

The Construction of the Self:
Self as a mere Imputation through the Symbolic, Identity and the Practice of
Freedom

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- 2) Kimlik
- 3) Budist Zihin Felsefesi
- 4) Ego
- 5) Özgürlük Pratiği

Key Words (English)

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- 3) Buddhist Philosophy of Mind
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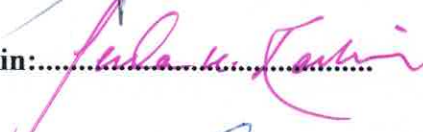
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Abstract

This thesis is an endeavor to present a critical analysis and discussion of the descriptive and prescriptive aspects of the problematization of the self in the Western thought and subjectivity. We argue with the help of self and consciousness theories of Freud, Lacan and Foucault and also with the counter-analysis of the Buddhist perspective of the mind that the conception of the self and subjectivity inherent in the Western thought as a sub-form of identity are artifactual and inadequate of supporting and providing an explanation of the practices of freedom against the Western objectivity and its functioning of power.

Özet

Bu yüksek lisans tezinin amacı tanımlayıcı ve kuralcı Batı düşüncesi ve öznelliği üzerinden ‘benlik’ kavramı ve problematizasyonuna kritik bir bakış açısı ve analiz sunmaktır. Freud, Lacan ve Foucault’un özne, benlik ve bilinç teorileri; Budist bakış açısının zihin ve bilince dair geliştirdiği karşı-analiz ile birlikte kullanılarak Batı düşüncesinde içsel olarak bulunan ve aslen kimlik yapılarının bir alt formu olan benlik ve öznelliğin Batı tarzı nesnelliği ve onun üzerinden işleyen güç ve iktidar mekanizmalarına karşı geliştirilen özgürlük pratiklerini desteklemede ve açıklamada yetersiz ve yapay olduğu savı üzerine tartışılmıştır.

Acknowledgements:

I would like to thank several people that inspired and supported me enormously while this thesis has been written:

Bülent Somay: My dear teacher, friend and mentor of whom I am proud to know.

Words cannot express my love and deepest gratitude; may you never be separate from the enlightened activity, and “*from our side may we always see them as enlightened*”

Khensur Jhado Tulku Rinpoche: My precious teacher of Buddha Dharma, the most precious objects of refuge gathered into one. “*I was floating down the river of life, caught in the current of this world. In the river, I met the Guru and he led me to the other shore.*”

Ferda Keskin for introducing me to the work of Michel Foucault and the practice of *parrhēsia*. Thanks for all the invaluable insights you have provided, and my thoughts haven't changed since my undergraduate dissertation process:

Ea thesis bene scripta potest quod philosophus narratorum, philosophorum narrator, sapienter tradidit atque erudit.

I am grateful to everyone who, in one way or another, put their efforts or faith in this work, and those whose names I failed to mention. The overall process was filled with joy thanks to their love, support and patience.

In loving memory of my mother, Ayten Yener.

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May all sentient beings
children of enlightened [Buddha] nature,
realise
the ultimate nature of mind:
insight and compassion,
in blissful union.

Synonyms for Mind

As for this apparent and distinct [phenomenon] which is called ‘mind’:

In terms of existence, it has no [inherent] existence whatsoever.

In terms of origination, it is the source of the diverse joys and sorrows of cyclic existence and nirvāṇā,

In terms of [philosophical] opinion, it is subject to opinions in accordance with the eleven vehicles.

In terms of designation, it has an inconceivable number of distinct names:

Some call it ‘the nature of the mind’, the ‘nature of mind itself’,

Some eternalists give it the name ‘self’,

Pious attendants call it ‘selflessness of the individual’,

Cittāmatrins call it ‘mind’,

Some call it the ‘Perfection of Discriminative Awareness’,

Some call it the ‘Nucleus of the Sugata’,

Some call it the ‘Great Seal’,

Some call it the ‘Unique Seminal Point’,

Some call it the ‘Expanse of Reality’,

Some call it the ‘Ground-of-all’,

And some call it ‘ordinary [unfabricated consciousness]’.

The following is the introduction [to the means of experiencing] this [single] nature of [mind]

Through the application of three considerations:

[First, recognize that] past thoughts are traceless, clear, and empty,

[Second, recognize that] future thoughts are unproduced and fresh,

and [Third, recognize that] the present moment abides naturally and unconstructed.

From the *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* or ‘*The Great Liberation by Hearing in the Intermediate States*’

Without contacting the entity that is imputed
You will not apprehend the absence of that entity.

(Śāntideva, *Bodhicaryāvatāra*. 8th century)

I. INTRODUCTION

This thesis is an attempt to critically analyze and discuss the discursive and non-discursive aspects of the problematization of the “self” with an interactive analysis of the modern psychological and post-structural perspectives and the Eastern, mainly Buddhist view of the mind.

It also aims to be a humble contribution to the dialectic method of thinking to overcome formal dualistic and monistic reductionism, which we face often when we hold a view upon the critique of the “self”.

The philosophical theories concerning the mind and the subject focus upon a variety of different models and questions, and the question of how it can be possible for conscious experiences to arise –whether out of the neurological impulses of the brain or the perceptions of the soul etc- is also a central one. This old and not yet resolved debate has important consequences over the concept of the “self” as well, since if we mean by “self” as “I”- an essential, ‘solid and independently existent’ entity, it takes us back to idea of an “immaterial soul” –since one can conceive oneself without a body, and ‘soul’ has connotations of ‘essence’.-

of the dualistic approaches of the mind and body. As dualistic way of thinking makes a distinction between the mental phenomena and the physical body, then it must explain how physical memories are created via consciousness or how consciousness affects physical reality. Dualism in this sense also refer to explain the tendency to perceive and understand the phenomena into two categories; such as seeing an object separate from everything it is surrounded or when one perceives a “self” that is distinct from anything else. When we think about what the ‘mind’ is on an average level, we may see and identify it with our “self”, “personality”, “consciousness” or “soul” etc.; by making a distinction between the physiological aspect –such as the brain- and the conscious experience.

MIND-BODY DICHOTOMY

The mind-body dichotomy, as a starting point of dualism, has shaped the Western culture since the time of Plato and Aristotle through St. Augustine and René Descartes, up to the present day. It was the latter among them however, later held responsible for conceptualizing and introducing the dualistic (a.k.a. cartesian) split to the modern Western world. By remembering Whitehead’s famous exaggeration as seeing “Western philosophy just a series of footnotes to Plato”, his theory of Ideas/Forms¹ is regarded as a model for all future manifestations of dualistic ontology. Plato’s distinction on the precedence of the non-material abstract Forms and Ideas, which possess the highest and the most fundamental kind of reality over material world of senses which is subject to change has great implications for the mind-body problem; because the intellect, as capable of knowing the Forms and Ideas according to Plato, also is an immaterial entity. Aristotle also shared the same idea on the intellect’s immateriality, but he tried to revise Plato’s theory and

¹ Plato, Phaedo

points that they are not separate from their concrete, particular counterparts. The Form/Idea of something is the very nature or *essence* of that thing, therefore they're inseparable.² The rise of Christianity, with its own fundamental problem of deciding the ontological status of the Christ, caused the discussions about the dichotomy change its direction to the problematization of resurrection and unification of body and soul on a sacred-profane opposition. Descartes actually followed this Christian tradition, as he claimed to write the *Meditations* to defend the Christian faith and developed his *order of being*³ upon the idea of proving the existence of a benevolent God. As an ontological project, he make a line of argument with the God on top, soul –of the *self*- the second and as the representative of the material world, the body the last. (His *order of reasoning* however, begin with one's own existence established by means of the *cogito*, and proceed from there to the existence of God and material world, whose knowledge depends of the knowledge of oneself.⁴)

For Descartes, just like St. Augustine; body and soul –or mind or self-, as parts of the “I” are both substances as solid and self-existent. Considering the “mind” only as a cognitive faculty of the “I”, which has the *systematic doubt* over its own *true beliefs* and even the existence of God –ultimately the causative, benevolent creator of all the substances, according to Descartes- marks the turning point of modernity in the Western thought. Thus the problematization of the modern “self”, with all its attributions to an independent, permanently existent “I”, together with the Puritan approach of personal identity has begun.

² Aristotle, *Metaphysics*

³ René Descartes, *Meditations*, pp.1-62

⁴ Garber, 2001, p.55

This independent and self-existent “I” as a part of the philosophical debate not only caught the attention of the Western schools of thought but Eastern philosophical approaches as well. Despite a rather arbitrary, colonial and Eurocentric tendency of considering “philosophy”-*the love for wisdom* in its pure form- a skill only attributed to the “great” Western civilisation by ignoring other traditions –mostly Eastern- , rising of multiculturalism, transdisciplinary studies as well as globalisation around the mids of the last century challenged to shift this artificial reductionism.

This point of view alone might be taken as a clear and strong sign of the problematization of “self” in the West, since from a broader perspective what we call “West” as a cultural object –based on the same dualistic discourse- try to undertake the position of a distinct entity *fond of wisdom*. When we look at the history however, with the rise of monotheism and the destruction of the Ancien Greek tradition, we can very well say what’s called *philosophos* once just turned into *philotheos* and *egophilia* in later periods. We can see those imprints on Descartes as well, even though he was considered one of the pioneers of scientific thinking and mechanistic world view replacing the Aristotelian view of Nature.

“Eastern” philosophy and practice; on the other hand, when introduced to the “West” for the first time, was considered theological based on the monotheistic framework in which the Western thinking has emerged, although an important amount of these views doesn’t even have a notion of *theos* in the Western sense. Eastern tradition, the philosophy of the mind of Buddhist and Hindu systems in particular, produced a vast lineage of thinkers–therefore- theories, logic and most importantly method and practices which

shows a consistency over the time despite the Ancient Greek akins' had died out and took another form in the Judeo-Christian world.

Just like dealing with any other duality, the undesirable outcome of comparing and contrasting by taking one superior over the other is not the aim of this study, and to be avoided. Perhaps reaching a complementary –but neither a complete nor a completing one- level of interaction to transcend this sort of dualistic thinking, without merely substituting dualism with monism or pluralism, is taken as a main and useful perspective in this dissertation.

Hindu philosophy, in its vast diversity also have dualistic schools⁵ but their dualistic views are different from the Western forms of dualism. The distinction some of the Hindu intellectual schools have made was a self-matter (*purusha*, as self or consciousness and *prakriti*, nature or matter) distinction rather than mind-body. Therefore before continuing to the discursive aspects of the self and its Buddhist counter-analysis, Samkhya school of Hindu philosophy will be also very briefly mentioned here because some traces of Samkhya views can be found within the Buddhist concepts of the self.⁶ The Samkhya school, which influenced the later Yogic and Vedanta system is considered with the other two as a part of the six orthodox (*āstika*)⁷ schools (*darshanas*) of the Hindu

⁵ Such as Vedanta philosophy's Dvaita (dualistic) and Advaita (non-dualistic) views. The first proposes dualism in consciousness and matter, while the latter insists that the experiential personal realization of unity of everything must be achieved. Advaita still uses Samkhya –will be discussed below- view of dualism for describing the world. Dvaita view however rejects such notion of complementary equation as they are two different entities.

⁶ Although which one predates the other is a peculiar subject. (Keith, 2009)

⁷ *Āstika* and *nāstika* are technical terms to define “orthodox” and “heterodox” persons and schools in Hindu philosophy. It can be roughly said that the distinction is based on whether or not they accept the authority of the Vedas. There are six systems considered as *āstika*; Nyaya, Vaisheka, Samkhya, Yoga, Purva Mimamsa and Vedanta and three systems as *nāstika*; Jainism, Buddhism and Cārvāka. The distinction is not based on a theistic level,

intellectual traditions. Samkhya is a strongly dualistic philosophical view which denies the existence of God and recognizes *purusha* (self) and *prakriti* (matter) as two ultimate entities. Although they discuss *prakriti* as originated from *purusha*, phenomena presented by the two greatly differs. *Prakriti* (nature/matter) alone is responsible for the faculties of memory, perception and “I” ness (*Ahamkara*). They arise when *prakriti* is the presence of *purusha* which cause the mis-identification between the two. This confusion is seen as the main cause of the ignorance which binds us to bondage and suffering⁸. Liberation is possible by becoming aware of these on a deep level –by maintaining this reflective faculty distinct from *purusha*- until the entanglement caused by ignorance dissolves.

The concept of *purusha* is sometimes used interchangeable with the concept *Atman*. The major difference is that *purusha* refers to the self⁹, the conscious mind whereas *Atman* represents a higher consciousness, an *essential* self - reminiscent of a soul- of the person. The main philosophical difference between Hinduism and Buddhism is that this concept of *Atman* was rejected by the Buddha Śākyamuni (as *Anātman* or *Anattā*, non-self) because it provides the psychological basis for attachment and aversion which creates suffering. Buddha Śākyamuni has denied the existence of a cosmic self and criticise theories of abstract principles, unitary soul or identity immanent in all things as unskillful¹⁰, while stating that holding the view “I have no self” is also mistaken¹¹. As Alan B. Wallace states:

for example Samkhya school denies the idea of a supreme God, although considered as orthodox. Cārvāka view, on the other hand, is a materialistic, atheistic and naturalistic school of thought that resemble the Epicureans of Greece

⁸ Samsāra

⁹ and also can be multiple

¹⁰ See Bibliography: “Maha-nidana Sutta: The Great Causes Discourse”

¹¹ The Samyutta Nikaya (Samyutta Nikāya SN, "Connected Discourses" or "Kindred Sayings") In Samyutta Nikaya (SN) 4.400, Buddha was asked if there “was no soul (natthatta)”, which it is conventionally considered to be equivalent to Nihilism (ucchedavada). The Buddha himself has said: “Both formerly and now, I’ve never been a nihilist (vinayika), never been one who teaches the annihilation of a being, rather taught

“Two ideas are psychologically deep-rooted in man: self-protection and self-preservation. For self-protection man has created God, on whom he depends for his own protection, safety, and security, just as a child depends on its parent. For self-preservation man has conceived the idea of an immortal Soul or Atman, which will live eternally. In his ignorance, fear, weakness, and desire, man needs these two things to console himself. Hence he clings to them deeply and fanatically. The Buddha's teaching does not support this ignorance, fear, weakness, and desire, but aims at making man enlightened by removing them and destroying them, striking at their very root. According to Buddhism, our ideas of God and Soul are false and empty. Though highly developed as theories, they are all the same extremely subtle mental projections, garbed in an intricate metaphysical and philosophical phraseology. These ideas are so deep-rooted in man, and so near and dear to him, that he does not wish to hear, nor does he want to understand, any teaching against them. The Buddha knew this quite well. In fact, he said that his teaching was 'against the current,' against man's selfish desires.” (Wallace, 2007, p.152)

only the source of suffering, and its ending.” The early Suttas see annihilationism, which the Buddha equated with denial of a Self, as tied up with belief in a Self. It is seen as arising due to conceiving a Self in some sort of relationship to the personality-factors. It is thus rooted in the 'I am' attitude; even the attitude 'I do not exist' arises from a preoccupation with 'I'. This can be an example of the middle way –Madhyamika-philosophy along with the two extreme views of nihilism and absolutism, which is discussed in the following pages under the paragraph “Right Understanding”. Buddha rejected the materialism as an opposite to nihilism also on both logical and epistemic grounds. He proposed a *middle way* between these extremes, relying not on ontology but on causality.

So far we have seen how the mind-body dichotomy has been established in the West, and how other traditions in the East treated the debate differently. Perhaps we can give a closer look to two main practices concerning the “self” in the Ancient Greek philosophy of the West, and how the split of these practices led up to the constitution of the modern Western subjectivity.

SHAPING THE DISCOURSE: ‘CARE OF THE SELF’ OR ‘KNOWING THE SELF’?

“The Hermeneutics of the Subject”, the third volume in the collection of Foucault's lectures at the Collège de France, is about exploring the concept of the “self” and its development from antiquity to the modern period. In the last two chapters, Foucault argues the different aspects of the Ancient Greek philosophical concepts of the 'knowing the self' -*gnōthi seauton*- and the 'care of the self' -*epimeleia heautou*- of Plato and the Stoics through the genealogy of objectivity and subjectivity in the Western school of thoughts.

In the practice of the ‘care of the self’, knowledge is contemplated as an ongoing process, not some sort of an object we need to obtain or grasp. This knowledge, along with the proper ethical conduct to experience it, is provided by the *tekhnē* - a know how (savoir)- (Foucault, 2001, p.35,51) -an art, a reflected system of practices referring to general principles, notions, and concepts (Foucault, 2001, p.249)- The central question of 'the good life' -life that one would like to live, or for happiness (*eudaimonia*)- in Ancient Greek thought is related with the ‘care of the self’ through the act of knowing and having the proper ethical conduct which requires virtue (*arête*). The process itself is the wisdom.

According to Foucault, in the practice of the 'knowing the self', the knowledge we have about ourselves operates upon the assumption that the 'self' is a separate entity from the knowing process that is experienced. This idea of an independent, self-existent self can be exposed through appropriate methods, and he uses the concept of the 'test' to explain it. Foucault's first interpretation here is actually similar to what we use in psychology and other positive sciences today: Testing the world which surrounds us and infiltrating its secrets in return. When we apply this test to the 'self', it give us even more information. We can use Foucault's second interpretation to apply a more positive new explanation to that 'test' exercise: Through a series of assays the person can experience the new dimensions of her/his self and look closer for what else might be there. In other words the person can strike roots in this new soil through this exercises and become familiar with the deficient, hidden parts.

Foucault explains how (Foucault,2001,p.486-487) life *-bios-* became a correlate to *tekhnē*, (i.e. the outcome of the process of living as a whole or any of its parts is the knowledge altogether.) In other words, how the life *-bios-* becomes an object of the ongoing testing process, and through this we obtain knowledge about ourselves –or the psyche-. If we use the Western 'objectivity' by making an example of a person who is doing any means to cultivate knowledge and therefore creating a life-style; foreseeing her/himself as an active part of it and then -in this very life that has been created- acting both as the tester and the tested. -if we think by taking *tekhnē* as the very experience- As in the position of being tested, we can claim that this person sees her/himself as the test in which its object is the knowledge on its own.

This situation is analogous to a mariner who is trying to understand why the boat is not sailing by tying the boat to the pier. Like the genie in the bottle, being boxed within the object without realizing that this object is indeed his design. In conclusion the whole situation appears something like autism we use to term in psychology: Being absolutely stuck in a secluded, inner reality that even if there's a way out, using the minds' innate faculty of knowing would be still not possible. (The word '*idiot*' is derived from the old Greek '*idios*' meaning 'one's own, private', therefore using the word here would be perhaps appropriate.)

According to Foucault this kind of subjectivity that was constructed in the West as a reaction to the Western objectivity; although implicates dialectic connotations, is constructed in actuality once we extend out of our 'selves' -with small 's' in that sense- by practising the 'care for the self' when we use its approach to grasp the essence of knowing with the purpose of connecting 'the other'. But the opposition this type of subjectivity insinuates quickly turns into an objectification of the knowledge through the path *-bios-* and experience in which the knowledge is obtained, therefore the ability of knowing will be restrained only upon its own and the possibility of reaching out the 'other' and transforming itself through experiencing –and producing- knowledge would be very limited. The opposition we argue here therefore fails to become an attempt to replace and deprive the absolute –that is universal- but result in creating absolutes. The Western objectivity's way-out is perhaps to experience a detachment –than involvement of the knower to with respect to the known- (Franke, 1998)- from the self.

According to Foucault, there are three major forms; memory, meditation, and method;

“which is in the West have successively dominated the practice and exercise of philosophy, or, if you like, the practice of life as philosophy.” (Foucault, 2001, p.460-461)

Moving from memory to meditation in the Western philosophical practice we see that the West “has always privileged *gnōthi seauton*, self-knowledge” (Foucault, 2001, p. 460-461) and excluded the permanent relation between ‘knowledge of the self’ and the ‘care of the self’ in ancient thought. As Foucault points out:

“Now it seems to me that by only considering *gnōthi seauton* in and for itself alone we are in danger of establishing a false continuity and of installing a factitious history that would display a sort of continuous development of knowledge of the self.” (Ibid.)

If we define meditation as an exercise of reflection upon thinking, -the root word *meletē/meditatio* here refers to the ‘inner preparation’- then both the Platonic way of asking on who we are in reality (knowing the self, *gnōthi seauton*) and the information we know about our own –self-knowledge- are important aspects of our subjective memory. The reflexivity of the self and its knowledge are brought together as memory. But *meletē* is not just a memoir. In order to understand what ‘*meletē*’ have meant we can look at another tradition; the Buddhist perspective, which holds meditation as the most effective tool among its practices. According to Buddhist practice of mind, assuming meditation as a method of discovering the ‘inner’ truth and thus revealing a true ‘self’ as an intact and absolute core is one of the most fundamental errors a practitioner could make. (We see the same assumption in Platonic understanding; one’s inner perception recalls the truth but it is

because the very act of perceiving objectifies the truth.) However, what happens by meditation is not removing the hindrances to uncover the truth but developing an exercise of mind upon its own and thereby experiencing an absence of self –‘from it’s own side’- and detaching all the habits and dependent factors it carries. In Stoic meditation, by using the analysis of the ‘care of the self’ -*epimeleia heautou*-, the very process of the meditating mind -in which its’ alert and introspective faculty uses all the other faculties *mindfully*- implies the truth. (Like Foucault discusses, by asking “What is Zeus?” Epictetus means an entity exist only for itself, a being which always be with his own.)

When we think of how we adopt a position about our relationship with the external world, we have to look carefully on how to perpetuate our self-identity in relation with others. The exercises of thought processing by taking its elements as objects of *meletē* in Stoic meditation help us to notice the positions we take towards different situations; what effects us, how we can find solutions towards them and how we can eliminate them. (This can be done only by being aware of the mental processes, not as trying to reveal a core and absolute truth as we see in Platonic thinking) Through this process the mind moves towards impartiality from its faculties which cause the subjectifications to create a “self-identity”. This impartiality –or detachment- however, does not define a process like a person changing her/his mind’s inner qualities over a lifetime to reach an upper level of existence. The activity mentioned here only counts in its own continuity, -as an expansion of the present- i.e. we cannot define what it is by referring past or memory. The “self” experiencing its own voidness –as we see in the sentence- seems like a paradox at first sight¹², a voidness everything –and none- apprehended. As it is, the experience therein cannot be expressed in symbolic ways or cannot bring a transformation by setting it as a

¹² The usage of the language and the symbolic will be discussed in the following pages more in detail.

memory of the past. When the faculties of mind or the attachment we have towards things can be defined as the minds' objects of existence and the co-dependency we have towards them are neutralized with a continuous practice, the mind would reach a complete, tranquil wisdom; and the person experiences a total detachment. This experience, as all the characteristics or deeds of every object and subject to define constantly cease, is called as *Śunyata* –emptiness or voidness- in Buddhist philosophy.

According to Buddhist philosophy of the mind, meditation is thinking deeply upon the eighteen areas of perception: Those are the six sense organs –eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind-, six sense objects –forms, noises, odours, flavors, tangible objects and objects of the mind-, and six consciousnesses –eye consciousness, ear consciousness, nose consciousness, taste consciousness, body consciousness and consciousness of mind-. The collections of the physical or mental aggregates; (or five *skandhas*) the body, emotions, senses, mental conditions and consciousness have no characteristic of a separate, inherently existent “I” –self-, yet three incorrect views concerning the “self” still arise from them. First view claim that the body or the physical existence is “I”, and according to this view the remaining four is the “self”. Second view claim in none of these we can find an inherent “I”, therefore the “I” must be independently existent from those yet all the aggregates are attributes of the “I”. The third view affirm that the sum of the five aggregates are indeed inherently existent in the “I”. By meditating on *Śunyata* or the emptiness of this inherently existent “I”, we can look upon the *skandhas* to experience that there are not the “I”, nor belong to “I” and also not inherent in “I”. This awareness does not belong to past nor future but only abides in the present¹³ -where life or *bios* is-, thoughts about recalling past or awaiting future is an exercise in futility in that sense, taking us away

¹³ (Thich Nhat Hanh, 1991, p.333)

from the truth abiding on present experience. In this regard, the memory which frames the past and projections which the future is apprehended are outside the context of the ‘care of the self’ -*epimeleia heautou*-. Foucault discuss the antinomy between past and future too in a similar manner, and explain its effect upon the practice of the self:

“The future preoccupies. We are *praeoccupatus* by the future. The expression is interesting. We are, as it were, occupied in advance. The mind is pre-absorbed by the future, and this is something negative. The fact that the future preoccupies you, that it absorbs you in advance and consequently does not leave you free, is linked, I think, to three things, to three fundamental themes in Greek thought and more especially in the practice of the self.” [the three themes as memory, meditation and method] (Foucault, 2001, p.464-465)

“ Thinking about the future cannot be a memory at the same time. Memory cannot be thinking about the future at the same time. When it became possible for us to think that reflection on memory coincides with an attitude towards the future was no doubt one of the great mutations of Western thought... Now the whole art of oneself, the whole art of the care of the self is constructed against these two things.” (Ibid.)

The Stoic exercise of *praemeditatio malorum* (premeditation of misfortunes and evils), –in context of the care of the self- is aimed to prevent the person being pacified by the events as the time goes by and reversing one from turning away from the truth. Here it can be understood that the “self” is taken as inherently existent, but if we see misfortunes and evils as facts for a moment rather than possibilities, as if they might happen now or in

any time and anywhere; we can prevent projections about future and also apply the premeditation systematically to nullify them and abiding at the present moment by increasing the awareness to continue of testing the truth. The ultimate purpose of this premeditation is meditating upon dying – *meletē thanatou*-. The possibility of a trained consciousness which looks upon the “self” at the moment of death also makes it possible to expand this awareness to every moment of daily life.¹⁴ The realization of the three wrong views -attributed to the “self” in Buddhist philosophy- at the moment of death is an effective antidote as a unique experience. Therefore, as a practice of the ‘care of the self’ - *epimeleia heautou*- premeditation can be used to reach this terminal stage to realize the truth by making the process much faster and effective. The practitioner can see her/himself in two ways: First, by seeing each moment as the last the person immobilize the present to see it in the reality of its value and her/his mind gains freedom over indifference (like Foucault referring to Marcus Aurelius) (Foucault, 2001, p.479) and the second, at this terminal stage by retrospection gains wisdom over the value of the entire process- life or *bios*- . In this regard, meditation upon dying is not thinking about future, but:

“It is only a means for taking this cross-section view of life which enables one to grasp the value of the present, or again to carry out the great loop of memorization, by which one totalizes one’s life and reveals it as it is. Judgement on the present and evaluation of the past are carried out in this thought of death, which precisely

¹⁴ Buddhist Vajrayāna meditational practices emphasize great importance to the process of dying and the practice of Phowa –*samkrānti* in Sanskrit-, meaning ‘the practice of conscious dying’, ‘transference of consciousness at the time of death’, ‘mindstream transference’. “Phowa is a unique meditation and liturgy on which you train, over and over again, while you are alive. Then, when you or someone else is dying, you use the phowa meditation to transfer or merge your consciousness or that of the dying person into the enlightened mind of the Buddha of Infinite Light.” (Tulku Thondup, 2005, p.299) Bardo Thodol, or famously known as ‘Tibetan Book of the Dead’ which means ‘Liberation Through Hearing During the Intermediate State’ –*bardo*- also has to be also studied accordingly.

must not be a thought of the future but rather a thought of myself in the process of dying. This is what I wanted to say quickly about the *meletē thanatou*, which is fairly well known.” (Foucault, 2001, p.480)

Foucault explains that the ‘care of the self’ is actually a set of exercises taking the events at the present and making them appear in the reality of their value –stripped from any artificial and projected reality-, in the inevitability of their impermanence. The exercise of the ‘care of the self’ is testing ourselves in *bios* -correlated with *tekhnē* and different than *zoē*-, transforming the thinking process into knowing by experience.

To sum up, Foucault argues that the “modern self” in Western philosophy since Descartes has been considered to follow an ethical conduct to attain the truth without transforming itself during the process whereas in antiquity that was the way. In modernity the truth becomes the rationale of *tekhnē* whereas in antiquity we can realize the truth through *tekhnē*. This concludes the process in Western philosophy that the transformation shaped by experience is separated from a merely thinking process of knowing, i.e. ceasing *bios* into an object of *tekhnē* and a correlate of a test; an experience and a exercise to become instead the form of a test of the ‘self’. This is also where the Western subjectivity is constituted. (Foucault, 2001, p.486) The last lines of the The Hermeneutics of the Subject throws this problem into sharp relief:

“The root of the challenge of Western thought to philosophy as discourses and tradition. The challenge is this: How can what is given as the object of knowledge (*savoir*) connected to the mastery of *tekhnē*, at the same time be the site where the truth of the subject we are appears, or is experienced and fulfilled with

difficulty? How can the world, which is given as the object of knowledge (connaissance) on the basis of the mastery of *tekhnē*, at the same time be the site where the 'self' as ethical subject of truth appears and is experienced? If this reality is the problem of Western philosophy- how can the world be the object of knowledge (connaissance) and at the same time the place of the subject's test; how can there be a subject of knowledge (connaissance) which takes the world as object through a *tekhnē*, and a subject of self experience which takes the same world, but in the radically different form of the place of its test?" (Foucault, 2001, p.487)

Again from Foucault's point of view, if in the Western thought the purpose of the Enlightenment is to ask where our objective knowledge relies, then the question of how the "self" should be experienced is also necessary. From this point of view, this might neither create a doctrine nor a philosophical argument but merely give us a tool to realize truth. Śākyamuni Buddha is referred to say that his advices are not to be taken as a doctrine or philosophical argument, because what he has been saying is coming directly from experience, not from a discursive or mental assumptions.¹⁵ They can be experienced by anyone because nothing comes from an independent and essential source but an interdependent stream of connectedness which is available to anyone. "Things" does not need a creator, beginning or end, it is all interdependently co-arisen from each other. Nothing is solely and permanently independent on its own, because they are a sum of perception, conceptualization and formalisation in their own value. From this perspective, aspects of existence and non-existence also come from assumptions about permanence, -

¹⁵ check Bibliography for "Kālāma Sūtra- The Buddha's Charter of Free Inquiry" and the quote "As the wise test gold by burning, cutting and rubbing it, So, bhikshus, should you accept my words -- after testing them, and not merely out of respect." Dr. Alexander Berzin (Berzin, 2000) attributes this verse to "The Sutra on (Pure Realms) Spread Out in a Dense Array."

i.e. mental constructions and approximations- and without falling into nihilism we can move from this distinction to the way of seeing “emptiness” as the realization of the relative and dependent nature of the “self”. This awareness is called *prajnaparamita* – perfection of wisdom- in Buddhist philosophy. Instead of giving descriptions upon the nature of the universe, Buddha Śākyamuni introduces a set of practices -so anyone can connect to- while emphasizing the importance of direct experience and the limited nature of the words and the *symbolic* (in Lacan’s terms). Meditation is used here like a *tekhne* rather than an attempt to explain the truth. (as it is explained in Dikhanakha Sutta)¹⁶ Then we can say, if the Western philosophy haven’t separated its discourse from the ‘care of the self’ -*epimeleia heautou*- to the 'knowing the self' -*gnōthi seauton*-, the challenge Foucault have been discussing might have been perhaps solved. Western subjectivity’s success over Western objectivity as Foucault analyses might rely on the fact of transforming the way of looking at the “self” with this type of practice.

Contemporary Western philosophy and the post-Heisenbergian science are holding up this discussion by relying on the Eastern thought anyway since both the cosmogony and the cosmology in the West are not enough to expand the paradigm they had brought so far. Ken Wilber, while discussing the popular interpretation of mysticism and modern physics link -via presenting actual writings of Heisenberg and his contemporaries such as Schroedinger, de Broglie, Jeans, Planck, Pauli, Eddington, and Einstein¹⁷- in his book

¹⁶ (Thich Nhat Hanh, 1991, p.213)

¹⁷ About the conclusion of the book and it’s relation to our argument, the review on the “intergral world” website might give an idea (Reynolds) “The book shows that “modern physics neither proves nor disproves, neither supports nor refutes, a mystical-spiritual worldview.” This is because physics itself is based upon mathematics, which itself is nothing but a system of "shadow-symbols" (in the words of the physicists themselves); therefore these world-famous scientists understood it's absolutely necessary to use real mysticism to contact reality directly. The selections from *Quantum Questions* highlights this unknown fact: all these great physicists turned to

“Quantum Questions”, also reminds us the important distinction between the *method* and the *domain* of science. The former as we know refer the ways in which we manage to gather knowledge (epistemologically), and the latter refers “to the types of events or phenomena that become, or can become, objects of investigation by whatever it is we mean”(ontologically) (Wilber, 2001, p.10)

Now, when we read Wilber’s interpretation of *method*, we can unequivocally see how Foucault’s remarkable statement on *bios* being ceased as a correlate of a test -instead the form of a test of the ‘self’- is also immanent in scientific approach, where again we see the Western subjectivity in charge.

“a method of gaining knowledge whereby *hypotheses* are *tested* (instrumentally or experimentally) by reference to *experience* (“data”) that is potentially *public*, or open to *repetition* (confirmation or refutation) by peers.”
(Wilber, 2001, p.11)

Wilber then truthfully asks:

“To what *domain(s)* then, is the scientific method applicable?... In other words, which *ontology* shall we accept?”

With keeping Wilber’s question on choosing an ontology, we can start to discuss the various definitions of the “self” in psychology, as it is constructed in a way to help us to answer that question of the above.

mysticism for true knowledge of the world and thus became modern mystics in the process.”

II. SELF IN PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

“We wish to make the *ego* the matter of our enquiry, our very own *ego*. But is that possible? After all, the *ego* is in its very essence a subject; how can it be made into an object? Well, there is no doubt that it can be. The *ego* can take itself as an object, can treat itself like other objects, can observe itself, criticize itself, and do Heaven knows what with itself. In this, one part of the *ego* is setting itself over against the rest. So the *ego* can be split; it splits itself during a number of its functions - temporarily at least. Its parts can come together again afterwards. (S. Freud, New Introductory Lectures in Complete Works, Ivan Smith 2000. p.4667)

Self, as we have seen in the previous chapter, is a complex term to define a variety of attributes related to the “I”. A great amount of theories from different perspectives of natural and social sciences attempted to explain the ‘self’ and other closely related notions such as the individual, personality, subject, *ego*, identity, consciousness, mind, psyche, nous, spirit etc. They may be at times confusing and their definitions are mostly used interchangeably by another.

Majority of the ideas which will be presented here in this chapter are coming from the psychological perspective however, for the notion of the ‘self’ is a key construct of its very foundation.

It is broadly defined as the ‘essential qualities that make a person distinct from all others’, ‘The union of elements –as body, emotions, thoughts and sensations- that constitute the individuality and identity of a person.’

From a more social perspective, the “self” refers to “an individual person from the perspective of that person”, just like in Carl Rogers’ theory in psychology, which the self is seen as ‘all the information and beliefs you have as an individual regarding your own nature, unique qualities, and typical behaviors.’

Ken Wilber makes a definition by taking the early psychological model,-the current views differ rather greatly- the division of the self into “I” and “Me”, as “the subjective knower” and “the object that is known” and defines the first (Wilber, 2000, p.33) as the “proximate self” and the second “distal self”. The both of them together, he calls it the “overall self”, because “the ‘I’ of one stage becomes a ‘me’ at the next”. By that distinction we can see the “I” is both a *constant function* and a *developmental stream*.

From the phenomenological point of view, ‘self’ can exist in comparison with *other*. By using objectification and perceived reality of the physical world; we define our ‘limits’, the boundaries which separates us from what is seen ‘out there’, therefore making a distinction of existence as ‘I’ and ‘other’.

Freud’s definition of the “I” –“das ich” in German and “ego” in Latin- is as such:

“We have formed the idea that in each individual there is a coherent organization of mental processes; and we call this his ego. It is to this ego that consciousness is attached; the ego controls the approaches to motility - that is, to the discharge of excitations into the external world; it is the mental agency which supervises all its own constituent processes, and which goes to sleep at night, though even then it exercises the censorship on dreams. From this ego proceed the repressions, too, by means of which it is sought to exclude certain trends in the mind not merely from consciousness but also from other forms of effectiveness and activity.” (S. Freud, *The Ego And The Id in Complete Works*. Ivan Smith 2000. p. 3951)

The massive amount of stimuli is processed by this structure and thus labeled as concepts, and our responses to those occurs as thoughts, emotions and sensations. As we already separated ourselves from the outer reality, those characteristics can be defined as “inner” stimulants as well, because our reactions to those processes are neverending, since the self/mind as a whole is the supervisor of the infrastructure.

“It [ego] is entrusted with important functions. By virtue of its relation to the perceptual system it gives mental processes an order in time and submits them to ‘reality-testing’.” (S. Freud, *The Ego And The Id in Complete Works*. Ivan Smith 2000. p. 3989)

Freud argues the mediator function of the “I” between id and superego here, but also he gives a hint about another aspect which continuously collects, saves and emerges; the memory; the important building stone of the self, covering both conscious and the unconscious.

More recent studies of the psychoanalytical theory of the self also helps us to make new perspectives about the memory-self relationship. According to Falkenstrom's (cited in Epstein, 2007, p.212) review of the different aspects of the self that emerges in the analytic literature are such: Self as experience, self as representation and self as a system. The first one is our subjective experience through time, the second our repertoire of self-images and representations, and the last one is our structure of self with an hierarchy of self representations.

Self can be also defined as an umbrella term to refer the collection of all the experiences we had so far; shaped by and within the intellect, emotion and sensation, therefore imprinting the created outcome as the memory. Whenever we use that storage – constantly-we call back the necessary patterns which appears *similar/familiar* to our present situation, -the similarity is also decided the same way - then we apply and go to the next. Certain behaviors, which were useful in a previous case, becomes a pattern when we start to apply it often as they turn into habits, therefore transforming the process into an automatic one, regardless of the present situation.

As we see, we form the memory by shaping a subjective description of time and we abandon this timeline once we collect a possible amount of memory-backed up responses to cope with the present. The behavioral/emotional/mental pattern we choose may work fine with the situations we face and we try hard to make it so, because we make projections to control and shape. If we remember the most fundamental aspect of the self in total is to avoid suffering and has a tendency to pursue pleasure to feel satisfaction, a big amount of its structure has been developed to catch the threats, dangerous situations, negativities

around us to protect itself first, for survival; just like every sentient being. But things get complicated rather quickly after that because by perceiving our reality we use the same memory faculty and by detecting and projecting/using the same “protective” responses again and again, one usually ends up in exhaustion. Freud’s famous “defense mechanisms” come into help that way. The pursuit of satisfaction –by the “*id*”-is also ceased since the whole attention focuses on prevention. The problem is not on these mechanisms in particular, since they’re just the symptoms and can be also used in constructive ways but the cause of them, the “*I*”; thus the memory as its main agent, which is filled with past events plus past events patched to possible scenarios which gives no space to other perspectives/*alternatives*, because those cannot be preset by the functions of the memory. More we use this perspective more we get inhibited by it. As Freud clearly states:

“Towards the outside it is shielded against stimuli, and the amounts of excitation impinging on it have only a reduced effect. Towards the inside there can be no such shield; the excitations in the deeper layers extend into the system directly and in undiminished amount, in so far as certain of their characteristics give rise to feelings in the pleasure-unpleasure series. The excitations coming from within are, however, in their intensity and in other, qualitative, respects - in their amplitude, perhaps - more commensurate with the system’s method of working than the stimuli which stream in from the external world. This state of things produces two definite results. First, the feelings of pleasure and unpleasure (which are an index to what is happening in the interior of the apparatus) predominate over all external stimuli. And secondly, a particular way is adopted of dealing with any internal excitations which produce too great an increase of unpleasure: there is a tendency to treat them as though they were acting, not from the inside, but from the outside,

so that it may be possible to bring the shield against stimuli into operation as a means of defence against them. This is the origin of projection, which is destined to play such a large part in the causation of pathological processes.” (S. Freud, Beyond The Pleasure Principle in Complete Works. Ivan Smith 2000. p.3732)

So instead of following what is going on at the moment, we just project what we *think* is happening to the events to *familiarize* them, this unconscious redirection of memory of one event on another flows within one’s mental continuum constantly . Perhaps at this point we can also introduce the effect of *transference*:

[by bringing repressed material out to the conscious] “He is obliged to repeat the repressed material as a contemporary experience instead of, as the physician would prefer to see, remembering it as something belonging to the past.” (S. Freud, Beyond The Pleasure Principle in Complete Works. Ivan Smith 2000. p.3723)

Thus the neurotic cause become a base of transference. In therapy, when captured correctly, transference and projection can be the most effective tools for the therapist because they can be used for mirroring and re-processing the past, therefore creating a gap on the structure of the self to re-organize.

“...we shall find courage to assume that there really does exist in the mind a compulsion to repeat which overrides the pleasure principle.

...The phenomena of transference are obviously exploited by the resistance which the ego maintains in its pertinacious insistence upon repression; the

compulsion to repeat, which the treatment tries to bring into its service is, as it were, drawn over by the ego to its side (clinging as the ego does to the pleasure principle).”(S. Freud, *Beyond The Pleasure Principle in Complete Works*. Ivan Smith 2000. p.3726-7)

The destructive impulse of the repetition compulsion, which may cause the effect of pleasure principle move backward and postpone its goal, seems to use its conceptual opposite as a back up force after all, but how it turns that way may be even more interesting: The possible cause of repetition is thought to be coming from a sort of wish to gain control over the undesired situations so the *ego* can be satisfied with it's capacity and heal its wound. At this point, the very action of repetition looks like it is empowering the *ego's* ultimate satisfaction, an imaginary sense of mastery or the omnipotence; because it directs the action –and so, the reaction- which is already foreseen/experienced by the *ego*. Since the satisfaction is always short lived, the repetition makes sense even more. Freud says:

“Originally, the ego includes everything... later it separates off an external world from itself. Our present ego-feeling is, therefore, only a shrunken residue of a much more inclusive –indeed, an all-embracing- feeling which corresponded to a more intimate bond between the *ego* and the world around it.” (cited in Epstein, 2007, p.167)

Freud asserts that by its very nature, *ego* has an almost omniscient side, and this implant has to be repeated over and over to prove to itself, that it is omniscient on *its own side*.

[The children repeat the unpleasurable experiences, because] “Each fresh repetition seems to strengthen the mastery they are in search of. Nor can children have their pleasurable experiences repeated often enough, and they are inexorable in their insistence that the repetition shall be an identical one. This character trait disappears later on.

...None of this contradicts the pleasure principle; repetition, the re-experiencing of something identical, is clearly in itself a source of pleasure. In the case of a person in analysis, on the contrary, the compulsion to repeat the events of his childhood in the transference evidently disregards the pleasure principle in every way.” (S. Freud *Beyond The Pleasure Principle in Complete Works*. Ivan Smith 2000. p.3738)

When we are growing, the sense of “I” also evolves within us and repetition works as a tool of diffusion to establish its solidity and control over the psyche. Freud claims that repetition should disappear over the time –such as when we enter adulthood-. It sure disappears, but only to work more effectively as a well practised and established self-sufficiency mechanism of the unconscious, since as adults we cannot create the replicas of events –let’s say all the time- with external tools –such as toys and games- but go with the other way around, imposing our conditioning to events so we can perceive them occurring-alike. This may give *ego* the temporary satisfaction it craves, but craving itself always remains. Since there’s a *lack* (in Lacanian terms) within the system- the whole system is built actually upon it- , the seek of pleasure always continues without destination.

According to Freud, there are two ways that the past may effect the present: through memories and through actions, -which is actually charged by those memories- and the latter is thought to be the reason for repetition compulsion. We can deal with the daily life either by choosing to *familiarize* experiences consistently to deal with the past events, or we choose –consciously or unconsciously- to behave in a way to simulate the earlier traumatic trigger. As we already mentioned, psychoanalytic theory claims that repetition compulsion is an attempt at mastery of the psyche over the experience so it can have the control over the outcome but the possible result of this action, that we expect to be something positive and not traumatic, fails to be so because what’s looking new is only an effort to return to past, a secure zone no matter how painful, at least still *known*.

“Let us suppose, then, that all the organic instincts are conservative, are acquired historically and tend towards the restoration of an earlier state of things. It follows that the phenomena of organic development must be attributed to external disturbing and diverting influences.

...Every modification which is thus imposed upon the course of the organism’s life is accepted by the conservative organic instincts and stored up for further repetition. Those instincts are therefore bound to give a deceptive appearance of being forces tending towards change and progress, whilst in fact they are merely seeking to reach an ancient goal by paths alike old and new.” (S. Freud, Beyond The Pleasure Principle in Complete Works. Ivan Smith 2000. p.3740)

When we see the pleasure principle can be omitted, we come to a certain point to explain the *ego*'s opposite self-destructive drive, which Freud named it as the “the death drive” and established his famous “dual instinct” theory.

First we apply ‘pleasure principle’ to explain the *id*'s seek of pleasure and avoidance of pain but it is regulated by the *ego*'s ‘reality’ apprehension so the pleasure can be deferred.

“An ego thus educated has become *reasonable*; it no longer lets itself be governed by the pleasure principle, but obeys the reality principle, which also at bottom seeks to obtain pleasure, but pleasure which is assured through taking account of reality, even though it is pleasure postponed and diminished”. S. Freud, Introductory Lectures On Psycho-Analysis in Complete Works. Ivan Smith 2000)

The reality, and the way we experience it, is filtered by the *ego* with three possible ingredients: sense perceptions, thoughts or mental images, and emotions –with the help of memory. The present moment we perceive is confused with this content, so we can say the *ego* has a dysfunctional relationship with time, and this subjective time is partly what *ego* lives on.

The *ego* cannot distinguish between a situation and its interpretation of and reaction to that situation. It is also due to the fact of the construction of the language.

LANGUAGE AND THE SYMBOLIC

When we learn a particular sequence of sounds are a “name”, we equate that word; which turns into a thought in the mind, with who we are. The equation of our “names” and “I” is the next phase, followed by adding more thoughts to it. Then we designate certain *things* that becomes part of “self”, just like what we did to thoughts, but ultimately; those *things* are also thoughts that represent things. By doing that, we automatically begin to derive an *identity* from them. This is similar to what Lacan calls as the “mirror stage”, caused by the tension between “one’s perceived visual appearance and one’s perceived emotional reality”. Lacan calls this identification as an *alienation*, and points it out as the cause of the formation of the *ego*, thus a starting point of the “Imaginary order” of the *ego*.

“The *mirror stage* is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation- and which manufactures for the subject, caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality that I shall call orthopaedic- and, lastly, to the assumption of the armour of an alienating identity, which will mark with its rigid structure the subject’s entire mental development.” (Lacan, 1977, p.4)

There are two other dimensions in Lacan’s threefold theory along with the Imaginary order: “the Symbolic” and “the Real”. The Imaginary order helps us to build a relationship –narcissistic- between the *ego* and the reflected image, the *Other* taken as “I”. But this process is structured by the ‘Symbolic Order’. We mentioned earlier about how words connote on the mind as thoughts; by creating the symbolic - the language- we develop meanings out of sensory accumulation, bringing them together as “knotting points

of the signified and signifier”, or if we use Lacan’s exact term “point de capiton”, eventually giving them a structure with rules. This fixation subdues “the otherwise endless movement of the signification (*glissement*)” (Lacan, 1977, p.303) and “and produces the *necessary illusion of a fixed meaning*” (Evans, 1996, p.149)

This explains how the sensory field is structured by the symbolic laws. Therefore the language has a connection with the ‘Imaginary Order’ since it is responsible to affect and distort *the discourse of the Other*. Here, we have to keep in mind that Lacan use the term ‘other’ in two different ways: the little other or ‘*autre*’, who is not a *really* other but a reflection and projection of the *ego*; and the big ‘Other’ or ‘*Autre*’, as “an otherness transcending the illusory otherness of the Imaginary” (Evans,1996, p.133). So when he mentions “*the discourse of the Other*”, he stresses that the symbolic-language- does not come from the *ego* consciousness but the Other, as the unconscious. From the Freudian perspective, unconscious is a massive storage of memory with past thoughts and events, instinctive desires, needs and actions; both as simply deleted from the immediate consciousness or repressed as “aversed”. Lacan sees this unconscious part of the self as linguistically structured as the consciousness itself, therefore imaginary order of the *ego* becomes an effect, even a *symptom* –as the symbolic expresses itself in it- of the symbolic order of the unconscious, and the symbolic interference –the unconscious- on reality shapes the perceptions, the conscious mind, and the self.

Over the time; more symbolic, discursive labels, -since the culture is a direct product of the symbolic- such as the societal roles as gender, nationality, profession etc. gets attached to this sense of identity, and “the self” becomes an accumulation of all these, including the memory, opinions, emotions and such. Einstein is said to refer this structure

of self as “an optical illusion of consciousness”.¹⁸ With this sense of self as the basis, we just recall certain aspects from this content whenever we need; we make projections, we interpret, or if we follow Einstein, rather misinterpret the reality, all thought processes, interactions, and relationships. Our reality becomes a reflection of the original *optical illusion* of the *ego*, as long as we continue to mistake it for reality.

Eckhart Tolle, when explains all of the above in a similar manner while mentioning the mind’s conditioning by the past, also adds its twofold construction as of content and structure.

“The content is whatever we choose to identify with, which is actually interchangeable, and the structure is the process of making associations between these and the “self”. (Tolle, 2005, p.24)

“The word “identification” is derived from the Latin word *idem*, meaning “same” and *facere*, which means “to make.” So when I identify with something, I “make it the same.” The same as what? The same as I.” (Tolle, 2005, p.24)

Paradoxically, the quest of constructing a self in comparison with the “other”, collects more and more objects to *familiarize*, to “make it *look* the same” a.k.a to *identify*, just to find solid and permanent core in them, but rather gets lost into them. The conceptual “I” cannot survive without the conceptual “other” in that sense. The self has to *identify* to evolve, at the same time has to *separate* to continue on its own, thus maintain an apparent, pathological struggle all the time. If we remember that *pathos* means suffering, the picture

¹⁸ maybe we can relate it with *anschauung*, or *theoria*; the way we look at things. And that very way is an illusion if we think it’s *sophia*. (Somay, 2008, p.25)

perhaps become more clear. Interestingly, Buddha started to build his entire philosophy upon this very fact about the self: -first one of the four noble truths- *dukkha*, the suffering. And the cause of it, which is the second noble truth: *tanha*, craving or desire.

“[the subject] – he ends up by recognizing that this being has never been anything more than his construct in the imaginary and that this construct disappoints all his certainties? For in this labour which he undertakes to reconstruct *for another*, he rediscovers the fundamental alienation that made him construct it *like another*, and which has always destined it to be taken away *by another*.

This ego, whose strength our theorists now define by its capacity to bear frustration, is frustration in its essence. Not frustration of a desire of the subject, but frustration by an object in which his desire is alienated and which the more it is elaborated, the more profound the alienation from his *jouissance* becomes for the subject.” (Lacan, 1977, p.42)

Perhaps that may give us another opportunity to look back at Lacan’s interpretation of the pleasure principle: rather than just displaying its matter, it represents a function to limit the enjoyment, and the *ego* always attempts to transgress as it is always craves for more, but the result of this transgression can only bring pain -it gives an opportunity to experience the third order; “The Real” or “Le reel”- and pleasure turns something unbearable, “since there is only a certain amount of pleasure that the one can bear.” This is what Lacan calls *jouissance*. Thus *jouissance* is equaled to suffering (Lacan, 1992). Desire can be understood here not as a relation to an object but a relation to a *lack*, and the real

source of *jouissance* is to repeat the attempt for transgression. [the lack is “lack of being whereby the being exists.” (Lacan., 1988)

Lacan’s intention to analyze the conflict between the “*ego* ideal” and the “ideal *ego*” –first as a wishful, therefore permanent sense of the self and the latter, what *ego* yearns to become- brings the conception of the “*gaze*”, observing one’s self in relation with the *other*. (starts with the mirror stage, again as “*autre*” and “*Autre*”) Žižek rightfully claims that they both originate from a *lack*, thereby the lack here comes from the “optical illusion”; the gaze, of self-imputation on existing from its own side.¹⁹

¹⁹ The common metaphor of using Nietzsche’s abyss quote here (And if you gaze for long into an *abyss*, the *abyss* gazes also into you) may be interpreted with the help of Tarot’s 16th card, The Tower to spice up the cliché a bit; the abyss referring to the uncanny –*unheimlich*-, the ominous, or The Real, other/Other, the unconscious etc. and the flash of lightning –shall we say *insight*?- as the destroyer of the protective walls of the tower –as *heimlich*- or the defense mechanisms of the Self, throws one into the abyss beneath. The gaze, the vertigo or the optical illusion; all *seems* the same.

III. THE SELF AS ITS OWN SIDE, OR THE SELF AS AN ILLUSION

We mentioned earlier about the pathological problematique of the self, and the parallels of its analytical standpoints between psychoanalytical theory and the Buddhist logic, since in their distinctive ways of analysing the mind they sometimes overlap with their critique. It is important that those two have very different backgrounds and understanding of phenomena, and an attempt to see further interaction between the two necessitates the setting of the differences clearly. The latter is a complex philosophy with both theoretical and applied sides, and investing the mind is only a part of it, therefore it includes the first by the matter of its content, whereas the first is developed as a particular method of study of the psyche and behaviour –individuals as well as societies-. We should keep in mind that Buddhism itself is not a belief system that dictates the individual or the masses certain dogmas as we are familiar within the monotheistic religions in general, but a philosophical system which presents and analyzes the ontological and epistemological sides of the phenomena by using extensive logic and scientific method, -i.e., set a question, gathering information, forming a hypothesis, performing experiments and collecting data, analyzing and interpreting the results, publishing and retesting-. By considering it “as a way of life”, perhaps we may get closer to the understanding of “philosophy as a way of life” as it was once seen in the Greek tradition, since the meaning of the classical Greek definition of *philosophia* is “love of truth and wisdom”. Another example can be given from the Tibetan tradition, where the term “Buddhist” as “a follower of Buddha” does not exist but the word which defines it literally means “a person who goes within”.

After explaining the problematique of the self with the help of Freudian concepts and Lacanian terms, we may go further by expanding the Buddhist analysis of the “self” to understand how the self postulates itself as ‘solid and permanent’.

One of the basics to realize the Buddhist approach of the critique of the self is to understand the concept of the “Four Noble Truths”²⁰. In broad terms, these truths relate to suffering (or *dukkha*), its nature, its origin, its cessation and the path leading to its cessation. Each one have also four sub-aspects for helping the practitioners to develop further insight for them.

First of the Four Noble Truths is the truth of suffering, or *dukkha*. This interpretation of the suffering does not mean that Buddha did not acknowledge the existence of happiness and the contentment in life, but stating that it is not permanent and it is subject to change. Unless we gain insight into that truth, the experience of dissatisfaction will persist. (Kyabgon, 2001) To offer a deeper understanding of the suffering, Buddha mentioned the “three marks” of everything that exists. All conditioned phenomena²¹ are pervaded by impermanence (*anicca*), dissatisfaction or suffering (*dukkha*), and insubstantiality (*anatman*, “without self”). It is usually the belief that we hold, which there is some kind of enduring essence or substance in things, or in the personality, and because of this belief we generate delusion and confusion in the mind.

Just like Lacan had already put it in his theory of the conflict between *ego*'s sense of omniscience and its relation of defense mechanisms that Freud had explained, the Second Noble Truth points out the cause -*samudaya*- of suffering -*dukkha*-, and the cause is originated in craving or desire, *tanhā*, which springs from the mistaken notion of an

²⁰ see Bibliography: “The Dharmacakra Pravartana Sutra”

²¹ “Conditioned phenomena” (Skt., *samskrita*; Pali, *sankhate*) means everything that exists is mutually conditioned owing to causes and conditions; things come into existence, persist for some time, and then disintegrate, thus suggesting the impermanent nature of the empirical world.

permanent “I” and “me” in relation to an never ending lack that needs to be satisfied by all kinds of desire; i.e. material objects, sensual pleasures, for life, for death, mental and emotional states, and their opposites; as in *not desiring to have*. So *tanha* is far-reaching, covers all kinds of desire, irrespective of its content. Just like Lacan’s concept of *jouissance*; the notion of the firm belief that once the desires are fulfilled, one will dwell into everlasting happiness or well-being, just results further craving in actuality and the repeated enactment of activities to bring about the desired results. In Buddhist understanding, this kind of craving can never be satisfied due to its impermanent nature. Freud defines the “*pleasure principle*” in a similar manner by presenting it as a pervasive unsatisfactoriness. Here it’s important to point out that Buddhist theory does not talk about a complete eradication of desire, as we can use it as a tool for positive outcomes as well, but most of the time they are accompanied by strong emotional and mental charges that we must be consciously aware of.

The Third Noble Truth, *Nirodha*, is the cessation of suffering. Desire for unsatisfactory things, can be transformed with an antidote of nonreliance on them; so craving, *tanha*, will not be an obstacle but a tool to realize the awakened state of mind, - when the mind is no longer governed with mental and emotional reactions of attraction and aversion- the enlightenment.

The Fourth Noble Truth, -*Dukkha Nirodha Gamini Patipada Magga*-, the path leading to the cessation of suffering; is also called as The Eightfold Noble Path, which consists Right Understanding, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration to analyze the four truths in detail.

Buddhist view does not offer an end to change or turn the view of impermanence into permanence, what we can change is the way we react; by skillfull means, so all the unsatisfactoriness, craving and suffering caused by a disturbed state of mind may be dissolved. According to the Traleg Kyabgon's interpretations:

"...The first two truths of Right Understanding and Right Thought correspond to the development of wisdom. Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood all develop our moral sensitivities. The last three—Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration—foster our meditative capabilities." (Kyabgon, 2001)

Right Understanding²² or View means the understanding of Buddhist view, *the middle way*, between absolutism and nihilism. Nihilism, in short, "is the view that things are totally non-existent, and there is no cause and effect".(Chodron, 2005, p.160) When Buddhist teachings emphasize an invalid existence of the self, - to introduce the teachings of *emptiness*- it means that things, as well as the self, is empty of inherent nature/existence, they still exist conventionally, dependently in a relative way of truth. Absolutism, by reifying things as they have a solid, independent identity to be grasped, also stands at the other extreme, since although things exist on a relative level, they do not inherently exist. A correct understanding of emptiness is very important here, as an emptiness of intrinsic existence, which necessarily implies dependent origination.

"It does not mean that nothing exists, but only that things do not possess the

²² See also footnote 12

intrinsic reality we naively thought they did.” (H.H. Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, 2005, p.111)

It also does not mean that emptiness itself is truly existent, especially on a practical level. ‘Emptiness has been said to be the relinquishment of views’ says Nāgārjuna, second century Buddhist philosopher ‘but those who hold to the view of emptiness is incurable.’²³

The XIV. Dalai Lama also points out:

“Having negated the true existence of all other phenomena, you might tend to apprehend emptiness itself as being truly existent, because it is the ultimate nature. Just as all phenomena lack true existence or inherent existence, so does emptiness. There is no independent emptiness or inherently existent emptiness that is not dependent upon the subject which it qualifies. Emptiness is always a quality or a property, and there is no emptiness which can exist independently, without a basis on which it is qualified.

Therefore, emptiness is a mere label imputed upon a basis, as, for example, the emptiness of a vase is nothing other than the ultimate nature of vase. The very absence or negation of the inherent existence of the vase is emptiness. Just as the subject *vase* is empty, so too is the quality of emptiness. Overcoming the misapprehension of emptiness as truly existent is crucial.” (H.H. Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, 2003, p.204)

²³ Nāgārjuna, 2nd century philosopher and also the founder of Madhyamika –Middleway school- system of Buddhism. Stanza #30 from Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā (Fundamental Verses of the Middle Way), (Luetchford, 2002)

Therefore, Right Understanding is the first of the Eightfold Path, because “ignorance”(or holding a mistaken view based on this), according to Buddha Śākyamuni, is the root of all suffering.

Right Thought or Intention is related with noticing how thoughts and emotions are closely linked and indulging in them creates suffering, and conversely starting and keeping the attitude of not clinging into them.

Right Speech, can be explained how we use the ‘Symbolic’ in Lacan’s terminology, and how we can direct our conscious effort to not to be swept away by its strength. We mentioned earlier how the construction of the ‘Symbolic’ affects the way we think and define the “I” and the “Other”. From a more common, practical point of view, it also points out of using harsh words, lying or gossiping etc. to refrain them by remembering the Eightfold Path.

Right Action, or *Conduct*, refers to how our actions to be held *skillfully* and advices us to check them carefully for the benefit of all, including us. It also implies to take individual responsibility and action instead of following preestablished rules or societal norms.

Right Livelihood is about avoiding occupations in any kind which is harmful for us and other beings, thus making a living without creating physical or mental pain for ourselves and others.

Right Effort, or *Endeavor*, is about insightful recognition of arising and non-arising of the mental qualities and “of our ability to mindfully intervene in these ephemeral qualities, the Four Right Exertions encourage the relinquishment of harmful mental qualities and the nurturing of beneficial mental qualities.” It has four aspects; the first is non-arising (sometimes restraint) making an effort to not be carried away by the continuously arising thoughts and emotions within the mind, the second is abandonment; and is about not clinging to the already arisen thoughts or emotions, the third is arising (cultivation), developing wholesome effort in meditation, and the last is maintenance (preservation), keeping the wholesome effort to cultivate more that have already risen in the mind.

Right Mindfulness, or “Right Memory”, “Right Awareness” or “Right Attention” is about being deliberately more attentive towards our momentarily mental continuum to increase our insight about the continuously arising mental and emotional influences.

Right Concentration, which is to be developed by the practice of meditation, offers a focused and undistracted mental attitude and also the ability to maintain it towards the external and internal stimuli.

As Traleg Kyabgon concludes:

“...the Four Noble Truths are both descriptive and prescriptive. They describe the condition we are in—what sort of conditions are prevalent and what the problems are. They also prescribe in terms of how to improve our situation, overcome our sense of dissatisfaction, and attain enlightenment through following

the Eightfold Noble Path and its training in morality, meditation, and wisdom.”

(Kyabgon, 2001)

Buddha Śākyamuni, the Buddha of our time among many others; is sometimes as referred as the Great Physician, since he detects both the symptom and the cause, the relationship between them, and how to transform/cure them. If we look at the Eightfold Path closely, we can easily claim that they are almost identical with the applied psychology’s cognitive approaches with their step-by-step programs, because they give a clear attempt to change the patterns of behaviour and thought. Buddhist theory and practice are, in a sense, guidelines whose purpose is to encourage a mindful, therefore *good* –with an Ancient Greek taste of meaning - lifestyle rather than strict canonical commandments and people are encouraged to test, debate, experience and analyze them.

Just like the psychoanalytical methods –such as free association, analysis of the transference etc- which aims to reach the not directly accessible unconscious data -rather than dwelling in ordinary introspection-, Eightfold Path is usually taken as a set of practices to cultivate a mindfull meditative ability. According to Mark Epstein, this way we can use the *ego*’s own contextual authority into a tool of realization, rather than labeling it as “the elimination of *ego*” but “revealing it what it has always been- mindfulness” (Epstein, 2007, p.49). He argues from an applied therapeutical point of view that “mindfulness is a method of using the *ego* to observe its own manifestations.” (Ibid., p.52), meaning that paying close attention to the body –as a material aggregate [see below], feelings, mental formations and states of mind.

During meditation, by applying mindfulness, however; that the meditator experiences the formations, or “the parts” that Freud had mentioned, severally breaking up.

Here we shall remember another aspect of the Buddhist psychology of the mind, the *Skandhas*, or aggregates,-as we discussed in detail earlier- any of five types of phenomena that when incorrectly apprehended, serve as objects of clinging and bases for a sense of enduring “Self” and that nothing among them nor the sum of them is really "I" or "mine". The five aggregates are Form, Feeling –sensation- , Discernment –perception or apperception-, Compositional Factors –mental formations-, and Consciousness. These faculties serve as the basis for the arising of an innate notion of self-identity in a person. They are called aggregates because of their being composed through the aggregation of many factors. (H.H. Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, 2003, p.228) They constitute a basis for constructing a sense of fixed, solid and “real” self. One of the aims of meditation then, at least at the beginning, is “not to withdraw from falsely conceived self but to recognize the misconception, thereby weakening its influence.” As again Epstein points out and quotes Dharmakirti, the seventh century scholar and one of the Buddhist founders of Indian philosophical logic: “Without disbelieving the object of this (misconception), it is impossible to abandon (misconceiving it). (cited in Epstein, 2007, p. 68)

The sense of “I” can be looked at by two different ways in relation with the aggregates, as we discussed earlier. One by taking the “I” as a separate entity and therefore different from all the aggregates, i.e. the one is not dependent on others, thus reaching a logical conclusion of no entity can have a separate independent existence of its own. If we hold the view that “I” is the same as its aggregates, then the latter must be one single unit,

but there are five different parts of aggregates, therefore the “I”; which seems one and solid, and the continuity of the aggregates, such as the mind and the “I” are not the same. But simply saying that the “I” is neither identical nor different from the aggregates is also not enough, because if there is a sense of “I” which appears to manifest itself as self-existent, it cannot be argued in any other way than taking the aggregates into consideration again. Therefore, we come to the conclusion again that the “I”, which to the mind seems to be the one and the only reality, is neither identical nor independent of the aggregates.

This is not a radical denial of the non-existence of such an “I”, as H.H. the Fourteenth Dalai Lama explains:

“The formation of the notion of the denomination “I” is dependent on the aggregates- a mere designation, or a mere appellation. This designation “I” enables the formation of a concept in which the “I enjoys eating, drinking, etc; is born again and again in Samsāra; practices religion and attains enlightenment. This “I” is distinct from the four –fold categories of Self-Existence, Non-Existence, both Self-Existence and Non-Existence, neither Self-Existent nor Non-Existent.

“... Again, when one is definite about the meaning conveyed by this “I” as being a mere designation separate from the logic of four-fold categories, then one has grasped the real significance of the non-existence of “I”. Similarly, by taking the instances of one’s eyes, ears, etc., form, sound, smell, taste, etc., and even Śūnyata itself, this logic of four-fold categories can be used to prove the relatively and non-existence of all elements and objects. To consider Śūnyata itself as self-existent is to take a fatalist view of things. For a correct comprehension of the

significance of non self-existence of objects of the world, a deep, penetrating study ...has to be made.” (H.H. Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, An Introduction to Buddhism. p.23)

Here, *Śūnyata*, or emptiness, refers to the principle that negates all contradictions in “self” existence. It only negates but does not affirm. Acharya Chandrakirti says:

“The word ‘Self’ denotes any self-existing essence or substance in anything whatever that is not dependent on others. Negation of the self is *Śūnyata*.” (cited in H. H. Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, An Introduction to Buddhism. p.22)

Studying and practicing a meditative mindfulness is the method for comprehending ‘*Śūnyata*’ the Dalai Lama mentions above, and so is the application of the Middle Path (*Madhyamika*) logic.

Since we are accustomed to regard the “optical illusion”, (what we think we know) as the reality, we usually cannot distinguish between the appearance and the deduced reality. The notion of deduced reality is mistaken for the notion of self-entity. Relatedly, the aggregate of perception, which helps us to define our experiences cognitively; classifies the phenomena by labeling and naming by using mere approximations –words, the symbolic order-, with the faculty of memory patching the past attributes to “now” and this causes us to no longer experience the phenomena as they are. This conceptual overlay or superimposition of construct is inevitable. What is not inevitable, but nevertheless rule

the ignorant mind, is the mistaking of the construct of the truth. Understanding the relativity of perceptions is the essence of the realization of “signlessness”, in which the sign is no longer mistaken for that which is signified. (Thurman, 1976) During the mirror stage, Lacan argues that the infant takes the assumed image of him/herself to symbolize the mental permanence of the “I” and the illusory image is therefore mistakenly perceived as real. If we remember, ‘This form’, says Lacan, ‘situates the agency of the *ego*, before its social determination, in a fictional direction’ (Lacan, 1977, p.2), causing the ‘assumption of the armour of an alienating identity’ (Ibid., p.4) and creating the ‘illusion of autonomy’ (Ibid., p.6) (also cited in Epstein, 2007, p. 89.)

The conceptual imputation²⁴ of the existence of phenomena is actually an advanced level of mind activity.²⁵ If the world exist as merely imputed, this imputation must work also on a very instinctive level of cognition, as the world exist somehow even in the consciousness of very primitive beings compared to humans. In Buddhist Madhyamikan – *middle way*- logic, saying that “things exist by mere imputation” describes their ontological status. They don't exist any other way, even conventionally. Beyond mere imputation they just cannot be found. It means that among the countless category of knowables, things that can be known, exist. So, to put these two notions together, we need to clarify what can know the knowables. Obviously this is the mind. (A computer can store information, but it cannot know). The mind knows things by mere imputation, and that is how those things exist, merely imputedly.

²⁴ the concepts of ‘Imputation’ and ‘imputed’ are used with their Eastern philosophical connotations throughout the text and therefore not to be confused with their Western philosophical counterparts.

²⁵ Sections between p.47-49 are written with the personal correspondence and permission of Andy Wistreich from IKN Network and e-group.

We may divide the mind into perceptual and conceptual sides, which both these types of mind know things by mere imputation. There is no other way to know things, and there are no knowables that don't exist by mere imputation. This approach is completely in accordance with the teaching of *dependent origination*, against the view of seeing the phenomena as the permanent, independent and unchanging. What is merely imputed is dependently originated. This is because whatever is dependently originated cannot in the slightest exist independently. If anything existed independently by any other means than imputation, it couldn't be known, couldn't be a knowable, and wouldn't exist. The standard monastic study topic of *Lo-Rig* (Mind and Awareness) of the *Madhyamikan* logic discusses the differences of perception and conception. All sense consciousnesses are defined as perception. They are 'direct perception' when they get hold of the object correctly e.g. to see an 'x' as an 'x'. Conception on the other hand never gets hold of its object directly ('x' is 'y'). Instead of an 'x' it sees an image of an 'x' such as a mental picture of an 'x', or a generic 'x'. This general 'x' is just in our mind; it is a concept. *Lo Rig* is studied according to the tenets of the *Sautāntrika* system (Sutra Followers).²⁶ According to that system, the smallest particles (out there) and the shortest moments of mental activity (in here) actually exist ultimately, whereas all conglomerates of these, such as an 'x' or an hour of thought, exist conventionally by imputation. In the *Madhyamika* system, they go a step further and say that even the smallest particle or the shortest moment are imputed, because from its own side nothing can be found at all. Hence, they say that things exist by mere imputation.

²⁶ There are four Buddhist tenet systems, which are the Great Exposition School (vaibhasika), the Sutra School (sautāntrika), the Mind Only School (cittamātra) and the Middle Way School (madhyamika). First two are considered as the Lesser Vehicle (hinayana) tenet systems and the other two as Great Vehicle tenet systems. There are subdivisions such as the Middle Way Autonomy and Middle Way Consequence branches of the Middle Way school, the Followers of Scripture and the Followers of Reasoning within the Sutra school, etc. (Newland, 1999, p.12) Their differences are usually on a subtle level, such as the logical and practical interpretations of emptiness or the two truths etc.

This word 'mere' eliminates any establishment of things from their own characteristics. Things can only be established conventionally in dependence on other things. For the *Madhyamika* there is no ultimate establishment, though this doesn't mean that there is no ultimate truth. Ultimate truth is a mere absence of any independent or inherent existence.²⁷ The wisdom realizing this, just doesn't see anything, after the mind has searched for inherent or independent existence. It is not that it replaces inherent or independent existence with something called emptiness. Emptiness is just non-finding or non-findability. Regardless of how we are looking, with perception or conception, things are merely imputed, and are empty of independent or inherent existence.

Time also does not exist from its own side according to *Madhyamikan* point of view, - past, present and future, being interdependent, do not exist by themselves. 'Kala' - means time-; the time that is empty, so merely imputed to e.g. the present moment, lacking essence, in an eternal (beginningless and endless) continuum, basically pure, on whose basis all the appearances of *samsāra*²⁸ and *nirvāṇa*²⁹ arise and cease. These appearances are the cycle of time³⁰. When our mind is deluded the appearances are those of waking, dreaming, deep sleep and fourth occasion³¹. At the pure level of the fruit they become the four *kayas*.³²

²⁷ Two truths: as conventional and ultimate. Conventional or relative truth: the interdependence of phenomena, “a truth founded on the fallacious perception of subject and object, of an “I” and another.” (Bokar Rinpoche, 1999, p.10) Ultimate Truth: syn. Emptiness, without inherent existence

²⁸ means “cyclic existence”

²⁹ means “the state of being free from suffering”

³⁰ linear timing is solely another illusion, perhaps close to the explanation of a *mimesis of mimesis*.(of Plato)

³¹ Which is different from the former three, the waking state, which is distinguished from the waking, dream and deep sleep states, *the clear light mind* as it is described in Tantric practices.

³² Four Kayas: Svabhavikakāya, Dharmakāya, Sambhogakāya and Nirmanakāya; the first as the realm of Śūnyata- the emptiness; the second as the unconditioned, the Absolute, the

The possible positioning of the “change” factor here is again in the conventional level which is indivisible from the ultimate. Here the consciousness can be modelled as a process proceeding within time or alternatively, one can start with consciousness as the fundamental assumption of the analysis, and proceed to investigate time and timelessness.

Time and timelessness may be understood to be mental constructs and therefore illusion-like. “Illusion” connotes falseness and the need to reject the validity of what is found to be an illusion. In that sense, time and timelessness are hardly illusions. They are true, useful, and even indispensable conventions, which can be induced from accurate observation of events, and from accurate analysis of those observations. Consciousness therefore is not trapped in time; consciousness invents time³³ as a concept based upon the comparison between two experiences, the mere appearances in the memory faculty of the mind.

According to the Lincoln Barnett, in his book ‘Einstein and the Universe’ (Barnett, 1980, p.52- 53) the daily experiences we remember appears as a series of events which seems to be arranged in a linear order, therefore can be expressed as “previously” or “subsequently”. So we can say on a subjective level, there appears to be a sense of time that is immeasurable in itself. The General Theory of Relativity (and the mass-energy

underlying truth; the third as “enjoyment/bliss body” and the latter; “emanation body” (Harderwijk)

³³ Consciousness is usually the translation of *vijñāna* or *rnam par shes pa*. As HH the Dalai Lama states that consciousness is eternal but not permanent. But consciousness is to be distinguished from *jñāna*. This latter is where there is some disagreement. Thrangu Rinpoche in our own times, like the Third Karmapa several centuries ago, has written a book distinguishing consciousness (*vijñāna*) from *jñāna*. It is titled ‘everyday consciousness’ and ‘primordial awareness’. These can be confusing in their various English translations.

equivalence, often used as a principle to interpret the relativistic symmetries of space and time) tells us that the time is not an absolute, independent agent which is separate from our conceptualizations of measurement. Our knowledge –perceptual and conceptual- about the notion of the continuity of the time is based on the varying references of the experiencing subject.

‘Observer effect’, as defined in the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum mechanics, claim that the observation affects the system being observed regardless of the method used for observation.

Although Heisenberg’s Uncertainty principle rather deals with measurement and not observation, -therefore not to be confused with the ‘observer effect’ but if both can be defined in quantum terms, then there is no 'observer effect' but only one vastly entangled quantum system- it still show that at the quantum level, the position and momentum of a particle cannot be determined with any degree of accuracy, they cannot both be known to arbitrary precision: the more precisely one is known, the less precisely the other can be known. It is now thought that in relation to the ‘wave-particle duality’, uncertainty also exists in the particle itself, even before the measurement is made. Then we can take Uncertainty Principle not a statement about the observer’s inability –or the measuring equipment-, but about the system itself, our *assumption* of definite positions and speeds are incorrect.

If the relativity of appearances have such an impact upon our conceptions, perceptions and the assumptions that we made up with them, then using quantum examples can lead us where the particles and the perceptions might conjunct: the neural activity of the brain.

If matter is in fact a mass of energy –made of quarks, leptons and their antiparticles- in subatomic level, then thoughts –whether conscious or unconscious- formed by neural electrical and chemical signals can be also theorised as a bio electromagnetic function or neural network. Processing and transmitting information via sensory (affarent), motor (efferent) and interneurons, particular neural acitivities should be included into our discussion of self and its relativity.

IV. MIRRORING THE SELF: SIMULATION AND EMULATION VIA MIRROR NEURONS

“...I study the functions and structure of the human brain. And I just want you to think for a minute about what it entails. Here is this mass of jelly-three pound mass of jelly, [showing the brain] you can hold in the palm of your hand, and it can contemplate the vastness of interstellar space. It can contemplate the meaning of infinity and it can contemplate itself contemplating on the meaning of infinity. And this peculiar recursive quality that we call self-awareness, which I think is the Holy Grail of neuroscience, or neurology. Hopefully, someday, we’ll understand how that happens.”

V.S.Ramachandran, from the TED talk- ‘On Your Mind’

We discussed earlier how repeated actions, process of learning and memory continuously affect and shape our mind, thus causing us to have a sense of an “I”, and a characteristic way of looking at the *other* phenomena. This structure surely have a neurological aspect, which emphasize the establishment of certain synaptic connections and hold them responsible for behaviour patterns. Cognitive neuroscience and evolutionary psychology study the correlations between the mental and the neural processes, the dependence of the mental faculties upon the anatomical regions of the brain, and the origins and the development of the human nervous system. As we see, all these modern

scientific studies' intellectual background can be traced back to the age-long philosophical debate of body-mind –or self-matter- separation that we discussed at the beginning of this dissertation.

There are many ways of approaching the functions of the human brain. Running researches and tests with animals and comparing the results on human physiology is one way, looking at the patients with sustained damage to a region of the brain is another. The loss of a specific function in these areas can make us assert that that part of the brain might be somehow involved in mediating that function. Then by looking at the microcircuitry this area has with the other areas of the brain, we can make claims of how the general structure works and interacts with each other.

Neuroscientists have made remarkable discoveries by working with the patients suffering from strokes, infection, brain hemorrhage or other brain syndromes. Jill Bolte Taylor³⁴, a neuroanatomist who experienced a stroke and survived by undergoing a major surgery to remove a clot on the language centers in the left hemisphere of her brain, is one of these scientists and also one of these patients whose later account on the experience and recovery gained a widespread attention. Her description as a neuroscientist experiencing the deterioration of her own brain functions step by step is remarkable, and also give us insight about how different areas of the brain cause different effects upon the thoughts, emotions, sensory perceptions and moment-to-moment experience. When her left hemisphere was affected by the hemorrhage; she experienced a loss of self, and a sense of union with all the phenomena with a peaceful euphoria that she related those with her yet functioning right hemisphere. Linear reasoning, methodological thinking and language

³⁴ see Bibliography.

often are lateralized to the left hemisphere of the brain whereas spatial manipulation, contextual language functions as well as visual and audiological stimuli processing and artistic ability are related to the right. Her expressions describing the nuances of her bilateral experience, seemingly supporting the view of the ‘lateralization of brain functions between the two hemispheres’ have been criticised, although there is evidence that claims which cerebral cortex is more involved in certain functions from the other. In fact, as to present an opposite data, Allan N. Schore’s ³⁵ findings upon the relational trauma in early developmental stage show that the mirroring structure and the emotional system relation with the limbic system is most effective in right hemisphere than the left, so he claim that the development of attachment, thus the development of the sense of and “I” and self awareness occurs at the right hemisphere in relation with the “significant other” aka the mother. If this process is somehow interrupted by unresponsive, or overresponsive attitudes of the mother, early relational trauma occurs and the infant develops defense mechanisms, as Schore argues, mainly dissociation. However it has been generally accepted that generalizations upon brain lateralization should be treated carefully. Jill Bolte Taylor’s vivid and humourous recollection with highlighting of the sensual loss of spatial boundaries still give great insight upon the capabilities of human brain.

Psychological interventions such as EMDR –Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing-, using bilateral stimulation of the brain as a form of desensitization to treat dysfunctionally stored memory, is based upon the similar lateralization assumptions, however further research is required since there is no definitive hypothesis as to how

³⁵ (Schore, 2001, 2009)

EMDR works. Although there's evidence upon its effectivity as a treatment technique for PTSD –post traumatic stress disorder-.

Different parts of the brain and their functioning is also important on the evolutionary level. For example, the question about the emergence of language and the importance of the Symbolic is not only unique in Lacanian terms, but its' effect on survival among other human traits is special since it help us communicate our thoughts with the other members of our kind. Once this ability is evolved in the brain, especially in the left hemisphere, it can be said language could also evolve. Empathy is another important aspect of this, because if there's a symbolic order, then there's a sense of object and subject as a part of a spatial symbolic-self which is defined in relation with the other. The discovery of the mirror neurons located in the frontal lobe of monkeys and posterior inferior frontal and rostral inferior parietal areas in humans can give us more clue about how these two qualities might have been evolved in the human brain.

Mirror neurons were first noticed when certain neurons among the other motor neurons in the superior temporal sulcus area of the brain responded to moving biological stimuli, such as hands, faces and bodies. These neurons were responsible for coding a meaningful interaction between an object and an intentional agent.³⁶ They fire both when an agent acts and also when the agent observes the same action performed by another as though the observer were itself acting.

Posterior inferior frontal and rostral inferior parietal areas of the brain have related to imitative learning and social behaviour; and mirror neurons provide a neural mechanism

³⁶ (Perrett et al., 1989; Perrett, Harries et al., 1990; Perrett & Emery, 1994)- taken from Iacoboni –see Bibliography.

for understanding the actions of others.³⁷ The corresponding mirror neuron of the observer fire before an actual observation of a second motor act by the conducting agent, thus resulting inferior parietal lobe mirror neurons “code the same act (grasping) in a different way according to the final goal of the action in which the act is embedded”.³⁸ According to V.S. Ramachandran, this allow us to develop language skills and also to understand other people’s goals and intentions, and “thus to develop a sophisticated theory of ‘other’ minds”.³⁹ The evidence of mirror systems simulating observed actions result in a possibility for them to contribute to theory of mind skills as well.⁴⁰ ‘Theory of mind’ refer to our ability to judge other people’s mental state from experiences or their behaviour. One of the multiple models which attempt to explain it in relation to mirror neurons is called *simulation theory*. Although predates the discovery of mirror neurons, it claims the theory of mind is available because whether consciously or unconsciously, we empathize with the person we observe, we account for relevant differences and we imagine what we would desire and believe in that scenario.

It is not a theory of empathy, but an attempt to reveal how we understand others by using empathetic response. The mirror neurons use a mechanism to adopt other persons point of view by producing a virtual reality simulation of the other person’s action. V. S. Ramachandran talks about⁴¹ different kinds of mirror neurons, for example to emulate an action or a tactile sensation. His famous phantom limb cases explain why the phantom

³⁷ (Iacoboni et al., 2007)

³⁸ Fogassi et al. (2005)

³⁹ See Bibliography (Ramachandran, Mirror Neurons and Imitation Learning as the Driving Force Behind "The Great Leap Forward" in Human Evolution.)

⁴⁰ Gazzola et al.(2006)

⁴¹ See Bibliography: (Ramachandran- TED talk, The Neurons That Shaped Civilisation)

organ –such as a hand or a leg as well as a uterus- hurts if you pinch another person or why it gets relieved of pain by merely watching some other person being massaged.

If somebody touches us, the skin receptors gets activated by the signal and the neuron in the somatosensory cortex in the brain fires. But the same neuron fires when the person watch another person gets touched too. This is an empathetic process, and if we take a step further by watching somebody gets touched and remove the tactile stimuli (for example by anesthetizing the place being touched) we literally feel and experience the touch in our minds since the signal from the skin is no longer there to validate the distinction between “I” and the “other”.

“This is not some abstract metaphorical sense, all that’s separating you from him, from the other person, is your skin. Remove the skin, you experience that person’s touch in your mind. You’ve dissolved the barrier between you and other human beings. And this, is of course the basis of much of Eastern Philosophy, and that is there’s no real independent self, aloof from other human beings, inspecting the world, inspecting other people. You’re in fact connected not just via Facebook, and Internet , you’re actually quiet literally connected by your neurons...And there’s no real distinctiveness of your conciousness from somebody else’s conciousness. This is not mambo-jambo philosophy, it emerges from our understanding of basic neuroscience .” (Ramachandran TED talk, Vs Ramachandran- the neurons that shaped civilisation)

Ramachandran’s other contribution to solving the puzzle of the phantom limb syndrome is showing the classical conditioning patterns the patients share. In most of the cases, patients have reported suffering from paralysis when the limb was still intact, so

when it leaves an imprint as a *learned paralysis* on the brain circuit, after the loss of the organ the sensation of the paralysis continue.⁴² So his invention of the “mirror box” help patients to alleviate the phantom pain by giving a visual feedback to the brain that the ‘phantom’ limb (the reflection on the mirror) obey its command. The visual input is important since the process doesn’t work with closed eyes, however auditory input is equally effective in other cases.⁴³ If the mirror neurons are damaged somehow, as it is in the cases called anosognosia syndrome, the patients not only claim they don’t have a paralysis although they have complete paralysis in one side, they also deny the paralysis of other patients whose inability to move their arm is clearly visible to them and others. Without the help of mirror neurons, they cannot process a virtual reality simulation of the corresponding movements in their brain when they are trying to make a judgement about someone else’ movements.

The activity of mirror neurons; with keeping the evidence in mind which suggests that mirror neurons develop in infancy⁴⁴, show an important interface upon the issues of consciousness, representation of the self and the epistemological role of empathy and its impact on the culture.

The important point then is to discuss how the mental projection of emotions and thoughts affect our empathetic simulation the mirror neurons have created. When we get caught up into the emotions of others by empathetic processes, –consciously or unconsciously- how personal emotions differ from emotions simulated by observing others is interesting since it brings up the subject of basic intrapersonal and interpersonal

⁴² See Bibliography: (Ramachandran, TED talks, *On Your Mind*)

⁴³ (Hooper, 2006)

⁴⁴ (Falck-Ytter et al.,2006)

understanding skills along with simulation-plus-projection routines. This link, although we apply in relation with other humans and species in particular –in the mirror neurons’ case- , might very well be resembled with the overall stimuli processing. As a result, this can have several implications relevant to personal afflictions related to the idea of a permanent and separate self. If there’s no real distinctiveness of one consciousness from another’s as Ramachandran mentioned earlier based on the understanding of basic neuroscience, then just like changing the “*learned paralysis*” of the phantom limb by manipulating the perception with conscious effort and visual stimuli, it would be possible for us to deconstruct this illusory distinction like any other learned trauma.

Conscious effort and awareness, a.k.a mindfulness is the very basis of all meditative practices and their basic assumption is that perceptions, as well as the one that is perceived, are not solid and permanent, therefore subject to change. -which in turn cause a change in subsequent experience.- Trauma is an ancient Greek word means “wound”, so it can be said the outcome of any wound to our sense of being -physical or psychological- can be manipulated. Similar to cognitive approaches of replacing the old patterns with new set of practices, from a therapeutical point of view we can apply “the phantom limb” example to any kind of ‘unfinished business’ -as in Gestalt system of psychotherapy-- (Perhaps using the “mirror box” as an analogy of bringing the root cause into light and making it apparent and/or by using transference) If mental states and projections – thoughts and emotions- leaves an imprint on the mind regardless of their degree or the context in which they *arise*, so does the sense of an ‘permanent and separate self’ on the consciousness. Actually this alone can be seen the very root cause of all these, like the Buddhist philosophy and counter-analysis of the mind. Considering the advanced meditative *sadhana* visualisations such as Dzogchen and Guru Yoga practices, they can be

presumed to be related with the mirror neuron circuit simulation and emulation on the neurological level.

From a relative perspective, they are also aimed to reach a “meaningful interaction between an object and an intentional agent” like Iacoboni’s definition of mirror neuron activity. The concentration practices are divided into two as *śamatha* and *vipāśyanā*, ‘calm abiding’ and ‘special insight’ respectively, the first being concentration on a single object and the second, moment to moment awareness of changing objects of perception. The practitioner [the philosopher-yogi] then “is encouraged to accept as incontrovertible the everyday conventional sense of ‘I’, while attaining simultaneously the rational certitude of its intrinsic non-reality.”⁴⁵ (Thurman, 1984, p.146)

⁴⁵ (Thurman, 1984, p.146)

V.CONCLUSION: GENEALOGY OF IDENTITY AND THE PRACTICE OF FREEDOM

Whatever can be conceptualized is therefore relative, and whatever is relative is Śunya, empty. Since absolute inconceivable truth is also Śunya, therefore Śunyata or the void is shared by both Samsāra and Nirvāṇa. Ultimately, Nirvāṇa truly realized is Samsāra properly understood.

(Nāgārjuna)

The expositions presented all above would be incomplete if Foucault's approach of identity was not discussed in the same context, therefore we come back to the point where we slightly mentioned the notion of 'identity' in order to further develop its fundamental role in the conceptualization of the self.

Identity can be defined as meaning sources built by the societal actors by themselves and for themselves through a process of individuation. (Berktay, 2003, p.71) Although it can be explained through different approaches, Foucault (1991; 1980) has presented the following ideas to explain the process of construction of identity. In the beginning, he defines the *prediscursive reel* which consists of "acting", "thinking", and "feeling". When certain fields of knowledge are developed, certain norms and rules are established through these, which in turn, become power mechanisms. Later, these norms

and rules change the person's values and meanings with respect to the conduct to subjectivity. When these values and meanings change the person, it establishes a new relation to oneself. The development of fields of knowledge results in the constitution of disciplines –scientific, moral, etc. The establishment of norms and rules inevitably leads to the development of institutions which have the purpose of enabling the control and enhancement of them. Rules and norms mean constraints on one's relation of consciousness to oneself. The reconstitution of this relation to oneself in accordance with constraints brought about by power relations is called a 'restraint'. The notion of identity, inevitably is subjected to those aforementioned constraints.

Then the "thinking", "acting" and "feeling" which had earlier been defined as the *prediscursive reel* start interacting with the discursive and prediscursive practices which are established after the development of institutions –Foucault (1991; 1980) calls these interactions as the "games of truth". The introduction of forms of "knowledge" and "truth", which have been defined by the institutions that had developed through discourse and its *normalization* back into the discourse and thus the constitution of these forms as objects-of- thought, and their *objectification*. This is a *problematization* which can be defined as the "totality of discursive and nondiscursive practices that introduce something into the game of true and false and makes it an object of thought" – and as a result of this articulation of the prediscursive reality is fused with the discourse of dominant power. Based on this background information, the identity and its bodily functions and their subjective experience which are constituted through this identity can be added to our analysis of the self. As a researcher working in a post-structuralist context based on this field, claiming to be only the subject of this work will be inappropriate; the researcher is also the object in this paradigm. The "discourse analysis" has turned the research practice

and its results into a field of investigation by stressing both the history, content and constitution of an investigation and the tools and thought structures used in deriving results from the research. So the researcher's account of the experience should also be taken into account: And being myself is the most difficult of all because the "self" is never an independent object given to me when I was born, static and undemanding; "I" am always in change and "I" am always under forces which influence my identity, my motivations, my feelings, and my thoughts, so I shall continue from where the self and society come together as *identity*.

The way of existence explained above which was determined by the discourse becomes an "object of thought". When this is conceptualized, the object of thought becomes the "object of truth and knowledge". When the discourse is taken as "true", the resulting statement can be qualified as true knowledge. Because it objectifies by using the truths fictionalized by the discourse which builds it, this knowledge become the object of the discourse. (These take their place in the discourse as political, moral or scientific etc. "truths".) When a person constitutes his/her behaviours and experiences by the knowledge provided by this discourse, the state described as "subjective experience" comes to be. The relation of consciousness one builds with her/himself is defined by the "truths" specified by the existing discourse and at this point the discourse of the dominant power puts the person as the tool of definition of her/himself into a state of "being"; Foucault (1991; 1980) calls this "identity".

Foucault follows Kantian model, because according to Kant thought is discursive knowledge, in other words, "knowledge by concepts". "Games of truth", which is an articulation, is *historical a priori* –for the propositions which provide knowledge but

cannot be observed by experience, for what Kant has identified as *synthetic a priori*, “universality” and “necessity” are required- because as the discourse of power changes these allegedly *synthetic a priori* propositions also change, and thus they become subject to the time and historical necessity where there is no universality and extratemporal necessity. When we accept the discourse we define ourselves “necessarily” by the truths it brings.

Therefore, analyzing the “games of truth” is the same as writing the history of *problematization*, it gives us the history of the constituted truth, and this enables us to analyze the “history of subjective experience”. The history of truth is what establishes the game of true and false. Showing *problematization* and its practices are looking at the underlying cause for the being to become experience, it is not looking at an answer of the questions such as asking of what behavior is. The history of truth is not concerned with answering the question of when the truth has been reached. It is concerned with finding out how and through which processes the games of truth -veridiction- came to be. Certain behaviors have been considered as problems in certain periods of time, and this is a *problematization*. This *problematization* has been articulated about the X in discursive practices, and become a subject of debate. In this way, fields of knowledge were developed, and when the correctness of the discourse was accepted, they were thought – conceptualized- in the way the discourse identified it- this is *historical a priori*. The Western civilisation enables us to accept certain constraints as the subjects of certain experiences when we define ourselves over those experiences. As Nietzsche (1977) expressed it, the human richness is continuously constrained.

Seeing the historical nature of truth is to realize that the limits imposed upon us are historically constructed and surmountable. It does not mean the loss of meaning however,

the removal of absolute identity (as it is the product of a chain of events) and tracing its descent reveals the accidental changes, mistakes, miscalculations and branchings. Identity's artifactual state today is not the result of a degenerative process from a high and 'pure' beginning; identity has always been artifactual. Laying the foundations or essential unity does not aim at revealing continuity, it is seeing a lot of factors that have been brought together by accidental conjunctions. Historically singular events underlie the mentioned path of development. In the 19th century the very discipline of history was under ideological influences. As we shed the legitimation anxiety we can go back to investigating events. Subjugated knowledge is knowledge under domination, scientific knowledge has hidden certain pieces of knowledge under formal systemization, the area of interest for genealogy is exactly this unaccepted knowledge.

Foucault's conception of subjectivity seems to imply that it is "the relationship of consciousness one maintains with oneself"⁴⁶. The "things" which are named by us through building a relationship of consciousness with ourselves -from among the identities provided by the dominant power- becomes our identity and the experiences under these identities constitute our "subjective experience". At this point analysing all of these and the practices in the context of the relationship of the historical process with power and its effect on the subject is of importance.

Again by referring to Foucault (1991; 1980), we can say that a distinction can be made between discourses that reinforce and legitimize the existing forms of oppression and those that oppose them. Oppression itself create internal contradictions and these open a

⁴⁶ I owe this definition to Assoc. Prof. F. Keskin. (personal communication and lecture notes)

way for a creative reaction on the part of the oppressed against their own conditions of living. Besides, as Foucault suggests, analysing the power and oppression discourse/practices in their uniqueness enables us to understand those practices better and thus makes it possible to resist them. Such a theoretical framework enables one to understand the structure of the resistance against every kind of hegemonic ideology as well as its oppressive and besieging qualities, and from this point of view, stresses the importance of a comparative research methodology that aims to evaluate every discourse practice in its uniqueness.

Here it should not be forgotten that “language” and “meaning” are not neutral tools for the expression of all these, in fact, the connection between power and meaning is a major concern of post-structuralist thinkers:

“Language highlights certain features of the objects it represents, certain meanings of the situations it describes. Once designations in language become accepted, one is constrained by them. Language inevitably structures one’s own experience of reality as well as the experience of those whom one communicates.” (Hare-Mustin, Marecek, 1988, p. 455-464)

Body exists as the physical part of the being. But whenever it is articulated with a new discourse (which appeared as a result of the pressure of patriarchy, Western thought, etc.) the behavior and image are recombined, and thus the “image” is objectified. This process is conceptualised and problematized in different ways.

When Foucault (1991; 1980) looks at normalization, he looks at how the constraints can be overcome. The issue - according to Foucault (1991; 1980) - is not making a distinction between normal-abnormal/pathological; rather it is to transcend the history of the “normal” and the constraints it brings, which according to him is a practice of freedom. When normalization is involved with the relation of consciousness one has with oneself, the person becomes “insane, criminal, dirty, lowly etc.”. Therefore, as Foucault points out, the discourses that are powerful in forming and shaping the human body/mind should be studied. (Ghannam, 1997, p.4)

In the light of what Foucault has shown us, we can go through what we have seen so far for the last time. We have started with mind-body dichotomy, and have seen how this dichotomy is articulated with certain games and discourses to create another ‘game of truth’. We have looked at the Ancient Greek practices to understand how the split between ‘knowing the self’ and ‘care of the self’, -*historical a priori*- might have provided the Western subjectivity discourse. Then we have been introduced to psychology; mainly the ideas of Freud and Lacan, and how the psychoanalytical attempt to reveal the underlying causes of the problematization, of this pathology of the self have interpreted by them. The unconscious defense mechanisms, the role of memory, projections and repetitions have come under our magnifier; the construction and the function of the ego have argued.

Ego’s co-called omniscience, as if it is ‘independently existent on its own side’ have discussed at length and we have seen how the construction of the *symbolic* and the language went along with the construction of the self, creating an alienation and illusion. ‘*The discourse of the Other*’, as Lacan vehemently debates has helped us to understand how through the Imaginary order the *symbolic* –language, culture identity etc.- has shaped

the sense of ‘self’ in relation to the Other, and how self have become a symptom of the symbolic –of the unconscious- interference. This symptom, this problematization have found its way through the expression of the *jouissance* at best, the suffering –*pathos*, and *dukkha*- ; along with conceptions and perceptions causing a relative difference between “appearance and reality” thus leaving the modern Western self in a poignant situation. A careful addendum have also included about the neural activity in the brain, mirror neurons in particular, to discuss the establishment of the mental and behavioral patterns of the empathetic simulation and emulation . The neuroscientific data on mirror neurons show that via empathetic processing our brain actually perceive actions and things done by others as it is own, and manipulating perception with conscious effort –whether it is to heal a trauma or train the mind for meditative stability- is possible. For developing a skillful meditative understanding, empathy and compassion (as a *bodhicitta*⁴⁷ motivation) towards other beings are the second important step of realizing and remaining on the view of emptiness.

Therefore the very faculties which are used to imprison us can be used to liberate us when we become aware of those articulations and illusions. Repetition can also be a key to dissolving old patterns and installing new ones, also developing a consistent practice of mindfulness. We have said memories prepare us for future scenarios, and when the thought patterns of past and future interface, same regions are activated in the brain. Then whenever an individual release a blockage, an ‘unfinished business’ through katharsis or any other transformative process by contemplating and changing the patterns of the trauma; the meaning we attribute to those memories and often even the memories

⁴⁷ Enlightened-Mind. The mind dedicated to attain Buddhahood in order to help all sentient beings. “conventional bodhicitta” is either engaging or aspiring, “ultimate bodhicitta” is a wisdom motivated by conventional bodhicitta directly realizing emptiness.

themselves change. (That's all what psychotherapy aims about) Since they are subject to change, then perhaps phenomenas such as synchronicity –simultaneously abiding in the present- is also relevant to our discussion upon the relativity of perception and conception.

The Buddhist philosophy of the mind have explicitly used throughout the text to analyze the conceptual imputation of the existence of phenomena; therefore dependent origination and the view of emptiness have discussed in detail and ‘independently existent self’ discourse has analyzed in depth. How this caused a false *proximity without intimacy*, which is unbearable for us—as the source of *lack* and suffering- until we realize that it is illusory is something we need to bear in mind if we want to pursue and contribute to the practices of freedom Foucault defines. Buddhist techniques of mind training (*lojong* in Tibetan) not only give us many hints and insights, but also can help us to improvise new dimensions for the practice of freedom. If the practices of freedom according to Foucault aims transforming the relationship that the individual has with her/himself, then those intrinsic/immanent mechanisms of the self we suffer can be diverted and transformed by tools given us by the Buddhist approaches of the mind as well. However, this shouldn't be seen simply choosing one discourse upon another; because:

“For Foucault, freedom is not a universal norm nor a final realizable state, and thinking that it is may blind us to the ways that new institutions and practices may result in new ways of domination. However, domination is not total because not all the power is normalizing, disciplinary power. Power itself is neither good nor bad; it is equally implicated in both resistance and domination.” (McLaren, 2002, p.36-37)

Foucault claims that power can be positive and productive and also says that power is nonsubjective in the sense that individuals do not *have* power, rather they participate in it. (McLaren, 2002, p.39)

Training on meditative awareness and mindfulness to transform ourselves can be counted among the important steps of the practices of freedom. (and in Buddhist sense, a practice leading liberation and enlightenment.) As the famous quote goes, we must be the change we wish to see in the world. This way of resistance against the problematization that has been imposed upon us by the discourse of the self, *mutatis mutantis*, is similar to Marxist idea of practice, since theory without practice is also condemned by him and continuous practice is the only way to realization on mind training. As Marx says:

“Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it.” (Marx, 1845)

Marx criticise Feuerbach and all hitherto-existing materialism of not conceiving human activity itself as a practice and sensuous activity, because then understanding the significance of ‘revolutionary’, of ‘practical-critical’, activity would be impossible.

“The materialist doctrine that men are products of circumstances and upbringing, and that, therefore, changed men are products of changed circumstances and changed upbringing, forgets that it is men who change circumstances and that the educator must himself be educated. Hence this doctrine is bound to divide society into two parts, one of which is superior to society. The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity or self-change [*Selbstveränderung*] can be conceived and rationally understood only as revolutionary practice.” (Ibid.)

Like Foucault anticipates individuals participating in power that is productive and nonsubjective for practices of freedom; like the aspirants listen, recite and look upon the very practice of the profound perfection of wisdom; –*prajnaparamita*- (which the *bodhisattvas* rely) the very coincidence of the changing circumstances and of human activity or self-change – perhaps then the set of practices we have discussed here would be also a part of it- Marx mentions would be unceased at the present until ‘the educator himself be educated’-and liberated.

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