

## Philosophy 2 IB -- Week ONE

SL: Hand out exams – necessary to rewrite and hand in next Friday

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Discuss exam question no.1 of: What is a Human Being? – relation of **mythos-logos**

1. ancient Greek conception (via Heidegger)

Relate to:

1. Physis-Techne
2. Kant – genius (Art) – relation to Greek (daimon)
3. Marx (Adorno) → fetishism of the product

2. modern conception (via Karen Armstrong)

Begin with discussion of Physis (Heidegger) – see

[http://geocities.ws/john\\_russey/philosophy/Heidegger\\_Parmenides1.pdf](http://geocities.ws/john_russey/philosophy/Heidegger_Parmenides1.pdf)

**Physis** – Being showing itself in “what is” → *aletheia*

-- Physis is poesis [bringing-forth] in the highest sense [=in itself (*en heautoi*)]

-- pure possibility

**Techne** – what is brought forth by the artisan or artist [=in another (*en alloi*)]

**Heidegger:**

**Da-sein** = openness to Being – letting Being come to be...

Da Sein

(There – Being) – the “place” where Being shows itself (via **logos**)

≠ “Dasein” (the normal German word for “existence” - L. 'existentia')

Man = “there” (das **Da**) the lighting of Being (**Sein**)

– the Being of the 'Da' has character of **ek-sistence** ≠ L. 'existentia'

(essence, potentiality) (actualitas – actuality)

of Being itself, pure possibility

relates to what is produced (end product)

related to **Mythos, daimon, eudaimonia**

**Mythos** is the “disclosive legend” (P, 114), the original gathering and naming of the gods who ‘bring to view’ “all that is.” “In *mythos* the *daimonian* appears [...and it is *daimonian* which] determines the basic relation of Being to man” (P, 117). Or to state this otherwise, it is through *mythos* that the truth of Being shines forth in the *polis*.

**Aristotle:**

*Man (antropos)* = “to *zoon logon echon*” -- the “living being” (**zoon**) which has language (**logos**).

**Logos** here is always in relation to **Mythos** -- **Mythos** is like a Source -- contains the possibilities to be given expression by **logos** & vice versa, **logos** gives **mythos** its “content.”

*Mythos* is the primordial naming of Being in its emerging forth via the Word or *logos*. “The word is in its essence the letting appear of Being by naming. [... And] *mythos* is the only appropriate mode of the relation to appearing Being” (Heidegger, *Parmenides*, 112).

## Romans:

*Zoon* → animal

logos → *ratio* (rationality)

→ SCIENCE

- the essence of subjectivity
- (the I-hood of man)

- becomes Truth (*veritas* ≠ *aletheia*)  
- **for Greeks** = *episteme/theoria* –  
always related to *mythos*

see: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/episteme-techne/>

Man → “rational animal”

- forgets relation to Being, man lives in the oblivion (*Lethe*) of Being
- *Mythos* becomes inferior way of thinking, irrational, non-logical – loses relation to *logos*
- Step away from: move to “evolution”/ “progress”/ “dualism”/ “materialism” /  
*techne* → technology

See my text to understand the relation *physis* and art (*techne*)

[http://geocities.ws/john\\_russey/philosophy/Heidegger\\_Parmenides1.pdf](http://geocities.ws/john_russey/philosophy/Heidegger_Parmenides1.pdf)

A similar relation exists between *physis* and art (*techne*) - “the setting into work of the unconcealedness of Being” (P, 117). Heidegger states that for the Greeks, “beings appear in their Being and in their ‘essence’ not only in the ‘word’ but equally in sculpture<sup>1</sup>” (P, 115). The Greeks did not rank their arts competitively, nor did they try to classify them. Architecture, sculpture, poetry, carpentry, shoemaking, and even handwriting are all skilled crafts which realized a *telos* that was given in Being.

### Relation of theory (*theoria*) – practice (*praxis*) / *phronesis* (practical knowledge) and *Eudaimonia*

According to Aristotle, the *polis* is self-supportive or self-renewing in relation to an already existing socio-political *ethos*. In his *Nichomachean Ethics* the *praxis* of the *polis* was “renewed” via high standards of education, and by the following of the “practically wise” exemplars (who utilized *phronesis* in conjunction with *Eudaimonia*) within the polis. Smith claims that, “[For Aristotle, the] political community had as its primary end the education that leads to the habits and virtues that make *praxis* possible [...] A stable political community was in turn the prerequisite for the theoretical life” (Smith, 31, fn 22). But we can take this further.

In the *Parmenides* Heidegger relates *phronesis* to “philosophy” in that both mean “to have sight for what is essential” (P, 120). It is the “insight of the intuition that looks into what is properly intuitable and unconcealed” (ibid). *Eudaimonia* refers to “the holding sway in the appropriate measure of the ‘*Eu*’ - the appearing and coming into presence of the *daimonion*” (ibid). Heidegger relates the *daimonion* (i.e., the ‘demonic’, the ‘uncanny’) to an “inner voice” that ultimately arises from “invisible and ungraspable Being” (ibid, see also above p. 7 the reference to the “*Es ruft*” in relation to the Call

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<sup>1</sup> This idea of Greek sculpture is also revealed in Rudolph Steiner’s “The Roots of Education” (in *The Essential Steiner*, ed. by R. McDermott, San Francisco: Harper, 1984, p. 346): “We must be sculptors and as such we must develop a feeling for the world, the kind of feeling that was present in the humanity of olden times as a sort of instinctive consciousness. It was clearly expressed in the orientalism of prehistoric times, thousands of years before our era, but we still find it in Greek culture. Just think how the materialistic artists of today are often baffled by the forms of the Greek sculptors. They are baffled because they think that the Greeks worked from models, which they examined from all sides. But the Greeks still had the feeling that man was born out of the cosmos, and that the cosmos itself forms the human being. When the Greeks created their Venus de Milo (which is the despair of modern sculptors), then they took what streamed out of the cosmos, and although this could only reveal itself imperfectly in any earthly work, they strove to express it in the human form they were creating as far as they were able to do so....”

of Being). Further, ‘the uncanny’ in its essence is “the inconspicuous, the simple, the insignificant, which nevertheless shines in all beings” (P, 105).

The *daimones*, which we could say are the voice(s) themselves, are said to reside in the abyss between earth and heaven. They are the extraordinary ones “who point and give signs” (P, 104), across the chasm which separates *Lethe* and *aletheia*, toward what we perceive as “ordinary,” i.e., they are the “out of which all that is ordinary emerges” (P, 102). Heidegger claims that they are “more essential than any being [and, as such,] they determine every essential affective disposition from respect and joy to mourning and terror” (P, 106). Ultimately, Heidegger will relate the *daimones* to *theaontes* (the gods) who ‘bring things to view’ as *historia* (P, 111).

*Daimonios topos* is an ‘uncanny district,’ i.e., the “place” where Being (via *daimones*) shines forth in history. The *polis* is the “essential abode” where historical man resides. It is “the ‘where,’ as which and in which order [*Dike*] is revealed and concealed [...] wherein the Being of man in its relation to beings as a whole has gathered itself” (P, 95-6).

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## KANT

The relation to knowledge, art and creativity, above, can also be seen in Kant’s vision of the “advance” of scientific knowledge and *genius* in Art – via the imagination.

**Science** “advances” via the discovery of **more universal schema** (explanations of “reality”) by utilizing the **productive imagination**; ... brings about scientific “revolutions,” i.e., “Copernican Revolution” → gradually brings about change in *sensus communis (logicus)* [logical, common sense]; i.e., our **UNDERSTANDING** of our perceptions: i.e., In the past, the masses believe “the Earth is the center of the universe” – after the change in common sense knowledge, the **associative imagination** of the masses will now indicate: “the earth goes around the sun.”

**Art** brings about changes on another level – it leads us to a recognition of our transcendent nature via **symbols**. The ‘genius’ works through the artist via the **productive imagination** to create works of Fine Art... Brings about universal changes in our **AESTHETIC PERCEPTIONS** of ourselves, nature and our moral destiny – change in *sensus communis (aestheticus)* [aesthetical, common sense]; i.e., in the past, man thinks that he needs a leader, a teacher, a master in order to learn anything (he is NOT free) – after the change in common sense knowledge, the **associative imagination** of the masses will now indicate: “mankind is free, and we are able to create our own, universal reality.”

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## Marx and Adorno on fetishism

In the process of the move to the “rational subject,” materialism and industrialization, there is a move to the focus upon the “reality” of market mechanisms and the focus on the value of objects/finished products (and their benefits). Meanwhile, there is a loss of recognition of the creative process and the human labor which goes into their production. As a result, commodities (those things man needs for survival) become ‘reified’ (they acquire a higher value than the human who produces them) – i.e., “the market” and objects produced acquire the condition of a “fetish.”

## Marx

Marx said that **fetishism is "the religion of sensuous appetites", and that the fantasy of the**

appetites tricks the fetish worshipper into believing that an inanimate object will yield its natural character to gratify the desires of the worshipper.

i.e., The savages of Cuba regarded gold as a fetish of the Spaniards. They celebrated a feast in its honour, sang in a circle around it, and then threw it into the sea.

in the manuscript of "Results of the Immediate Process of Production" (ca. 1864), an appendix to *Capital: Critique of Political Economy, Volume 1* (1867), Marx said that:

. . . we find in the capitalist process of production [an] *indissoluble fusion of use-values* in which capital subsists [as] *means of production* and *objects* defined as capital, when what we are really faced with is a definite social relationship of production. In consequence, **the product embedded in this mode of production is equated with the commodity, by those who have to deal with it. It is this that forms the foundation for the fetishism of the political economists.**<sup>[13]</sup>

### The theory of commodity fetishism

In the critique of political economy Karl Marx proposed that, **in a society where independent, private producers trade their products with each other**, of their own volition and initiative, and without much co-ordination of market exchange, **the volumes of production and commercial activities are adjusted in accordance with the fluctuating values of the products (goods and services) as they are bought and sold, and in accordance with the fluctuations of supply and demand.** Because their social co-existence, and its meaning, is expressed through market exchange (trade and transaction), people have no other relations with each other. Therefore, social relations are continually mediated and expressed with objects (commodities and money). How the traded commodities relate will depend upon the costs of production, which are reducible to quantities of human labour, although the worker has no control over what happens to the commodities that he or she produces. (See: *Entfremdung*, [Marx's theory of alienation](#))

### The domination of things

The concept of the *intrinsic value* of commodities (goods and services) **determines and dominates the economic (business) relationships among people**, to the extent that buyers and sellers continually adjust their beliefs (financial expectations) about the value of things — either consciously or unconsciously — **to the proportionate price changes (market-value) of the commodities over which buyers and sellers believe they have no true control.** **That psychologic perception transforms the trading-value of a commodity into an independent entity (an object),** to the degree that the social value of the goods and services appears to be a natural property of the commodity, itself. Thence [objectified](#), *the market* appears as if self-regulated (by fluctuating supply and demand) because, **in pursuit of profit, the consumers of the products ceased to perceive the human co-operation among capitalists that is the true engine of the market where commodities are bought and sold; such is the domination of things in the market.**

### Objectified value

The value of a commodity originates from the human being's intellectual and perceptual capacity to consciously (subjectively) ascribe a relative value (importance) to a commodity, the goods and services manufactured by the labour of a worker. Therefore, **in the course of the economic transactions (buying and selling) that constitute market exchange, people**

ascribe *subjective* values to the commodities (goods and services), which the buyers and the sellers then perceive as *objective* values, the market-exchange prices that people will pay for the commodities.

### Adorno:

**Commodity fetishism** is theoretically central to the [Frankfurt School](#) philosophy, especially in the work of the sociologist [Theodor W. Adorno](#), which describes *how* the forms of commerce invade the human psyche; how commerce casts a person into a role not of his or her making; and how commercial forces affect the **development of the psyche**. In the book *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944), Adorno and [Max Horkheimer](#) presented the [Theory of the Culture Industry](#) to describe how the human **imagination** (artistic, spiritual, **intellectual** activity) becomes commodified when subordinated to the "natural commercial laws" of the market.

To the consumer, the cultural goods and services sold in the market appear to offer the promise of a richly developed and creative individuality, yet the inherent commodification severely restricts and stunts the human psyche, so that the man and the woman consumer has little "time for myself", because of the continual personification of **cultural roles** over which he and she exercise little control. In personifying such cultural identities, the person is a **passive consumer, not the active creator, of his or her life**; the promised life of individualistic creativity is incompatible with the collectivist, commercial norms of [bourgeois culture](#).

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Adorno reads Marx as a Hegelian materialist whose critique of capitalism unavoidably includes a critique of the ideologies that capitalism sustains and requires. The most important of these is **what Marx called "the fetishism of commodities."** Marx aimed his critique of commodity fetishism against bourgeois social scientists who simply **describe the capitalist economy** but, in so doing, simultaneously misdescribe it and prescribe a **false social vision**. According to Marx, **bourgeois economists necessarily ignore the exploitation intrinsic to capitalist production**. They **fail to understand that capitalist production, for all its surface "freedom" and "fairness," must extract surplus value from the labor of the working class**. Like ordinary producers and consumers under capitalist conditions, **bourgeois economists treat the commodity as a fetish**. They treat it **as if it were a neutral object, with a life of its own, that directly relates to other commodities, in independence from the human interactions that actually sustain all commodities**. Marx, by contrast, argues that **whatever makes a product a commodity goes back to human needs, desires, and practices**. The commodity would not have "use value" if it did not satisfy human wants. It would not have "exchange value" if no one wished to exchange it for something else. And its exchange value could not be calculated if the commodity did not share with other commodities a "value" created by the expenditure of human labor power and measured by the average labor time socially necessary to produce commodities of various sorts.

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The primary clues to these revisions come from a **theory of reification** proposed by the Hungarian socialist Georg Lukács in the 1920s and from interdisciplinary projects and debates conducted by members of the Institute of Social Research in the 1930s and 1940s. Building on Max Weber's theory of rationalization, Lukács argues that **the capitalist economy is no longer one sector of society**

