

**Democracy to come: Reconsider our thinking of democracy through Heidegger,
Levinas, and Derrida**

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Introduction

The pursuit of a perfect form of democracy has been one of the major themes in the history of philosophy and traditional philosophy put most of their faith and effort into metaphysics and subjectivity. Such thinking insists that the truth must be there in the world for me to find it; and if I have not found it yet, only because I have not think hard enough. The question of “what is” and “what ought to be has remained the content of thinking and analysis. However, I am tempted to argue that there has been a lacuna in the process of subjective thinking, that is, the questioning itself has been left unexamined. The construction of subjectivity starts its thinking with a principle which is pre-supposed. Hence the horizon in which one initiate the act of thinking is the one and only focus of my analysis. The beforehand of the thinking must be re-examined before jumping to the content of one’s thinking. Thus, the entire project, in a nutshell, is designed to disprove the validity of the horizon of subjectivity and offer an alternate horizon to initiate the thinking.

This project attempts to reconsider our thinking of democracy through three of the most significant figures of post-modern continental philosophy: Heidegger, Levinas, and Derrida. The main content of my critique would not be the idea of democracy itself; hence, I do not propose ideals otherwise than democracy such as Marxism, Socialism, Maoism, etc. The essential point of this project is to offer deconstruction as the alternative horizon to initiate the act of thinking. More importantly, I am tempted to say that deconstructive thinking is prior to entertaining the mechanism or features

of democracy. In my articulation of the legitimacy of deconstruction, I intend to argue that the possibility of thinking about democracy is necessarily conditioned by deconstruction.

In the first section of Chapter 1, I start with one of the most revolutionary and significant critique of subjectivity—Martin Heidegger. Modern philosophy, to a certain extent, owes a great deal to Descartes's *cogito ergo sum*, which granted the trajectory of philosophical investigation the foundation of subjectivity. This form of subjectivity establishes the primacy and independence of the "I", that is, my thinking is always independent from whatever is outside of me. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger radically criticized such thinking and offered an alternate answer to the question of being. Essentially, Heidegger argued that my thinking occurs within a horizon (world) that necessarily conditions my thinking. Heidegger was the unpassable philosopher of the post-modern period because not only does he undermined the significance of subjectivity, but Heidegger also brings about the value of examining the relationship between my thinking and the world. For Heidegger, my thinking and my being is conditioned by the rest of the world. Heidegger's phenomenological account of the nature of being offers the possibility of re-examining the subjectivity within the idea of liberal democracy.

After Heidegger's critique of the overall enterprise of subjectivity, a more specific analysis of the subjectivity within liberal democracy becomes possible in section 2. The purpose of such analysis is to reveal human's way of dealing with the world, which conditions the necessity to entertain the problem. In a nutshell, the mechanism

of liberal democracy is based on collective opinion. Such mechanism necessarily presupposes the primacy of our thinking, that is to say, the world lies there as something for me utilize and consume. Therefore, the world plays a secondary role in human's way of dealing with the world. The primary role of the entire process is our thinking, which assigns the utility to the world so that we can consume the world for our thinking. The problem of such subjectivity is that liberal democracy fails to recognize the role of the world in the process of thinking. Hence the entire horizon in which human initiate the thinking necessarily becomes problematic. Heidegger argued that my thinking is conditioned by the world and the being of beings in the world is also conditioned by my thinking. The world and my thinking are on a equiprimordial ground; and liberal democracy fails to acknowledge the significance of the world within the phenomenon. Such failure leads my discussion to the relationship between modern technology and the death of human thinking in the next section.

Heidegger argued that the balance of the equiprimordial relationship between my thinking and the world is broken by the occurrence of modern technology. Our thinking under the construction of subjectivity cannot take a step forward in order to catch up to the development of modern technology. In section 3, I draw a connection between the occurrence of modern technology and liberal democracy to argue that subjective thinking is completely dead. However, liberal democracy's inability to confront the technological world does not indicate a total abandonment of thinking. In my opinion, it is a demand for thinking otherwise than subjectivity because human has become the standing-reserve due to subjectivity.

The entire enterprise of subjectivity, I intend to argue, indicates no more than two things: totality and autonomy. Since my thinking is always in the primary place in all circumstances, the temptation of knowing becomes utterly inevitable. Comprehensively speaking, the very essence of subjectivity claims that, sooner or later, we will know it all; and subjective thinking functions as such because the primacy of my thinking is pre-supposed and unexamined. In Heidegger's critique of metaphysics and subjectivity, the failure and inadequacy of subjectivity was thoroughly revealed; however, Heidegger's solution "Only a god can still save us" is not as satisfying as one might expect it to be. The purpose of Chapter 1 is to show that the construction of subjectivity is problematic and changes are necessary. Heidegger's critique in *Being and Time* and his later concern with modern technology, in my opinion, are more than enough to prove the point that thinking under the construction of subjectivity is dead.

It is not a stretch to argue that many philosophers have provided various alternatives due to the death of subjectivity. Among all of the brilliant philosophers, I find Levinas and Derrida's argument extremely appealing and insightful. Following their line of thinking requires a thorough understanding of one major thesis—the other.

The significance of Levinas's argument is that not only does it undermine the construction of subjectivity, but it also grants primacy to the other. For Levinas, the other necessarily comes prior to the "I" and manifests the "I" into existence. The phenomenon of the other provokes too many problems to demonstrate in this project. In order to concisely make the connection between the phenomenon of the other and

democracy, I only focus on the absolute exteriority of the other in my demonstration of Levinas. The other is something absolutely exterior to the “I”. Such absolute alterity indicates that the “I” may never speak of the other as this or that. The other always remains the wholly other. For Levinas, such absolute alterity that which stops one from knowing or claiming another human being makes ethics first philosophy. Derrida, on the other hand, leads the phenomenon of the other to a different trajectory—the otherness of ideals and events.

The otherness of an ideal or event was one of the major themes in Derrida’s *Specters of Marx*; and such otherness eventually lead my discussion to the core of the project—democracy to come. Throughout the history of philosophy, the majority of philosophers’ effort are devoted to the pursuit of truth—something that is already there for me to find. Following this kind of thinking, democracy has been treated in the same way. People have been pursuing the perfect form of democracy and society as if such perfection can be achieved at some point in time. Derrida proposed otherwise than such thinking. For Derrida, there is no such thing as the perfect form of democracy. Democracy, as an ideal, is always yet to come but never comes.

My demonstration of Derrida’s democracy to come is divided into two parts: (1) other to come—l’avenir and (2) democracy to come. The purpose of the democracy to come is to provide a thorough analysis of the phenomenon, that is, the underlying phenomenon that conditions the investigation of any ideal. In this case, democracy cannot just be the product of some logical argumentation or statistical analysis. To respect the real future (l’avenir) and the singularity of each moment, one may never

claim the end of any ideal or history. Deconstruction provides a horizon to initiate the act of thinking, which is completely different from the horizon of subjectivity. I am tempted to argue that deconstruction gives the right to initiate the act of thinking.

Chapter 1: Heidegger and Liberal Democracy

Section 1.1

Heidegger in Being and Time: Dasein

Martin Heidegger, in *Being and Time*, argued that traditional philosophy founded its ontological investigation upon metaphysical thinking. The being of entities in the world has been often misinterpreted and overlooked; and Heidegger insisted that to reveal the being of entities we must first investigate the being of ourselves, which he named Dasein. Heidegger started his analysis of Dasein with his demonstration of the “world”, which not only brought new insights to the interpretation of the “world” as a philosophical category, but also undermined the significance of the Cartesian ego. A novel holistic view of the world was proposed in Heidegger’s work. Indeed, the holistic view of the world does not refer to a scientific understanding of all the entities in the world; instead, the world ought to be interpreted as a unitary phenomenon. Investigating the difference between Heidegger’s understanding of the human being and the Cartesian ego is a necessary step for an inquiry regarding Heidegger and liberal democracy.

While distinguishing phenomenological analysis of human being from other disciplines such as biology, anthropology, and psychology; Heidegger put most of the historical interpretations of Dasein¹ into two categories: “*animal rationale*” and the

¹ Da-sein in German means “being there”. “Da” means there and “Sein” means to be. In *Being and Time*,

Christian theological definition. “The two sources which are relevant for the traditional anthropology—the Greek definition and the clue which theology has provided—indicated that over and above the attempt to determine the essence of ‘man’ as an entity, the question of his Being has remained forgotten, and that this Being is rather conceived as something obvious or ‘self-evident’ in the sense of the *Being-present-at-hand* of other created Things.” (Heidegger, 2010. 75) For Heidegger, the idea that our existence is generated from an indubitable metaphysical principle is deeply embedded in both the Greek and Christian investigations of ourselves. In other words, these two anthropological conclusions take the metaphysical principle of our existence for granted. It is not a stretch to claim that metaphysics has been one of the major subjects for philosophy and that many of the modern philosophical interpretations of our existence can be traced back to the influence of Descartes.

In *Discourse on Method*, Descartes made a revolutionary claim: “cogito ergo sum” (I think therefore I am) (Descartes, 1993.), which became one of the most controversial topics for modern philosophy. Although, many philosophers have questioned the Cartesian ego from various angle, Descartes’ contribution to modern philosophy cannot be overlooked. Descartes set the most influential foundations of modern metaphysics: The first metaphysical principle is that I exist. Not only does such principle put the “I” in the primary position, but also isolates the existence of the “I” from the rest of the world. Although Descartes’ philosophical inquiry contributed to post-modern philosophical investigations as such investigation attempt to think

Heidegger used Dasein to refer to human being’s existence.

otherwise; Descartes' work has also directed a certain trajectory in modern philosophy to develop further his central insight.

For instance, Heidegger claimed that "Historically, the aim of the existential analytic can be made plainer by considering Descartes, who is credited with providing the point of departure for modern philosophical inquiry by his discovery of the 'cogito sum'. He investigates the 'cogitare' of the 'ego', at least within certain limits. On the other hand, he leaves the 'sum' completely undiscussed, even though it is regarded as no less primordial than the cogito." (Heidegger, 2010. 71) Descartes' "cogito ergo sum" pre-supposes the enclosed-ness of entities as well as ourselves. In other words, my existence, for example, does not depend on anything beyond myself to be the "point of departure" for further philosophical investigations. Descartes implemented the method of doubt² in order to avoid pre-supposing any foundations of his philosophical inquiry. By doubting everything that he has learned or known, Descartes questioned the validity of the existence of the world, which was a groundbreaking philosophical quest. In a nutshell, Descartes suspicion is that there might be a powerful demon, who tricks me into believing that the world is what I perceive it to be; while the reality is otherwise than my perception. Meanwhile, Descartes made the claim that "I think therefore I exist" must be true in any circumstance. One might logically conclude that in Descartes' point of view, the "cogito ergo sum" can never be questioned and this principle most certainly does not depend on anything else to be true. To put it in negation, one's relationship to the

² A method of philosophical thinking used by Descartes in *Meditations on the First Philosophy*. The essence of this method, in a nutshell, is to not assume any principle in his thinking so he would not take anything for granted.

world is not a constitutive component for one's existence or Being. The absolute primacy and independence of the "I" brings about the first problem regarding political subjectivity. Under the construction of subjectivity, political actions are first and foremost determined by my thinking; and more importantly, my thinking is free from everything else, that is to say, the source and existence of my thinking is transcendental. The problem of subjectivity is that it takes the act of thinking for granted. People have been questioning "what is" and "what ought to be", but the act of thinking that which drives and conditions these two questions are left unexamined. Heidegger attempted a fundamental reconsideration of the first philosophical question: what is the nature of being? The significance of Being and Time is that thinking itself is not taken for granted in Heidegger's fundamental ontology. Thus, I intend to argue that Heidegger's phenomenology offers an alternate way of initiating the act of thinking, which not only disrupts the entire enterprise of political subjectivity, but also introduces a new language for our recourse to do philosophy.

For Heidegger, entities within the world are no longer isolated from the rest of the world; and their relations to the world are open for investigation again. Heidegger put a question mark on the traditional analytic and scientific interpretation of beings; that is to say, scientifically deterministic qualities of entities might not be able to reveal the being of entities. For Heidegger, entities, as well as Dasein, ought to be interpreted by their "being-in" the totality of the world; and the phenomenological foundation of such interpretation is the most primordial phenomenon—Being-in-the-world. Although Being and Time offers a fundamental ontology that encompasses all,

this discussion primarily focuses on the significance of Dasein's being, which leads to a reconstruction of the act of thinking itself.

Heidegger characterized "Being-in-the-world in general as the basic state of Dasein." This characterization of "Being-in" does not indicate the spatial relationship between Dasein and the world. Instead, Being-in-the-world refers to the phenomenon that Dasein always already has the worldhood of the world as the background condition for Dasein's being. Heidegger does not entertain the problem of 'from whence comes everything' or 'what is the entire causal chain of Dasein becoming so and so?' Heidegger was concerned about "To the things themselves" of being there in the totality and with the totality. (Heidegger, 2010. 58) For Heidegger, the nature of being is not constituted by quality A, B, and C or connections X, Y, and Z between one thing and another. Being does not come from anywhere or any incidents such as the big bang of the universe, but lies in the totality that is always already there.

A hammer, for example, cannot be a hammer just because the hammer can put nails into walls. The being of a hammer has to do with its lying within the totality of the worldly phenomenon. In Heidegger's demonstration, Dasein has its concern³ with the environment and understanding of the world; thus when Dasein takes a circumspection of the environment, a shelter is understood to be needed. Such need is not generated from human being's instinctual human nature; but because the totality of the world is always already set up in such way for such concern to be a possibility

³ The problem of human nature is not entertained in Being and Time. Dasein's "having concern" is the phenomenon that which shows itself to us as it is such in itself. Phenomenology, in most of the circumstances, does not demand the truth behind the phenomenon. But taking whatever the phenomenon shows to us.

for Dasein. Then all of the things that are needed to build a shelter makes a hammer able to be put into use, that is, the totality of the world is primordially set up in such a way for Dasein to bring forth the hammer as a possibility. Therefore, a hammer has “for the sake of something” in the character of its being not only because Dasein possess the intelligence to create such a thing for Dasein’s purpose, but also the hammer’s “Being-in” the totality of the world.

It is crucial to clarify that the Being of the hammer does not depend on others. The word ‘depend’ indicates a hierarchical, chronological, and logical order among things in the world. One would most likely miss Heidegger’s point if one claims that the hammer might cease to exist without the beginning of the universe. The reason or causality behind the existence of the hammer might be valuable to investigate, but it would not be phenomenology; for Heidegger, the validity of the worldhood comes before any reasoning or analysis as a phenomenon, not an argument. Thus Heidegger’s interpretation of the world is not an enclosed system built upon causal relationship as in one needs shelter then one creates a hammer. The world primordially exists where the hammer can be put into use by Dasein in the most appropriate place. For both the Being of Dasein and entities within the world, its “Being-in-the-world” is always primary to the qualities one can name by “staring at it”. (Heidegger, 2010. 98) Being-in-the-world refers to the state of Being wherein everything is primordially in the most appropriate ‘place’ before any understanding or analysis. According to Heidegger, the closer you are to entities within the world and Dasein, the less you actually see; that is to say, analysis and understanding merely

push us away from the nature of Being.

Heidegger's way of approaching the question "what is the nature of being" annihilates the independence and primacy of my thinking in the most fundamental way. For Heidegger, my act of thinking and the content of my thinking can only be so under the condition of Being-in-the-world. In other words, my thinking necessarily comes after the state of being in such a world and there must be a relationship between my thinking and the world. My argument regarding the problem of political subjectivity does not entertain the content of one's thinking. My main concern is under what condition does one initiate the act of thinking. The content of one's thinking such as ontological understanding of the world must rest upon Being-in-the-world as the fundamental phenomenon. Therefore, when the absolute independence and primacy of my thinking becomes problematic at a fundamental level, the entire enterprise of political subjectivity is destroyed from its very core.

The significance of Heidegger's phenomenology is that it changes our view of how the world operates in a foundational fashion. Hans Lindahl concluded: "Heidegger is concerned to show that Descartes' *cogito ergo sum*, the founding principle of modern metaphysics, seals human being's interpretation of itself as a subjectum, as the ground of being and truth, and, in the same stroke, of the world as a picture." (Lindahl, 2008. 325) For Descartes and many metaphysicians, the world is completely irrelevant to human being, that is to say, that the world and the human are utterly separated beings that are independent from each other. Moreover, human being can impact the world to a certain extent, but it can never change the very nature of the

being of the world, or vice versa. In other words, similar to Descartes' dualism claim, there are certain fundamental qualities in everything that will remain the same forever. In the next section, I intend to argue that the concept of liberal democracy builds upon such self-certainty and subjectivity; and such self-certainty is not benign.

Section 1.2

Heidegger, liberal democracy, and political subjectivity

There have been many forms of subjectivity and objectivity in the history of philosophy, but Descartes' subjectivity in the "cogito ergo sum" will be the content of my analysis due to the primacy of the "I" in his argument. The significance of the "cogito ergo sum" is that it puts the ego in the most primary place. The primacy of the principle is not only an indubitable "point of departure" for Descartes, but I intend to argue that such principle is also the starting point for the operation of political subjective thinking. Heidegger's phenomenology, in addition to his reconsideration of being, provokes our reflection upon human being's way of dealing with the world. Liberal democracy provides a decent platform for us to apply this line of thinking. This section will focus on designating Heidegger's way of emerging into the world as opposed to the sense of subjectivity in the idea of liberal democracy.

The subject-object relationship system starts with the foundation of an "I". The idea is that there is an "I" and the "world" wherein the "I" exist independently and separately from the "world". The "I", in relation to whatever is beyond and outside the "I", possesses sovereignty, which gives supreme hierarchical importance to the essence of "my" existence. The significance of such principle is that 'I exist as a thinking being' does not depend on anything beyond this principle to be true. In such case, my thinking necessarily conditions the existence of the "I" and it brings about the content of the discussion—the sense of subjectivity within the idea of liberal

democracy. Rigorously speaking, the problem becomes “our” thinking rather than my own thinking when it comes to liberal democracy.

Liberal democracy produces a decision based on collective opinion, that is, our thinking. This decision is expected to alter our existence into a certain form and the rest of the world is for us to consume in order to make the decision into reality. Within this process, human being tries to determine its own existence by, first and foremost, our thinking. This is not to say that the rest of the world does not play a role in this at all, but rather as merely a tool, which human beings can use and utilize for the implementation of our thinking. In the context of liberal democracy, thinking is more primary than the tools which we use to turn thinking into reality, that is to say, thinking can be accomplished by thinking itself and it does not depend on anything but our thinking. The word “primacy” in the “primacy of our thinking” indicates not only the chronological immediacy, but also a hierarchical importance. The Cartesian ego is constructed upon the “I think”, thus my existence is always primarily determined by my thinking and then whatever is outside of my existence can be recognized by me. In the idea of liberal democracy, the rest of the world can be put into use only because of my thinking. To consume the world for the sake of our thinking is necessarily a consequence of our thinking⁴. As Hans Lindahl claimed: “To reveal the world as a picture is to view cogitare as an objectification, whereby the subject projects the world as the domain made available for its unconditioned self-security.” (Lindahl, 2008. 325)

⁴ The word “thinking” in this paragraph indicates no more than Descartes’ thinking in *Discourse on Method* and *Meditation on First Philosophy*.

Heidegger proposed differently in regards to the issue of primacy between our thinking and the world. For Heidegger, Dasein's concern and the worldhood of the world are equiprimordial, that is, there is no causal hierarchy involved. Therefore, human being's thinking does not necessarily come prior to things in the world; nor does it condition the being of things in the world. Dasein's concern is conditioned by Being-in-the-world, that is, being in such a world; and the being of things in the world is conditioned by Dasein's ability⁵ to encounter the being of these things. These two phenomenon are not intertwined causal relationships, but rather interpenetrations that are equally primordial. Thus the role of the world is not something for me to consume or something that serves my thinking; instead, the world conditions my thinking to be so. Although Heidegger did not comment on liberal democracy in *Being and Time*, it can still be argued that Heidegger would claim that the sense of subjectivity is fundamentally embedded in the idea of liberal democracy.

Some might argue, based on Heidegger's argument, there is no longer a concept of free will since Dasein's being is conditioned by the world or more precisely, Being-in-the-world. Heidegger noted "Freedom governs the free space in the sense of cleared, that is to say, the revealed. ... All revealing comes out of the free, goes into the free, and brings into the free. ... Freedom is the realm of the destining that at any given time starts a revealing on its way." (Heidegger, 1954. 99-113) Heidegger's freedom is utterly different from the free will in the idea of liberal democracy. For Heidegger, freedom is Dasein's revealing or bringing forth within the world that

⁵ "Ability" does not refer to any form of human nature. For Heidegger, this "ability" is also conditioned by Being-in-the-world, but it also allows Dasein to encounter beings in the world for the beings to be.

which conditions Dasein's being. Dasein can only be free when Being-in-the-world where contains infinite possibilities⁶ for Dasein to reveal and encounter. Dasein's freedom lies in "emerging" into the possibilities that are already within the world. Whatever human beings do, it is always something that which is done within the world, but not to the world from above. For Heidegger, there has never been such a thing as absolute freedom, that is, absolutely free out of any context and platform. The problem of freedom can only be entertained within a certain realm of framework because such freedom is conditioned by the worldhood of the world and the historical context at any given time. Thus, freedom does not come from the successful implementation of one's will to the world from above, but rather "at any given time starts a revealing on its way". The free will, or a collection of free will within the idea of liberal democracy is not tenable for human beings. The concept of freedom must be reconsidered and it must be entertained in the realm of already being in the world. Whatever is yet to be revealed or encountered must be already in the world.

Now it becomes clear that Heidegger does not destroy the construction of subjectivity by debating the validity of every aspect of the whole construction. According to the previous demonstration of Heidegger's argument, the construction of political subjectivity is tackled from the basis. The question now becomes "under what condition am I thinking" and "in what horizon does my thinking comes to be" instead of immediately jumping to analyzing the content of my thinking. I am tempted

⁶ There might or might not be infinite possibilities, but Heidegger does not consider such problem worth entertaining. Phenomenology is about "To the things themselves" as Heidegger claimed in *Being and Time*. Hypothetical problems are barely entertained in this field of inquiry.

to say that the *initiating* must be properly investigated and questioned before the analysis of the *initiated*. Heidegger provided an inquiry of the *before the beginning of thinking*, that is, before the “I think therefore I am.” The practical analysis of political philosophy and sociology are absolutely valuable in their own way; however, my only concern in this project is the stage of *initiating*. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger reconstructed the stage of initiating by pointing out the illusion of independence and primacy of my thinking; and in this sense, political subjectivity becomes problematic on a fundamental level.

Since neither did Heidegger develop any political theories nor has he made enough comments on liberal democracy in his early works, some may object that it is fruitless to merely apply Heidegger’s thinking on the nature of being to the concept of liberal democracy. Moreover, some might argue, the distinction between metaphysical understanding of the world (liberal democracy) and Heidegger’s understanding of the world (phenomenology) does not seem to be worthy of entertaining. However, such application of Heidegger’s thoughts is extremely crucial for connecting Heidegger’s comment on liberal democracy⁷ in his later career and his claims regarding modern technology in the next section. The danger of human’s way of dealing with the way of technology and liberal democracy’s inability to confront the technological world precisely bring out the practical sphere of my investigation regarding subjectivity. Under the construction of subjectivity, the dominance and primacy of my thinking is gradually annihilated by the technological world because of human’s constant failure

⁷ Heidegger shortly mentioned liberal democracy in relation to modern technology in *Heidegger, Der Spiegel Interview*.

at recognizing the horizon that conditions my thinking.

Section 1.3

Modern technology and the death of thinking

Heidegger made some controversial claims about the dangers of modern technology in his later essays and interview. In *Heidegger, Der Spiegel interview*, Heidegger mentioned liberal democracy in response to one of Spiegel's questions: "I would indeed describe them⁸ as halves because I don't think they genuinely confront the technological world." (Heidegger, 2009.) Although Heidegger was more concerned about modern technology than liberal democracy in this comment; in my opinion, such comment is not only noticeable, but also worth entertaining.

During the later period of Heidegger's academic career, he devoted a significant amount of attention to the occurrence of modern technology. The disruption of modern technology to human's state of being in the world is now a serious problem after human beings become the standing-reserve. The term standing-reserve precisely refers to Heidegger's critique of subjectivity wherein my thinking is primary and independent from the world. When my thinking is primary and independent, the world is considered staying there and waiting for my disruption such as utilizing, changing, destroying, etc. "Standing-reserve" radically indicates that the world is essentially *for* my thinking. Heidegger's concern with modern technology is that, in a nutshell, through human's constant temptation of treating the world as standing-reserve, human beings will eventually become the standing-reserve in relation to modern technology.

⁸ "them" refers to liberal democracy

I intend to apply Heidegger's concern of modern technology to the analysis of liberal democracy's incapacity to confront the technological world. Linking to the previous section, liberal democracy is incapable of confronting modern technology because, within the idea of liberal democracy, the equiprimordiality between Dasein and the world is superseded by subjectivity. Liberal democracy does not recognize or acknowledge the phenomenon of being conditioned by the worldhood of the world; and this situation is dangerous to Heidegger.

It seems rational and justified to think of modern technology as an instrument. Heidegger noted: "We ask the question concerning technology when we ask what it is. Everyone knows the two statements that answer our question. One says: Technology is a means to an end. The other says: Technology is a human activity." (Heidegger, 1954. 320) It is hard to propose otherwise than such a coherent, metaphysical, and logical answer of the question 'what is technology?' For Heidegger, instrumentality originates from subjectivity; in other words, technology is considered as an instrument when it is put into a position that is hierarchically below thinking. The "I" first thinks and then applies the thinking to my using of technology as an instrument; or to put it more provocatively, to treat technology as an instrument is to say that thinking necessarily conditions the being of technology. For Heidegger, the danger lies in such thinking which treats the world as standing-reserve; more importantly, such thinking is embedded in the idea of liberal democracy.

The danger originates from a certain form of thinking, which Heidegger characterized as enframing. For Heidegger, the problems of validity, logical

consistency, and political correctness come already under the construction of subjectivity, that is to say, statements and arguments regarding these problems are products of thinking under the subjectivity. Enframing, on the other hand, refers to before any content of my thinking. In other words, enframing characterizes the horizon of subjectivity in which man initiate the thinking. Such horizon limited man's thinking into a certain framework in which the primacy and independence of my thinking is the point of departure for all further inquiries and investigation. This action of enframing is the result of assuming the primacy and independence of my thinking.

For the sake of the entire project, the relationship between enframing and the subjectivity within liberal democracy will be the content of my following analysis. Heidegger describes this particular form of thinking in *The Question Concerning Technology*: "In this way the illusion comes to prevail that everything man encounters exists only insofar as it is his construct." (Heidegger, 1954. 332) Rigorously speaking, although Heidegger did not mention the problem of subjectivity in the essay, this characterization of enframing can be connected to the critique of subjectivity. Such thinking puts the "I" in the primary place wherein everything beyond my existence is essentially for me to consume and order. Both the subjectivity within the idea of liberal democracy and the content of Heidegger's characterization of the illusion articulates the primacy of the "I" and my thinking. The word "enframing" indicates the lacunae of the opposite side of the "I" in the equiprimordiality and interpenetration. The "I" takes everything beyond myself as hierarchically below my thinking, which "no longer concerns man even as object, but exclusively as standing-

reserve.” (Heidegger, 1954. 332)

But what is the problem to take everything as standing-reserve, for me, or serves my thinking? Heidegger was confronted with such question in the interview: “One could naively object: “What do we have to come to terms with here? Everything functions. More and more electric power plants are being built. Production is flourishing. People in the highly technological parts of the earth are well provided for. We live in prosperity. What is really missing here?” (Heidegger, 2009. 320) This is a crucial question to ask because it would be absolutely fruitless to entertain such a problem if there is no significance in pointing out the danger of undermining the opposite side of the “I” within the equiprimordiality. Heidegger responded: “Everything functions. That is exactly what is uncanny. Everything functions and the functioning drives us further and further to more functioning.” (Heidegger, 2009. 320) The problem occurs in the “more functioning.”

The opposite side of my being within the equiprimordiality, to draw from the previous section, conditions my Being-in-the-world, which is the basic state of my being. When this side is undermined or enframed into the realm of subjectivity, “then he comes to the point where he himself will have to be taken as standing reserve.” (Heidegger, 1954. 332) The crucial thing to notice in the phenomenon is not just the “more functioning”, but the world that which conditions my being challenges me more and more. The “I” is in a position that my thinking serves modern technology; and modern technology is getting closer and closer to the position of primacy. For Heidegger, this “more functioning” is not the product of my thinking; instead, it is the

product of modern technology ordering me as the standing-reserve. When Heidegger said: “Yet when destining reigns in the mode of enframing, it is the supreme danger.”; the actual problem becomes clear—the subjectivity within the idea of liberal democracy destines man to “encounter only himself” and “more functioning”. Initiating the act of thinking within the framework of subjectivity seems to be an endless road for human being if we do not develop alternate paths.

Now that the problem has become clear, it is necessary to entertain the possibilities of a solution for the problem. Since Heidegger brilliantly proposed the problem and directed our attention to the problem, one might wonder if Heidegger had a solution already. Unfortunately, in my opinion, Heidegger’s answer is not as satisfying as one might expect it to be because Heidegger replied to Spiegel: “Only a god can still save us.” (Heidegger, 2009. 11) In such case, it is not stretch to seek the answer from other thinkers. This “supreme danger” leads me to further inquiries for an alternative when the line of “my thinking” has become a dead end. The death of subjectivity leads me to one of the most famous philosophers of the post-modern period, who proposed the extremely influential altruism—Emmanuel Levinas.

Levinas pointed out that Heidegger has undermined the problem of the other in the phenomenological analysis; then Levinas articulated a new way of thinking by putting the other in a primary place. Once again this project is not designed to fix the method of thinking under subjectivity; the primary task of the project is to re-examine the horizon in which we initiate our thinking in the first place. Heidegger, I intend to conclude, thoroughly devalued the horizon of subjectivity; however, Heidegger’s

point of departure for initiating the act of thinking, in my opinion, is not as convincing as Levinas's. To devalue the horizon of subjectivity is only the beginning of the reconsideration, the rest of the project is designed to offer another horizon, which might be a better place to initiate the act of thinking. Ironically, the horizon I intend to offer turns out to be a non-horizon horizon, without no realm, essence, principle, or center operation. The idea of no-horizon horizon will be demonstrated towards the end of the project. Thus, next chapter is designed to investigate if the possible alternative lies in thinking otherwise than subjectivity; instead of otherwise than thinking and just waiting for the God who can save us.

Chapter II: Same, Other, and Deconstruction

Section 2.1

Levinas and Heidegger: same and other

It is possible to discern a pattern throughout the history of philosophy, as one negation after another, from Socrates to Nietzsche, from Descartes to Heidegger, etc. The example of Levinas is no exception, although his concerns have broad implications. Levinas' proposed an alternative way of thinking, which for Levinas was otherwise than every method of philosophical investigation, including Heidegger. In this section, I intend to demonstrate Levinas' thinking as an alternative to the tradition and to Heidegger himself—thinking otherwise than from the “I”. It is safe to say that Levinas has brought us into the new age of reflection; and in order to thoroughly connect Levinas' thinking to our topic, there are two concepts that need to be laid out—the same and the other.

The point of departure for many philosophers other than Levinas is the “I”, but this idea of the “I” is different from the Cartesian subjectivity that Heidegger was critiquing. Descartes' “I” in the cogito ergo sum is an isolated “thing” that remains fixed once established. In other words, for Descartes, the “I” is nothing but a principle, which can be settled once and for all. The subjectivity that which Levinas was critiquing is rather a horizon under the construction of intelligibility rather than one single principle. Such horizon of subjectivity that in which we used to initiate the act

of thinking is, according to Levinas, the source of the violence we project towards the other.

To draw from the previous section, Heidegger proposed that the phenomenon of “everything functions” that which leads to “more functioning” challenges human to be the standing-reserve. Thus it is not a stretch to conclude that my thinking and acting is utterly conditioned by the challenge that modern technology imposes, that is to say, my being is determined by modern technology, which comes into the picture as something other than me. The expression “death of thinking” does not indicate a denial of the entire realm of thinking; but thinking under the construction of autonomy or within the horizon of subjectivity. In the context of liberal democracy, free will is only possible when man can think under the construction of autonomy. As Levinas noted: “It would be moving toward auto-nomy, a stage in which nothing irreducible would limit thought any longer, in which, consequently, thought, non-limited, would be free.” (Levinas, 1987.48) Nonetheless, Levinas’ critique of autonomy encompasses Heidegger’s phenomenology as well. Although Heidegger proposed the idea of equiprimordiality, his thinking still lies within the horizon of autonomy. In other words, Heidegger still takes the being of the other as reducible because Heidegger’s phenomenology, according to himself, is “to the things themselves.” For Levinas, the gesture of “turning the other into the same” refers to the subject’s attempt to take the other as must be knowable, intelligible, and speak-able.

The horizon of the same is precisely concluded by Levinas as “Freedom, autonomy, the reduction of the other to the same, lead to this formula: the conquest of being by

man over the course of history.” (Levinas, 1987. 48) The idea of “conquest” indicates man’s attempt to encompass all, include all, and dominate all of being. The word “being” indicates a thing that is other than me but for me to know. Even for Heidegger, the concept of Dasein’s encountering the being of beings within the world indicates “knowing” in the structure of phenomenology already. Although Heidegger puts human in a less primary place than the Cartesian ego in *Being and Time*, Dasein’s role in the phenomenon of being is still primordial. In other words, for Heidegger, man must be there in the world for beings to be and such relationship must not be ignored. Levinas approaches the phenomenon from a different angle—the other.

Levinas noted: “Truth implies experience. In the truth a thinker maintains a relationship with a reality distinct from him, other than him—‘absolutely other,’” (Levinas, 1987. 48) In my opinion, this is one of Levinas’ most crucial and significant claims to reflect upon in regards to the problem of the same and the other. It is safe to say that philosophers’ effort to seek the truth and reality has started ever since the ancient Greeks and it has never stopped; and Levinas was no exception. For Levinas, the truth is otherwise than epistemology and the realm of totality under the construction of subjectivity. Such truth, if it is anything at all, can only be realized through the expression of the “absolutely other”.

For Heidegger, Dasein’s basic state of being is Being-in-the-world. The phenomenon of the worldhood is unitary; and the constitutive component of such unitary phenomenon is that of which I can speak. Simply speaking, for many philosophers, there is not merely something they can say about the other, but they can

say all about the other. Levinas imposes a question on such thinking: what if my being is entirely conditioned by the other, that is, the other comes prior to the “I”? This question turns our thinking from the construction of autonomy into heteronomy.

Levinas proposed that man is otherwise than “will and labor”, that is, a being that thinks and acts. Thinking, in Levinas’ view, is not made possible by the will of a subject, but through the other. Levinas considered that “Rational animal cannot mean an animal saddled with reason; the interpenetration of the terms indicates an original structure.” (Levinas, 1987. 27) The first thought comes into the picture when the “I” is aware of the fact that it is separated from the world while being in the world. According to Levinas, “Thought begins at the very point that consciousness becomes conscious of its particularity.” (Levinas, 1987. 27) This particularity is necessarily conditioned by the other, which comes to me as exteriority. There would be no “I” in the world that merely contains the same without difference and distinction; the other calls the “I” out into existence. The “I” can only realize its particularity through the face of the other, which is something distinct from me. Thus, the other must primordially be there for me to acknowledge and recognize that the “I” is distinct from this other, that is, particularity. Here Levinas proposed an utterly different horizon to initiate the act of thinking besides subjectivity. The point of departure, for Levinas, is the event of seeing the face of the other instead of the “I think therefore I am.”

The primacy of the other is defined by Levinas as “Conceiving of a freedom external to my own is the first thought. It marks my very presence in the world.”

(Levinas, 1987. 28) Although this problem is a matter of general, fundamental, and philosophical thinking, it is crucial to point out that Levinas does not deny Being-in-the-world entirely. On the contrary, it is only possible for the “I” comes into existence when the “I” recognize its particularity within the totality. (Levinas, 1987. 28) But to put the state of ‘being in the totality’ in the primary position is “not thinking”, the first thought must be conditioned by the presence of the other. (Levinas, 1987. 25) Hence, to treat the other as the other and not turn it into the same is acknowledging the primacy or primordially of the other that comes before me and conditions the existence of the “I”.

Levinas’ altruism, in relation to the topic of our discussion, lays the groundwork for Derrida’s deconstruction. Indeed, the ethical perspective of Levinas’ philosophy is often considered the most significant part of his work, but only the concept of the “absolutely other” is the most helpful component which directs my discussion to Derrida and democracy to come. The most significant part of Levinas’ altruism is that the other, as something other than me, must remain the other as such the other, that is, foreign, exterior, and distinct from me. This absolute alterity, according to Derrida, is much more extended than the face of another human being. For Derrida, the alterity of an event or ideal is also worth entertaining and reconsideration. For Derrida, in order to think otherwise, to not turn the other into the same, treating the other as such must be one of the most fundamental gestures. This “the other as such” gives possibilities to think alternatively regarding liberal democracy, that is, democracy to come.

Section 2.2

L'avenir: the other to come

Before going directly into the idea of democracy to come, Derrida's "other to come" must be described. Although Derrida's work owes much to a Levinasian altruism, the analysis that introduces the "other to come" remains importantly different from a strictly Levinasian ethics. Moreover, Derrida is not only influenced by Heidegger, but his analysis of the other may be more similar to Heidegger than Levinas. The "other to come" is the underlying phenomenon, which enabled the designation of "democracy to come". Derrida's philosophy can be approached or unpacked through various perspectives; in this project, I intend to start with and focus upon the *l'avenir*, which refers to the other who comes.

In order to conceive of the idea of the other who comes, it is almost necessary to entertain a discussion of time, even to just wander around the edge of the topic. *L'avenir*, which refers to someone who comes, is characterized by Derrida as the "real future." There are two different futures, which Derrida discussed in his work. One is the typical future in our daily context and some philosophical analysis; one which is predictable, such as tomorrow, next month, next century, etc. "But there is a future, *l'avenir* (to come) which refers to someone who comes whose arrival is totally unexpected. For me, that is the real future." (Derrida, 2002) The "real future" that which Derrida emphasized in many of his works will eventually bring out the content of our discussion—democracy to come. This "someone" does not refer to any specific

person such as philosophers who might bring us the enlightenment, but the other who comes. In order to properly demonstrate Derrida's *l'avenir*, two concepts must be thoroughly explained: the other and to come.

For Derrida, the other does not merely refer to the face of the another in Levinasian ethics. The other can also be extended to the alterity of "the event" or ideal. (Derrida, 1994. 82) To draw from Derrida's critique of Fukuyama in *Specters of Marx*, no event or ideal can ever become fixed forever and for all, such as Fukuyama's claim that liberal democracy is the end of history. According to Caputo, the phenomenon of the "other to come" is that "the *tout autre* whose alterity disturbs the complacent circles of the same." (Caputo, 1997. 156) Derrida's other is something outside of the horizon of the same and disrupts the centric operation of such a horizon. To clarify, this other does not indicate a piece of knowledge that lies outside of our current understanding because the word 'knowledge' means it is still within the horizon of the same. Knowledge necessarily indicates that this "something" can be turn into the same, which way of thinking necessarily operates under the construction of subjectivity. For Derrida, it is not simply a matter of expanding the horizon of the same, which is a gesture characterized by Levinas as "The science of yesterday, before the new facts of today, thus makes its way toward the science of tomorrow." (Levinas, 1987. 63) In other words, it is not something that which we yet to understand disrupts the horizon of the same, but the alterity, which is something we may never fully understand. One might object, if we may never fully understand this other who is coming, then how should we proceed with our lives and academic inquiries. It is crucial to point out that

Derrida is not claiming a form of skepticism when he says deconstruction. This question of what to do with deconstruction that which is a step further than the fundamental thinking of the phenomenon will be thoroughly discussed in the next chapter when I get into the problem of hospitality.

The idea of “to come” contain many complexities and therefore it is also extremely difficult to explicate. Therefore, I demonstrate this “to come” by offering an example Derrida used—justice. Derrida argued that “no one can say ‘I am just’”. (Caputo, 1997. 17) One may claim to be right within the framework of law, but not justice. Justice cannot be calculated, fixed, or determined once for good. Derrida claimed: “If he wants to be responsible, to make a decision, he has not simply to apply the law, as a coded program, to a given case, but to reinvent in a singular situation a new just relationship; that means that justice cannot be reduced to a calculation of sanctions, punishments, or rewards.” (Caputo, 1997.17) The important thing to get from Derrida’s argument regarding justice is the singularity of every situation, which means the judge has to “reinvent the law each time.” Indeed, this phenomenon of the singularity is much more fundamental than court case; it refers to the singularity of every “now” at any give time. To stick to the core argument, this singularity is embedded within every now if we, for the sake of discussion, interpret time as a continuation of the “now”.⁹ The truth, which philosophers have been seeking, or the entirety of justice in this case, is always yet to come and never fulfilled since the

⁹ This interpretation does not reveal the entirety of both Derrida and Heidegger’s interpretation of time. However, Derrida’s and Heidegger’s arguments regarding time is not highly relevant to this discussion, but only brings in unnecessary complications.

future is always coming.

The significance of this “to come” for Derrida, is that there is no possible occurrence or event of a closure for liberal democracy such as Fukuyama’s end of history. Under the construction of subjectivity and metaphysics, many would easily claim that here is the truth or the truth is always there for us to find it such as the truth of justice and being just. The truth, for Derrida, is always already yet to come and never fulfilled; and given this always already, nothing may ever claim to be fixed and stabilized for good. Again, one might confuse this with skepticism; and the distinction will be demonstrated in *Chapter 3*.

This “other to come” refers to every other and every now. (Derrida, 1997. 23) According to Derrida, this other to come is a universal structure, which is the underlying phenomenon. This universal structure is characterized by Derrida as messianicity. But this messianicity ought to be distinguished from messianism. For Derrida, the messianicity refers to one’s waiting for someone to come, which “is not limited to what one calls messianism, that is, Jewish, Christian, or Islamic messianism.”(Caputo, 1997. 23) The significance of this messianicity or waiting for the other to come is that neither the truth nor the image of the truth is already here or that it will be here at a certain moment. Messianicity highlights the phenomenon that “As soon as you address the other, as soon as you are open to the future, as soon as you have a temporal experience of waiting for the future, of waiting someone to come: that is the opening of experience.” (Caputo, 1997. 22) In other words, the horizon of subjectivity is initiated to encompass, include, and reduce. Derrida’s deconstruction,

as an articulation of Levinas, offers another place to initiate the act of thinking, which is before the thinking.

To make the connection between Derrida and liberal democracy explicit, for Derrida, democracy is always already yet to come. Similar to the problem of justice, one may never claim that this form of democracy we have or a certain form of liberal democracy that we might have is absolutely the best for us. The “opening” is an opening to every alterity and there is always someone who is coming. More importantly, deconstruction, in my opinion, primarily emphasizes that one must think within the horizon of opening, which makes it a non-horizon horizon. In the next chapter, I will finally get to the demonstration of “democracy to come” and deconstruction as hospitality. Moreover, the distinction between skepticism and deconstruction, or more precisely, between destruction of liberal democracy and deconstruction of liberal democracy will be designated.

Chapter 3: Democracy to come

Section 3.1

Democracy to come and political subjectivity

The topic of liberal democracy is often studied in both philosophy and political science; and one question is frequently asked and answered throughout history: what is the best form of democracy we can possibly have? It is safe to say that there are many answers to this question, which seem reasonable, well argued, or at least logically concrete. However, for Derrida, there is no possible answer to this question, nor is it possible to ask the question at all. Derrida argued that any event or ideal is always to come, but never fulfilled. (Derrida, 1994. 1-95) This section is designed to offer an alternative way of thinking about democracy in contrast to liberal democracy under the construction of subjectivity.

Derrida wrote: “messianic opening is to what is coming, that is, to the event that cannot be awaited *as such*, or recognized in advance.” (Derrida, 1994. 82) The “messianic opening” will be demonstrated in the final section of this chapter, which is the solution for this project of rethinking liberal democracy. The critique of political subjectivity, as well as the main point of deconstruction, lie in the expressions “awaited *as such*” and “recognized in advance”. For the sake of clarity, these two terms will be demonstrated separately.

Under the construction of political subjectivity, the concept of liberal democracy must become fixed and perfect someday through our constant thinking and practice.

The “end of history” must eventually occur at some point in the future, or as Fukuyama argued that it has already occurred.¹⁰ To await democracy as such is to claim that there must be such a thing as perfect democracy, which we do not have yet. Fukuyama argued for this point by drawing from Marx and Hegel when he wrote “Both Hegel and Marx believed that the evolution of human societies was not open-ended, but would end when mankind had achieved a form of society that satisfied its deepest and most fundamental longings.” (Derrida, 1994. 83) Neither Hegel nor Marx’s form of society is important in our analysis of the “awaited as such.” The crucial point is that, for Fukuyama and other political subjectivists, that day will eventually come and that would be the end of the development of human thinking on this particular matter—the last man. One way or another, human beings will eventually accomplish the ideal and perfect form of society—the end of history. “As such”, in my opinion, indicates that it is completely acceptable if no one knows the perfect form of society for now; and, for political subjectivists, the perfect democracy that which we do not have yet will be in front of us someday.

Derrida does not agree with such claims at all. For Derrida, the occurrence of the perfect democracy or best democracy can not be fulfilled. Claire Colebrook concluded Derrida’s argument that “Ethics or justice must therefore be referred to a future that always remains “to come”—a messianism or eschatology which can never arrive.” (Colebrook, 1998. 353) In this case, democracy is the same as ethics and justice, which is always “to come”. According to my interpretation of Derrida’s messianicity

¹⁰ Although Fukuyama’s argument is already discredited in the academic field, he did make the claim in his work and it was quite influential for a certain period of time.

as a universal structure, it refers to the universality that encompasses not only all ideals and events, but also all of the future. (Caputo, 1997. 26) In other words, the question “when will that democracy come?” may never be answered and it should not be asked in this way; instead, the only thing we can say is that “democracy is yet to come”. Such realization of the “to come” is not a temporary operation, action, or enlightenment. We have to keep saying “democracy is yet to come” every moment in the future, which is a universal structure in terms of *l’avenir*. The “moment in the future”, for Derrida, is the alterity to come¹¹, not in the future, but in the *l’avenir*.

The significance and legitimacy of the “alterity to come” is revealed in the expression “recognized in advance”. Derrida suggested that the best form of democracy, for the sake of the argument let us assume that one can discuss such a thing, can not be calculated or predicted by any means. To draw from the previous chapter, the arrival of the other may never be anticipated or expected in advanced. More comprehensively, the arrival of the other should always be a surprise to me because the other is always the alterity outside of the entire horizon of my understanding, calculating, and predicting. Whatever comes and arrives is always foreign and exterior to me. To clarify, some philosophers might object that the sun will certainly rise up tomorrow and it would not be a surprise to most people.¹² However, Derrida does not deny this future at all. Nevertheless, the sun rising up is

¹¹ Alterity to come, in the case of democracy, refers to the singularity to come. For Derrida, every moment is singular and universal at the same time. Singular means that every moment is unique and exterior to my understanding. The tension of every moment in both history and future enables one to do deconstruction, doing “memory work” but keep criticizing.

¹² These type of problems are entertained by some philosophers such as Bertrand Russell, Locke, etc. However, the whole enterprise might be too broad to narrow down to one or two specific arguments.

not the real future (*l'avenir*). For Derrida, there is not any example or name that we can assign to the future; the only thing Derrida claimed regarding the *l'avenir* is that it's the coming of the other *as such*. Thus, Derrida would not agree to any form of predictions regarding the best form of democracy because that form of democracy is always to come but never comes.

The key point of this project, building upon various specific demonstrations of the terms, is that we should wait for democracy but without content. Whatever part of democracy that which comes to me as a surprise cannot be “awaited as such” or “recognized in advance”. To wait for something “as such” pre-supposes the certainty of its arrival. In order for democracy to be recognized, one must know something about that democracy before it actually comes into presence; and if we know something before it comes, it would not be a total surprise at all. This is the key point of the project because, in my opinion, the fundamental thinking must be initiated within the right horizon before one offers any solution to the problem. The action of deconstruction rests upon not putting or assuming that there is a truth or reality. However, deconstruction is not skepticism either. Derrida is not saying that we may never say the word truth or best democracy. Derrida merely takes these words to a different realm of thinking where one does not make claims about the other with any certainty. For Derrida, ethics, justice, truth, reality, and democracy can be discussed and must be discussed; but the underlying structure behind all of the discussion is that regardless how good or bad is our current situation, these terms must always remain in construction, not fixed and stabilized.

Derrida's deconstruction re-examined an extremely broad horizon of thinking. In the case of liberal democracy and political subjectivity, any claim regarding the future of democracy should be at least reconsidered and re-examined. Any form of prediction, for Derrida, imposes subjectivity and certainty to the other, the alterity, and the exteriority. There are other ideologies that might be misinterpreted or confused with deconstruction such as Hegel, who considered that truth is revealed through our projection towards the future; or skeptics, who claim that we will never know the truth or best democracy. Rigorously speaking, they fall into the category of turning the other into the same because they are either promising the positivity in every moment of the future or claiming the absolute unknowability in every moment of the future.

Now that the entire enterprise of political subjectivity is excluded by deconstructive thinking, one may ask that what ought one do after losing the power to claim and predict? From a certain point of view, some might naively surmise that deconstruction does nothing but criticize our attempt to predict, claim, calculate, and analyze; then what is the point of deconstruction, if there is a point at all? This is the question I intend to answer in the final section. Deconstruction does not just give a solution or result, but offers an alternate horizon to initiate the act of thinking in which one possesses the endless of effort to open.

Section 2

Say yes in two steps: Deconstruction as hospitality and memory work

The alternate horizon I intend to offer for this research, if it is a horizon at all, is constructed upon Caputo's term self-limitation, which describes the abstract tension and logical contradiction within Derrida's deconstruction. In my opinion, the solution for reconsidering liberal democracy involves two steps: (1) to have hospitality towards the other and (2) to do memory work. It is not a stretch to say that Derrida's work may not be completely appreciated by people; and some might ask: what is the point of deconstruction or what ought one do anyway? This section is designed to answer these questions regarding deconstruction. Since this project does not entertain the very structure or idea of liberal democracy itself, this section does not offer a form of ideal or society that may achieve what Fukuyama's was longing for. The action of saying yes gives a universal structure for all ideals; thus it offers the two fundamental steps to do deconstruction of democracy, but not another democracy. (Caputo, 1997. 181-200) In other words, there must be a horizon for one to initiate the act of thinking about democracy; and deconstruction might be the alternative after the death of subjectivity.

It seems both the alterity of another human being and the otherness of an event are put to a significantly high position in Derrida's thinking, nonetheless not the supremely high position where it becomes transcendental or metaphysical. The role of the "I" is also crucial in deconstruction; and it is the primacy of my responsibility, not

my existence or ability to think.¹³ My responsibility in the realm of deconstructive thinking, if there is such a realm, would be possessing hospitality towards the other who comes.

Hospitality does not indicate the approval or permission of the incoming of the other, nor my ability to approval or permit the other to do anything. For Derrida, the fundamental phenomenon that which allows us to proceed deconstruction contains two *yeses*. The first *yes* is said by always being there, which is an underlying structure for my “response to the address of the other”. (Caputo, 1997. 53) Since the other is always already coming, the first *yes* would be always already said in advance, which means that my questioning, rejecting, killing, or resisting always comes too late to the first *yes*. Thus, I can only have hospitality towards the other by saying a second *yes*, which affirms the fact that I have said the first *yes*. More comprehensively and practically speaking, the first thing one ought to do is to affirm the fact that democracy is always yet to come and always coming. In a nutshell, Fukuyama’s argument, for example, does not prevent or deny the incoming of democracy in the *l’avenir*; that democracy will come anyway and it will keep coming. The only thing Fukuyama accomplished, in Derrida’s view, is to deny his affirmation to the other or the first *yes*, which he had always said at the moment when he proposed the argument. Only after one’s affirmation of the incoming of democracy, one will have to room to entertain the idea of democracy itself. In other words, only after one says ‘democracy is always yet to come and always coming’, one will be able to ask the question ‘then

¹³ As in the “I” for Heidegger or Descartes.

what?’

However, to have hospitality towards the other is not such a simply task. Caputo explicate Derrida’s argument that it is impossible to just have hospitality towards the other because “the word ‘hospitality’ carries its opposite within itself.” (Caputo, 1997. 110) Caputo offered a sophisticated and complex analysis of the word “hospitality” by going through the origin of the word. To make the analysis more comprehensible, the logical contradiction within the word “hospitality” is the tension between the “I” and the other. To have hospitality means to welcome the other into my place; hence, one must be as opening and hospitable as possible to the other. However, the “I” must remain the host and master of the place in order to have hospitality. There would be absolutely no hospitality if I invite people to my neighbor’s house. Hospitality evaporates if the “I” surrenders all of my identity and ownership of the place to the other; neither will there be hospitality if I claim full ownership of the place and remain utterly closed to the other. Hospitality, in this sense, is the impossible.

The idea of self-limitation within the word “hospitality” seemingly makes one’s effort in welcoming the other worthless. Fortunately, Derrida is not claiming a form of utopian welcoming of the other.¹⁴ Caputo argued that “Hospitality really starts to happen when I push against this limit.” (Caputo, 1997. 111) Therefore, the problem of the logical contradiction and impossibility is not the crucial point. My attempt to push the self-limitation to its very edge is the essence of hospitality, if hospitality has an essence at all. Hospitality lies in my attempt and effort in accomplishing the

¹⁴ “I am not turning myself into khora which welcomes all as an open receptacle.” Derrida, Jacques, and John D. Caputo. *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*. 1997. 111

impossible. In other words, no matter how open, welcoming, and hospitable to the other, “I am always too close-fisted, too ungracious, too unwelcoming, too calculating in all my invitations.” (Caputo, 1997. 112) The hospitality, in this sense, can never be present or possessed by anyone; it is also always *to come*. My hospitality towards the other is always in construction. Hence, our reflection upon our thinking of the democracy to come should always be in construction. No matter how open am I to the democracy to come, I am still always too-unwelcoming. For Derrida, hospitality does not and can not just happen for once or any amount of times. All of the questions regarding the idea of democracy itself comes after the second yes; and the fundamental point of hospitality is not to keep these questions alive. The very condition for entertaining the questions after the second yes is our attempt to always ask “are we open and hospital enough to the other? The possibility of doing deconstruction is always conditioned by this very question.

Then what is the application of the hospitality? How does this help one welcome the democracy to come in practice? These questions will be answered in the following demonstration of “memory work.” Derrida said: “Since the disruptive force of deconstruction is always already contained within the architecture of the work, all one will finally have to do to be able to deconstruct, give this always already, is to do memory work.” (Derrida, 1989) According to my interpretation, not only does such claim excludes skeptical elements in deconstruction, but also reveals the practical sphere of deconstruction.

Deconstruction is not an outsider who comes from another dimension that disrupts

our current horizon of thinking and understanding. It is always already within the realm of our current work. The other who comes does not float somewhere completely out of context. The disruptive force of deconstruction is always the unexpected surprise from within the architecture of our current work. In *The Specters of Marx*, for example, Derrida argued that Marx is not just history, but also ahead of us in the future. Every time one reads Marx, the other always comes through one's reading of something in the history. Hence, deconstruction is my responsibility to always criticize, suspect, wonder, embrace the incoming of the other, and think otherwise. It is irresponsible and naïve to say that the truth of Marxism has already been here for a long time through academic analysis and political practice. It is also irresponsible to interpret the phrase "memory work" completely out of context because one must have hospitality while doing the memory work. This is the reason I started my demonstration of democracy to come with the enterprise of subjectivity. Since it is utterly impossible to have hospitality if I surrender all of identities and ownerships, deconstruction of democracy starts with my attempt to do memory work under the construction of the tension between the "I" and the other who comes. Doing memory work with hospitality is the "messianic opening".

Conclusion

Richard A. Cohen wrote: “The real difficulty with questioning—which is philosophy’s task—lies in the questions themselves, in the places they take us unawares.”¹⁵ For years, metaphysicians and political scientists have been asking the question of “what is” and “what ought to be.” By going through the argument of Heidegger, Levinas, and Derrida, the entire enterprise of thinking under subjectivity has proven dead. However, the construction of subjectivity does not collapse from the very center of the operation; instead, this project examines the tool, which people use to initiate the act of thinking under subjectivity.

Rigorously speaking, the idea of democracy does not necessarily rest upon the *cogito ergo sum*; but the horizon in which human initiate the thinking would be the same—the primacy and independence of my thinking. After Descartes, many have questioned the validity of such primacy and independence of my thinking by investigating the principle within the realm of logic and knowledge. This project analyzed the problem of subjectivity very differently than the traditional way. I am tempted to say that entertaining within the realm of logic, knowledge, and coherent argument already pre-supposes the construction of subjectivity. Heidegger’s phenomenology offered a completely different view on the problem of being. For Heidegger, my thinking is no longer primary and independent. Human thinking is necessarily conditioned and initiated by the state of Being-in-the-world, that is to say,

¹⁵ Levinas, Emmanuel, and Philippe Nemo. "Ethics and infinity." (1985). 4

my thinking can only be so because I am in such a world. Although Heidegger did not proposed an chronological order between Being-in-the-world and the act of thinking, it is completely rational to say that my thinking is no longer primary and independent. More importantly, after Heidegger, the act of thinking is initiated within a different horizon. The question of “what is” and “what ought to be” should not be entertained without asking “at what place are we thinking” and “at what place should we initiate the act of thinking.”

Heidegger’s place to start thinking, in my opinion, is not as satisfying either. However, Levinas’s critique of Heidegger’s phenomenology cannot be possibly included in this project; and Levinas’s argument regarding the beginning of our recourse to ethics is not significantly relevant to this project. In a nutshell, since there is an interpenetration between the worldhood of the world and my thinking, the trajectory of this project lead towards the investigation of the side of the *other*. This other does not merely refer to the face of another human being, but the otherness of every other that includes history, ideal, and event. The otherness of every other that which is the universal structure dominates the whole enterprise of deconstruction.

“Democracy to come” does not indicate a form of messianism of democracy in the future. It refers to the horizon in which we ought to initiate the act of thinking—a non-horizon horizon. “democracy to come” offers a realm of thinking without the realm wherein we must constantly criticize, examine, reconsider, and open to the *other to come*. Derrida proposes the messianic opening without any content, that is, doing the memory work.

For Derrida, in order to welcome the other to come and be hospitable to the other who comes, one must treat history as one. In other words, Derrida does not agree with self-independent and self-sufficient analysis such as systematic and purely logical ones. Any ideal and event that comes must originate from history; and they must be entertained in the historical context. This memory work, indeed, does not refer to the physical activity of memorizing something. It reveals the framework in which deconstruction operates, that is, history. Whatever and whoever comes as the other must be from already within the architecture of the work. The most important principle in regards to such memory work is that it cannot be treated separated from deconstruction. Doing memory work is not equal to learning something from the past and apply it to the events in the future. For Derrida, memory work means expecting the other who comes from history—an utter openness to the otherness of history in the future. The memory work, in this specific project, can be considered as an articulation of the alternate horizon to initiate the act of thinking—otherwise than subjectivity.

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