hermeneutics together with phenomenology. In order to determine how much has he semantically extracted from the semiotic recipe of the cave-narrative, let us now turn precisely to Heidegger's phenomenological reinterpretation<sup>23</sup> of Plato's allegory of the cave. First, I will summarize the story of the cave and the sun in terms of the phenomenological diction typical of Heidegger's, as my interpretation aims at deciphering not only what these metaphors in particular mean in the context of the Platonic metaphysics but also and more emphatically so what Heidegger excavates from their 'unsaid'<sup>24</sup> meaning with reference to his phenomenological paradigm. Moreover,

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<sup>23</sup>I call it reinterpretation because Plato himself interpreted the allegory where he places it in *Πολιτεία* (*The Republic*), Book VII and Heidegger's phenomenological approach towards its 'unsaid' meanings is rather a second-order endeavour. In this regard my interpretation of Heidegger's reinterpretation of Plato's primary interpretation of the narrative is a third-order or tertiary discussion.

<sup>24</sup>First I thought that what I meant by 'unsaid' seemed to be more close to what Ricoeur rather than Heidegger said about the 'unsaid' but later I realized that the most useful idea in this regard would be what they mutually said about the 'unsaid.' According to Heidegger, 'what a thinker left unsaid, whatever it might be, we have to consider what he said' in general or in particular. In this case an interpreter feels a little free about whether a concept is to be incorporated into or abstracted from the thinker's concerned scheme of thought. See Martin Heidegger, *Wegmarken* (*Pathmarks*), ed. William McNeill (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 155. Ricoeur while comparing the relationship between metaphor and narrative states that '[in] both cases, the new thing—the as yet unsaid, the unwritten—springs up in language.' Both metaphor and narrative show the phenomenon of 'semantic innovation.' In case of the former this 'innovation lies in the producing of a new semantic pertinence by means of an impertinent attribution' whereas in case of the latter the 'innovation lies in the inventing of another work of synthesis—a plot,...that is, a new congruence in the organization of the events.' Here the interpreter is a little unfree while interpreting the unsaid in the context of what has already been symbolically said in a metaphor or a narrative. See Paul

the cave and the sun metaphorically mark the lifeworld and the source of light in which things are to show what they are in themselves respectively, what happens in between fictitiously in the story is that what one may undertake as a heuristic framework to find answers to the further problematization in the course of interpretation. A paraphrased summary of the tale of the cave and the sun is in what follows:

Once upon a time there was a group of people imprisoned from childhood in an underground cave like dwelling. The exit of the cave was at some height to which it was not easy in ordinary terms to reach to get out of it. The prisoners were made sit in a row chained so tightly by the legs and neck that they could not even move their heads around to look at what was happening right behind them. They could only see what was in front of their faces. There was a wall of the dwelling cave in front of them like a big cinema screen<sup>25</sup>; as if somebody were to cast light from behind them with the help of a film projector and they like an audience could see the images on the screen of the wall. There was a fire at some height behind them casting its glow towards their back. In between the prisoners and the fire there was a walkway and some people started walking there (and some of them were also talking to each other) holding statues and artefacts on their heads and shoulders. Of these walking people there appeared big moving shadows on the screen of which the chained people might think that these were the images of some big animals like camels and elephants moving behind them through the walkway. Suddenly, one of the chained prisoners was to somehow set free himself from the chains experiencing the pain of being forced to stand up, to turn around, to walk and to look at the fire producing the shadows. He obviously realized that what he was thinking of the shadows while he was chained were absolutely wrong opinions, as these were not the big animals rather the ordinary people who were walking along having artefacts on their shoulders (and some of them talking to each other as well) through the walkway. Now someone however forced to drag the unchained person away from his place pulling him up to the cave's exit to get him out of it into the sunlight. When the unchained person got out of the cave into the sunlight, the first thing he experienced was the glaring effect of the sunlight which made his eyes unable to look around the world outside the cave. After the laps of sometime he got accustomed with the world outside the cave in the light of the sun. And he got accustomed so gradually. The easiest things for him to see were shadows, and then the images of things reflected in water. And thereafter he would be able to see the things themselves in the sunlight and then finally the sun itself being not only a reflector but something in and of itself as a source of all reflections.<sup>26</sup>

The most valuable of the body of secondary literature which has sprung up about the cave narrative is Plato's own suggestive hermeneutics that indicates various

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Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, Vol. 1, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. ix.

<sup>25</sup>In my paraphrased summary of the narrative I have deliberately replaced 'the screen above which showmen exhibit their puppets' with the cinema screen. This alteration in the material does not affect the meanings of the tale rather it makes the meanings more neatly graspable for the contemporary reader. Cornford also suggested the same as he notes that in this regard 'Plato could have found a neater analogue in the cinema.' See W. K. C. Guthrie, *Plato: the Man and his Dialogues: Earlier period: A History of Greek Philosophy*, Vol. IV (Cambridge, Cambridge university press, 1975), n. 3, p.515.

<sup>26</sup>This paraphrasing is drawn mutually from the translations of the tale by Paul Shorey and Martin Heidegger. See *Πολιτεία (The Republic)*, Book VII, 514a–517a, in Plato, *The Collected Dialogues of Plato Including the Letters*, eds. Edith Hamilton & Huntington Cairns (New York, Bollingen Foundation, 1961), pp. 747–749 and *Op. Cit.*, *Wegmarken*, pp. 156–163.

directions and forms different philosophical links between hitherto unsaid meanings. In what follows I will paraphrase Plato's interpretation of the narrative through a dialogue between Socrates and Glaucon.

The text of the narrative indicates that 'the true analogy for' the 'indwelling power' of apprehension is 'that of an eye that could not be converted to the light from the darkness except by turning the whole body.' This turning around of the human self 'from the world of becoming' to 'the brightest region of being' makes him cognize the ascending path of the soul from mere ignorance to the ultimate truth. If the soul 'had been hammered from childhood, and had thus been struck free of the leaden weights, so to speak, of our birth and becoming, which attaching themselves to it by food and similar pleasures and gluttonies turn downward the vision of the soul'; if the soul is 'freed from these, it had suffered a conversion toward the things that are real and true, that same faculty of the same men would have been most keen in its vision of the higher things, just as it is for the things toward which it is' ordinarily turned. The sun being the ultimate object to be seen in the brightest region is the symbol of the highest idea in the light of which all other ideas can be cognized, and which is itself cognized as good. The idea of good, Plato imagines, is 'the last thing to be seen and hardly be seen' 'in the region of the known, and that when seen it must need point us to the conclusion that this is indeed the cause for all things of all that is right and beautiful, giving birth in the visible world to light, and the author of light and itself in the intelligible world being the authentic source of truth and reason, and that anyone who is to act wisely in private or public must have caught sight of this.'<sup>27</sup>

Plato also fantastically suggests about the possibility: If one were to go back to the dark world of ignorance after having attained the height of wisdom in the world of knowledge, then what would happen to one? If one is made descend to the abysmal ignorance again, one will obviously refuse to abandon that feel of the uprightness that he has already attained in the brightest region. However if one is forced to do that, the perpetual prisoners of ignorance will judge of one that one has returned from one's journey of wisdom 'aloft with one's eyes ruined' because for some time one's vision will remain dim before one's eyes will be accustomed to the dark and so the journey will not be taken by them to be worth while and they will not prefer even to make any attempt to ascend to get out of the ignorance. Their distastefulness toward wisdom will be so intense that if one is to try to convince them to be released, they will kill one.<sup>28</sup>

Seen from the perspective of 'the unsaid,' Heidegger's analysis of Plato's cave narrative has two important features: first, he attempts to discover the whole of what Plato really meant to say in the narrative and so he ultimately leaves out much of what Plato did really mean in terms of particularities; and second, he interprets the narrative in the context of not only the entirety of Plato's work but of the entirety of Greek philosophy and so he eventually covers up the individual narrative by his

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<sup>27</sup> *Op. Cit.*, *Πολιτεία*, Book VII, 517a–519b.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 517a.

reading of the whole Greek thought.<sup>29</sup> In case of the former, the irreducible characteristic of the narrative's particularities is sacrificed immediately to a coherent interpretation with respect to the doctrine of truth (*ἀλήθεια*) which Heidegger translates as unhiddenness (*Unverborgenheit*).<sup>30</sup> In the latter, the narrative, as particularly self contained repository of meanings, disappears into the larger context of Western adventure of truth. What Heidegger gains by his totalizing approach to the cave narrative whereby the meaning of particularities of the narrative is lost into the hermeneutic process of totalizing the semantic content with respect to the doctrine of truth? Heidegger conceives of the organization of all events depicted in the narrative as a path to be covered in order to arrive at the meaning of truth. Thereby he divides the whole narrative into the four stages of the occurrence of truth. Each of these stages is to have its own meaning of truth. The four stages<sup>31</sup> are:

- (i) 'the Situation of Man in the Underground Cave'; the shadows (*σκιάι*) are what is the unhidden (*τὸ ἀληθές*) in the cave
- (ii) 'a 'Liberation' of Man within the Cave'; the unhidden is not the shadow but what the unshackled man sees directly in the light (*φῶς*) of fire (*πῦρ*)
- (iii) 'the Genuine Liberation of Man to the Primordial Light'; the unhidden reveals gradually in this sphere. First the released prisoner 'sees better by night, where vision slowly grows accustomed to the illuminated things—the smooth light, the unblinding light of the stars and the moon. When he gets used to this, he is able to see by day in the light of the sun, then the light itself. Finally he is able to see the sun as what *gives* the light, as what gives *time*, as what *rules over* everything, and which is the ground even of what is seen in the *cave*.' Thus the unhidden in this sphere is defined by the things that show themselves as images for the ideas, and the sun is something that 'makes all ideas visible', namely 'the idea of all ideas (*ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέα*).'<sup>32</sup>
- (iv) 'the Freed Prisoner's Return to the Cave'; the freed man comes back to the bondsmen (*δεσμῶται*) to tell them the truth, namely that what they are seeing on the wall as the unhidden is simply misapprehended. After having experienced the illuminated things, ideas and the ultimate idea, he has come to know the unhidden as he is now experiencing in the cave as 'co-belonging' to the hidden. Hence the unhidden of the fourth stage lies in the 'deconcealment' with 'respect of its essential relatedness to concealing and the concealed. Untrue *belongs* to the essence of truth.'

<sup>29</sup> While concluding his argument Heidegger's remarks encompass not only Greek thought but even the whole 'history of Western humanity' and not only its past and what is happening at present but what will happen in the future as well. See *Op. Cit.*, *Wegmarken*, p. 182.

<sup>30</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit: zu Platons Höhlengleichnis und Theätet (The Essence of Truth: On Plato's Cave Allegory and Theaetetus)*, trans. Ted Sadler (London, Continuum, 2002), p. 7.

<sup>31</sup> On the issue of the four stages see *Ibid.*, pp. 17–68.

<sup>32</sup> *Op. Cit.*, *Wegmarken*, p. 165.



Heidegger's totalizing phenomenological-hermeneutic approach to the cave-narrative is characterized by excavating the meaning of truth overshadowing all other meanings hidden in the organization of events feigned as plot of the narrative. There lies the risk that occurs in analyzing the metaphorical composition of the tale, whose established meanings Heidegger has tried to destroy to preserve the extremely sound and incredibly clear meaning of truth joined to the phenomenological orientation of his thought. Here I intend to restore the meaning of transcendence in relation to immanence out of the Heideggerian ruins of the cave-narrative.

On its most obvious level, the allegory of the cave as a part of Plato's *Πολιτεία* is the story of an improvised side-show composed of two worlds: the dark cave wherein human beings are shackled with the conventional ignorance imposed on them by society and the bright outside world under the shining sun wherein everything shows itself as it is in itself. Overlooking this dark-bright couple of worlds, Heidegger, yoked with his phenomenological commitments, perceives the tale as a circular intellectual voyage of a liberated philosopher. It is a tragic journey incepted in the dark cave with the liberation of a philosopher chained with other men, culminates with the climax of cognizing the truth as shining sun outside the cave, and ends with the murder of the philosopher in the hands of the bondsmen in the cave. In my view the tale is not originally a tragedy and the intellectual voyage of the philosopher is not necessarily to be taken as circular as Heidegger perceives of it. The story is pleasantly improvised by the heroic acts of the philosopher first by unshackling himself from the conventional chains of ignorance and then by cognizing the truth at the climax. It is a happy ending of the linear improvisation of the tale. The tragic part of the story wherein the hero is killed by the villains should be taken as a fantastic postscript to the tale whereby the author wishes to teach the audience a particular lesson.

If one takes light from Heidegger's phenomenological hermeneutics to illuminate the pleasant linear improvisation of the cave-narrative, one has to distance oneself first from the lopsidedness of Heidegger's interpretation of the narrative loaded with the meaning of truth, yet one has to remain stuck to the Heideggerian diction of phenomenology. This sticking-avoiding simultaneity focuses on the double hermeneutic movement of revealing the meaning of transcendence-immanence difference in the context of two worlds and concealing the lopsidedness of the meaning of truth in the context of four stages; and it all operates within the framework of the ascending linear improvisation of the cave-tale. Revealing the meaning of the transcendence-immanence contrast, one has to interpret the narrative by discovering bridges between the two worlds of the dark ignorance and the bright truth so that the bridging permits passage of consciousness between them and thereby fixes the irreducible distance dividing them. It is not of the Heideggerian four stages but of the two worlds the context in which Plato's narrative makes sense of transcendence as associated with immanence. The sense can be made soundly only if the tone of the interpretation is set in terms of phenomenology and only if it is fixed in its appropriate context.

Heidegger's four-stage interpretation of the cave-tale depicts the universe of the narrative as comprising of four worlds with their respective truths, namely the

world of the shadows, the world of the fire, the world of the sun and the world of the conflict between the ignorance and the knowledge. Within this universe, the liberated man moves across the landscape from one world to another, in such a way that the mode of his “[trans]ascending” from one specific world to its adjacent world remains in the dark. The Heideggerian interpretation of the Platonic tale reveals these worlds as destinies that have always been present though access from one of them to the next may have been somehow obscured. And once a particular destiny has been attained, all difficulties one faces and all efforts one makes in [trans]ascending one world to attain the destiny are overlooked to illuminate a particular truth attached with that destiny. A study of this unsaid meaning of the [trans]ascending of the liberated man, which takes its place between two particular worlds, will permit us to explore certain thematic images as they structure the landscapes of the whole universe that will serve as the context of my interpretation of the tale. Yet my analysis will exclude the [trans]descending of the liberated man from the world of the sun down to the world of conflict between the ignorance and the knowledge, which finally leads the tale to a tragic ending with the death of the liberated man by the bondsmen.

The first is the lifeworld of ‘everydayness’—the world of shadows—wherein the conventional meanings are imposed by force on the prisoners, which they simply believe in without asking any question. The unquestionable acceptance of the imposed meanings illuminates an attribute of the shackled minds that they do not find the *question of Being* as an issue for them. In that sense none of them is Heidegger’s Dasein; and so the world of shadows is a Daseinless world. In this part of the cave-lifeworld the imposition of conventionalities through the process of history is so intensely hammered on human consciousness that man has become absolutely devoid of any sense of being deceived by the moving images appearing on the screen of everyday cinema. The determining effect of conventions on consciousness whereby man-in-the-cave is to perceive of meanings reminds one of the Gadamerian formation of prejudices in the effective-historical consciousness. In Gadamer’s case however the historical effect on human consciousness is not so harsh and strict that makes man merely a recipient of prejudged meanings rather in his traditionally shaped lifeworld man is able to distinguish illegitimate prejudices from the legitimate ones though the process of such subjective distinguishing occurs in the nexus of tradition. When the situation of the shackled-men-in-the-cave is compared with the position of Heidegger’s men-in-the-world, it encourages the shoots of intellectual speculation in order to establish their relation to Gadamer’s effective-historical consciousness lying in the way of tradition. One may find the cave-lifeworld-tradition equation a little nebulous at this stage of the argument, yet it becomes more transpicuous when one first turns from the world of the shadows to the world of the fire in the cave<sup>33</sup> and then [trans]ascends to the world of the sun in the end.

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<sup>33</sup>The bipartisan structure of the cave-world has various interpretations. ‘The chained prisoners represent ordinary uneducated humanity’ while the bipartite cave stands ‘for the whole world of nature’ so that the shadows ‘represent particulars and the artefacts that cast them the general notions abstracted from them by the uneducated.’ Keeping the purpose of depiction of the tale in

It may be easy for one who is analyzing the cave tale to turn imaginatively from the world of the shadows to the world of the fire, but this is not so easy for one who is bodily shackled with the chains of conventions in the cave. Every bondsman is so tightly chained by neck and legs that he cannot even turn around his head to see right behind his back. But according to Plato, one of the bondsmen somehow liberates himself, notwithstanding the shackles. There may be at least two reasons behind this unshackling of an individual and then his turning around to direct himself to the world of the fire. First, his view of the shadows rationally illuminates him that the dark shadows always appear on the screen with the bright patches of light; and he understands that a shadow is itself a darkness that lets the bright patch illuminate on the screen. Second, this extrinsic heuristic interplay of the dark shadows and the bright patches guides him to have a feel that the source of this interplay is behind him. This intrinsic feel coupled with some mystical extraneous force makes him so strongly curious that he finally succeeds to break his relationship with the world of the shadows and shackles in order to see the fire behind him as the source of the show on the screen. This is not simply an individual act of turning around rather it is a curious case of a shackled man who after leading a long life with dark conventions and misleading opinions finally liberates himself from this deceptive phase of everyday life. This is an initial stage of life of an ordinary man who partially transcends his everydayness to acquaint himself like a thinker with the illumination of ideas in this experiential world of the fire.

After having seen the fire emitting light whose obstruction through the people moving between the fire and the prisoners is making the shadows on the wall, the liberated man has a sense of accomplishment of his experience of the cave-world. This accomplishment has a series of cognitive experiences: that the prisoners are leading a life of ignorance and deception; that in the reality there is a bright light and its obstruction is to cause darkness which becomes shadow on the wall; and the source of all brightness is the fire. That is to say, the liberated man's passage from the world of the shadows to the world of the fire is an experience of conquest of this horizontal and penetrable landscape of the bipartite cave-world. But this short-term feel of conquest soon transforms into an unsatisfactory experience of cognition when the liberated man raises his head to see the bright opening of the cave at certain height. This unsatisfactory conquest embeds a desire of finding a gigantic fire outside the cave, as this expected fire may be making the opening of the cave bright from outside; and so the psychodynamic association of desire and narrative improvises the tale to the final phase.

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Book VII of *Πολιτεία* in his mind, Plato might have referred to 'the whole field of *mimesis*' while conceiving of the bipartisan structure of the cave. The shadows are ordinary appearances and the artefacts are their artistic imitations; and since 'the artists do not understand what they are imitating' the level of reality of their imitations remains low. On this general discussion see *Op. Cit.*, Guthrie, pp. 512–517 and specifically on poetry as an art of producing 'only deceptive appearances of things' see Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Dialogue and Dialectic: Eight Hermeneutical Studies on Plato*, trans. P. Christopher Smith (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1980), pp. 39–72.

According to Freud, the essentiality of desire is its ‘mobility, the ease with which it passes from one object to another.’<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, desire seeks its satisfaction in repetition of the experience of pleasure one has already had in the past. Insofar as the liberated man’s attempts to [trans]ascend the dark cave in order to find the fire-like source of illuminations outside the cave are concerned, he postulates the end of desire as a re-experience of the same pleasure that he has already enjoyed in the cave after having conquered the cave by finding the fire as a source of light. This time in the new world outside the cave he is expecting to attain his goal by finding such a gigantic fire-like source of illuminations and such an intense view of brightness that the attainment would eliminate the need for further passage. This displacement in search of illuminations and, ultimately, the source of all illuminations, is an experience of transcendence. The liberated man’s project of transcendence recalls an earlier moment in the narrative while he was immanently in the world of the shadows. He had volitionally unshackled himself in a burst of naive cognitive enthusiasm. And very quickly he discovered the devastation and meaninglessness of his cognitive conquest in the world of the fire when he became aware of the reality of the show of the shadows and light on the wall. He felt his loss of innocence with respect to the shadows on the wall and that loss connoted to a gain of some vague cognition of illumination. This intellectual deflowering led to an arousal—the desire to escape the cave-world of everydayness, even if it meant to face the gigantic fire outside the cave which might burn him down to ashes. If one were to locate the beginning of events of the dark voyage impelling the forward movement of the narrative, one would have to situate it in this unfolding—the beginning of the liberated man’s discovery—of the illuminating nature of human cognition. The fire’s glow intensified the arousal of the true illumination and gives the narrative a new direction by opening up the possibility of finding the true source of illumination elsewhere by means of transcending to another world. The shadow-perceiver’s trip to the world of the sun was delayed by a transitional stay at the world of the fire. Although the transitional stay at the world of the fire maintained the urge to seek a brighter view outside the cave, the sort of clue for full-blown illumination the fire-perceiver discovered in the cave was revealing of the vanity of dim light in this transitional phase of his voyage. If the world of the shadows is a dark primitive world and the world of the fire is a dim old world, then the world of the sun is an expectedly most illuminated new world. The theme of illumination which has been associated throughout the narrative with man’s desire to see things transparently manifests itself in several ways. As a bright patch with the shadows on the wall it helps the bondsman in unshackling himself and then as a relatively dim light in the bipartite cave-world it serves as a clue of finding the brightest light outside the cave. Thereby, on the one hand, it exposes the vain prospects of cognition of truth regarding the immanent dim world of everydayness; and on the other hand, it points to the plausibility of the brightest illumination expected in the transcendent world of *ἰδέα*. Thus illumination as a catalyst of the fire-perceiver’s

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<sup>34</sup> Sigmund Freud, *An Outline of Psychoanalysis*, trans. James Strachey (New York, Norton, 1949), p. 24.

escape to the new world serves to renew the arousal that stimulated his conquest of the cave; it finally closes the immanence episode as it opens the transcendence one, impelling the narrative forward.

After having transcended the deceptive or simply the ignorant world of everydayness the freed man finds himself in the brightest region of knowledge, i.e., the transcendent<sup>35</sup> world of *ιδέα*. This is the space of ideation wherein the things are to illuminate themselves as what they are in themselves. The *ιδέα*-illumination intimacy can be brought to fore through the metonymic exchange between Plato's depiction of eye as the indwelling power of apprehension and Heidegger's concept of idea. Owing to the platonic metonymy of eye, one may find one's understanding of something as an experience of seeing that thing with extreme transparency. This is to say, the seeing metonymically depicts the having of ideas. Heidegger defines *ιδέα* in the same way. According to him, when one has an idea of some 'being' one is able to see Being of that being in advance, which is to say, '[t]he idea allows us to see a being as what it is, lets the being come to us so to speak.'<sup>36</sup> It means idea is like light that lets thing be seen illuminated as what they are in themselves. This idea-light interplay becomes more illuminated when one links it to Heidegger's interpretation of freedom in the nexus of the cave-narrative. When the freedman transcends the dark and deceptive world of everydayness he did not only experience the negative freedom—the freedom *from* the deception; but this act of transcendence also a 'genuine positive freedom'—'the freedom *for*' the comportment to what will be illuminated. It means the freedman was not genuinely free when he unshackled himself in the cave because at that time he was unable to see things being illuminated in the light due to his being in the dark cave. But now as he has already transcended to be here in the brightest region, he is genuinely free; and his '[b]ecoming

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<sup>35</sup>The meaning of transcendence in the context of relationship between the cave-world and the world of illuminations is altogether different from what Husserl means by this term. In case of the latter, when one transcends the lifeworld one arrives at the empty abode of the transcendental subjectivity, and whatever thereafter one cognitively experiences it takes its place immanently within the same abode. Such an act of cognition is possible in the structure of intentionality. In the nexus of intentionality consciousness is always a consciousness of something, i.e., there are two poles of cognition namely the knowing subject (*noetic* pole) and its known objective correlate (*noematic* pole). Such a correlation is not possible in Plato's philosophy as depicted in the cave-narrative. When one transcends the cave-world, one observes the objectively existing illuminations which are absolutely independent of one's subjective cognition of them. This is to say, the Platonic *Ιδέα* is an objectively existing reality rather than simply a *noematic* correlate of the transcendental subjectivity.

<sup>36</sup>Heidegger notes: "What emerged as the essence of light and brightness namely letting-through for seeing, is precisely the basic accomplishment of the idea. The essence of light is letting-through for sight. If light, as in the allegory, is meant in a *transferred* sense...*seeing* must correspondingly be meant in a transferred sense: the seeing of beings...What is seen in and as the idea is, outside the allegory, the *being* of beings. *Ιδέα* is what is sighted in advance, what gets perceived in advance and lets beings through as the *interpretation* of 'being'. The idea allows us to see a being as what it is, lets the being *come* to us so to speak. We *see* first of all from *being*, through the understanding of *what* a particular thing is. Through its what-being the being shows itself as this and this...Being, the idea, is what lets through: the *light*. What the idea accomplishes is given in the fundamental nature of light. See *Op. Cit., der Wahrheit*, pp. 42.

free means binding' himself 'to what is genuinely illuminating, to what makes-free and lets-through, the light.'<sup>37</sup>

How does the *new* world of ideas or world of illuminations differ from the *old* world of everydayness? When the freedman arrives in the former he is both surprised and disconcerted by the natural landscape of this bright region as contrasted with the latter, its dark counterpart. The difference between the two worlds is conveyed by the metaphor of light. Whereas the world of everydayness is depicted as dark and dim in the presence of a small fire, the world of ideas, which the freedman expected to be simply less dark in the presence of a relatively big fire, turns out to be extremely bright under the sun. As an immediate effect of the sun the freedman's eyes appear to have been shut first in the world of ideas, and then open in part to the brightness of the landscape with its illuminating effect. Indeed, the scorching effect of the landscape on the freedman suggests that he has become, obviously temporally, blind, with all that this term connotes insofar as the successful vision through this pilgrimage is concerned. And the freedman may suspect that there is an attendant transformation of his indwelling power of apprehension, from dim vision to lost of sight, but when the next moment he opens his eyes he has surprisingly had a crystal clear vision of the landscape in the sunlight.

Another aspect of the new world experience reinforces the disparity between it and the old world in terms of the notion of time; and this disparity leads towards the hermeneutic finitude of Heidegger's phenomenology in interpreting Plato's cave-narrative. The cave-lifeworld is a temporal or historical world, whose temporality or historicity is defined by the everydayness heading towards the death. All acts of human consciousness takes their place within the sphere of the lifeworld; and both consciousness and world are the coordinates of time and the immanence of temporality, as discussed above, stands in an essential relationship to the *apriori* of Being-in-the-world. This is to say, the temporal orientation of Dasein and the lifeworld illustrates that all acts of cognition of self in the lifeworld are to take their place immanently temporally, as the inquiry concerning what the self and world are transcendently in themselves is reduced by Heidegger to asking how they show themselves immanently *qua* time. In this nexus the authenticity of one's being temporal is guaranteed by past, as in the continuity of everydayness one's running ahead to past is also running up against future through present and so one is one's future and being so one comes back to one's past and present. This is what Heidegger calls the first principle of hermeneutics, a phenomenon of experiencing past as 'authentic historicity... something to which one can return again and again' in the nexus of the lifeworld of everydayness. But Plato's narrative of the cave tells us altogether a different story. In order to experience all showing of things-in-themselves one has to transcend the nexus of the temporal and historical lifeworld of everydayness. All illuminations are guaranteed in the sphere of ideas whereat one may reach when one has already discarded his past, the continuity of having deceptions and misapprehensions in the sphere of everydayness. The most important question arises here is whether the transcendent world of ideas is temporal or not? The transcendent world

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 43–44.

of ideas reflects the gradualness of illuminations—an ascending of human soul<sup>38</sup> through a hierarchical anchors of bright lights—leading the soul to the brightest of lights, the sun being idea of all ideas—*ἰδέα τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ*. This gradual movement of the soul from the mouth of the cave up towards the sun underlies a sort of temporality. But this sort of timing is not guided by the continuity of everydayness heading towards the death while continuously coming back to the past again and again. Instead, it is a temporality begins with transcending one's past of everyday life, and then proceeds with the gradual illuminations of ideation ends at the ultimate idea, the idea of good. This ultimacy of all illuminations reflects the infinite scope of the divine ideation, the eternal bliss of the divine illumination, as after having reached at this height when the soul looks back at all moments of cognition it realizes that it is the ultimacy of illuminations that has opened the soul's eyes to the infinite scope of all cognitions. This ultimate idea is, in Plato's own words, 'the cause for all things of all that is right and beautiful, giving birth in the visible world to light, and the author of light and itself in the intelligible world being the authentic source of truth and reason.'<sup>39</sup> It means in the transcendent world of ideas, the ascending soul's destiny is not the death, rather after having experienced several destinations the soul finally experiences the eternity of the divine illumination not as a closing end of Being rather an opening of infinite possibilities of human cognition blessed with the heuristics of the divine light.<sup>40</sup>

Here one may understand the alleged hermeneutic finitude of Heidegger's phenomenological hermeneutics as regards his interpretation of Plato's cave-narrative. In Heidegger's hermeneutic-phenomenology the immanence of temporality of the consciousness and the lifeworld is the only nexus available for all acts of human cognition, whereas in the context of Plato's narrative the historical lifeworld lies

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<sup>38</sup> Heidegger inevitably refuses in principle to incorporate such a concept of man-with-a-soul or man-with-a-personhood into his phenomenological hermeneutics. He Writes: "In our indicative definition of the theme of hermeneutics, facticity=in each case our own Dasein in its being-there for a while at the particular time, we avoided on principle the expression "human" Dasein or the "being of man." He further explains why this inevitability is there in his system of thought by referring to the originality of this concept of man with personhood. He notes that this concept of man 'arose in the Christian explication of the original endowments of man as a creature of God, as explication which was guided by Revelation in the Old Testament.' See Martin Heidegger, *Ontology – The Hermeneutics of Facticity*, trans. John van Buren (Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1999), p. 17.

<sup>39</sup> See note 27.

<sup>40</sup> Paul Ricoeur is also of the view that human temporality is more intensely justified and deepened with its reference to eternity. He notes: "This intensification does not just consist of the fact that time is thought of as abolished by the limiting idea of an eternity that strikes time with nothingness. Nor is this intensification reduced to transferring into the sphere of lamentation and wailing what had until then been only a speculative argument. It aims more fundamentally at extracting from the very experience of time the resources of an internal hierarchization, one whose advantage lies not in abolishing time but in deepening it." He further notes: "Indeed it was necessary to confess what is other than time in order to be in a position to give full justice to human temporality and to propose not to abolish it but to probe deeper into it, to hierarchize it, and to unfold it following levels of temporalization that are less and less "distended" and more and more "held firmly," *non secundum distentionem sed secundum intentionem* (29: 39). See *Op. Cit.*, Ricoeur, p. 30.



dark without any moment of such cognitive illumination. Instead, every act of cognition takes its place in the transcendent world of ideas being the only place immanently available for the illuminating ideation, as the sun being the source of all illuminations is shining in the transcendent world of ideas not obviously in the cave. So there are two options remained for Heidegger: he may devastate the whole mountain into which the cave has already been built as a prison of conventional givenness of meanings for ordinary human beings; or he may also drag the sun shining in the sky into the cave to make it illuminate. But for him both options are unlikely to execute. The former is the world he has opted deliberately in order to set meanings to be operational in the nexus of temporality and the latter is simply impossible to execute even in one's imagination.

The same sort of hermeneutic finitude would seem to belong to Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, if he were to interpret Plato's narrative in the specific context of his own philosophy. The functionality of human consciousness, as we have already seen above in case of Gadamer, cannot in any way transcend<sup>41</sup> the procession of tradition constituted in the flow of effective-history encompassing not only the past but also the relevant present. Thereby whatever illuminations human mind experiences in the form of ideas owe to the historicity of tradition. On the contrary, Plato finds conventional or traditional meanings to be the shackles that keep man in the dark. The most one can do in this situation is to have a dim light partially showing the deceptiveness of traditional meanings, which guides man how to gauge the wastefulness of human intellect enclosed by the immanence of historicity of the cave-lifeworld. This wastefulness reveals to man the difficult project of transcending the cave-lifeworld being guided by the mystical overtones of the same extraneous force which already helped him in making himself free from the shackles and

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<sup>41</sup>In a conversation with Riccardo Dottori, Gadamer, responding to a question concerning man's 'finite spirit' in relation to the possibility of absolute knowledge, explicitly said: "...what we must keep in mind here is that transcendence is not attainable anywhere. Transcendence is not simply believing in God. It is something incomprehensible, and this is true for Hegel as well. This is all we can say today. It's all true for Jaspers, who incorporated this form of transcendence into his thinking, but even for Heidegger. This is why we ourselves (Heidegger as well) have, for some time, been able to come to an extensive understanding with Jaspers...So I would basically agree with Jaspers that the *ignoramus* is the fundament of transcendence." And this *ignoramus* is 'the finitude beyond which we are not allowed to go.' See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *A Century of Philosophy: A Conversation with Riccardo Dottori*, trans. Rod Coltman with Sigrid Koepke (New York, Continuum, 2003), pp. 78–79. Gadamer forces his refusal to transcendence by his emphasis on immanence. Discussing the relationship between Greek philosophy and modern thought, he finds the theme of an 'enduring relevance' dealing with 'the integration of the magnificent results and the faculties/achievements of the modern empirical sciences into social consciousness, into the life experience of the individual and the group.' This integration, he further says, "accomplishes itself in the praxis of social life itself. It must always take back into its own purview that which has been placed in the power of human beings, and it has to vindicate the limits that human reason has placed upon its own power and recklessness. We require no proof to see that, for the contemporary human being as well (even as much as modern industry and technology are spreading across the entire globe), in this sense, the understandable world, the world in which we are at home, remains the final authority." See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Beginning of Knowledge*, trans. Rod Coltman (New York, Continuum, 2001), pp. 125–126.

shadows of the primitive world. And once man transcends the historicity of the lifeworld, his intellect becomes illuminated by the divine light leading him towards the eternal bliss of intellectual satisfaction.

## Conclusion

In his cave-narrative, Plato exploits the phenomenon of illumination in the nexus of the two-world theory metaphorically delineated in terms of the dark-bright contrast of man's act of consciousness. Respecting the variable attributes of the two worlds, and profiting from the opacities and lacunae of the cave-lifeworld and the richness of ideation of the transcendent world of illuminations, he infuses the meanings of divine inspiration into the human discourse of intellectualism. Looking from the privileged viewpoint of contemporary phenomenology of Heidegger and Gadamer, Plato's narrative seems to be unjustifiably interpretable. The narrative is semantically multiform and self-perpetuating, may intricately mesh with the meanings that attempt to reshape it; a set of notions not merely twisted so that its inner-outer relationships reflect phenomenological concepts, but endowed with a capacity for hermeneutic underpinning beyond the limits of phenomenology. The settings of the tale are therefore not landscape of the transcendent world or décor of the cave; they are metaphorically functional and dynamically operative elements of Plato's philosophy. As regards Heidegger's interpretation of the narrative, it overlooks the incredibility of the meaning of transcendence as contained in the tale within the framework of his phenomenological hermeneutics under the pressure of an irresistible force of the doctrine of truth. The gaps in the material of his hermeneutical approach to the narrative constantly enlarge through the disintegrating power of the meaning of truth applied to the various elements of the tale. It is not only Heidegger's version of phenomenology that one confronts the unsatisfactory consequences if one interprets Plato's cave-tale; in case of Gadamer one also faces the same consequences. Recognizing these limitations of two contemporary versions of phenomenology and their interplay with certain elements of the narrative, this paper concludes that Heidegger's lifeworld and Gadamer's tradition both can be aptly aligned with the temporal cave-lifeworld as depicted in Plato's tale. Furthermore, the Platonic depiction of the transcendent world of illuminations forms a doctrinal fold, which remains incompatible with Heidegger and Gadamer both with respect to the way it discerns references to the climax of the tale and connections with the tale's principal theme of light and illumination, and the freedman's continuing ineffectual quest for the understanding of its meaning. Thus both Heidegger's hermeneutic-phenomenology and Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics do not afford us an appropriate philosophical framework for accomplishing the task of complete discernment of the meaning of the cave-narrative. Therefore, if a contemporary phenomenologist insists on experiencing illuminations immanently within the sphere of everydayness, it means that he is dragging the sun into the cave.