

**IBN HALDUN UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**

MASTER THESIS

LABOUR, SUBJECT AND THE OTHERNESS

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THESIS SUPERVISOR

ASSIST. PROF. MUHAMMET İKBAL BAKIR

İSTANBUL, 2021

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LABOUR, SUBJECT AND THE OTHERNESS

by

SENA ZEREYAK

**A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in
Philosophy**

THESIS SUPERVISOR

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APPROVAL PAGE

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Philosophy.

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I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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Emek üzerine yapılan tartışmalar çoğunlukla ekonomi ve politika gibi alanlarla sınırlı kalmaktadır. Buna göre, bir şey üzerine emek harcamak genellikle öznenin sosyo-ekonomik ve politik sistemle olan uyumuna işaret etmektedir. Bu görüş özneye kurucu (belirleyici) bir rol vermektedir. Yani, aklın ilkelerine göre hareket eden özne sistemin rasyonel yapısını kavrayarak ona göre davranır. Böylelikle, onun tarafından yapılan emek olarak kabul edilir. Ancak, öznenin salt kurucu olarak alınması, emeğin anlamının, öznenin yaşamsal olanla ilişkisi sonucunda ortaya çıktığını gözden kaçırmamıza sebep olabilir. Bu sebeple, yaşamın temalandırılmayan (ya da sınırları çizilemeyen) taraflarına bakmak emeğe anlamını veren şeyi görmemizi sağlayacaktır. Buna işaret etmek için, öteki kavramı üzerine düşünmenin, öznedeki eritilemeyi anlamak için yararlı olacağına inanıyorum. Bu tezde de emeği özne ve öteki arasındaki karşılıklı gerilim üzerinden yeniden ve daha çok şeyi içerek biçimde yorumlanın yollarını araştırmak istiyorum.

Anahtar Kelimeler: emek, öteki

ABSTRACT

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Discussions about labour are commonly limited to certain areas like economics and politics. In this regard, labouring most generally implies that a subject who labours on a work that is familiar with the acceptable rules of the socio-economic and political system. In this view, the subject is considered as the constitutive part of the labouring. A subject who uses *reason* knows how this rational order works, and acts accordingly. Thus, what is done by him/her is accepted as labour. However, the subject could not be simply taken as the constitutive part of the labouring because the labour emerges between the subject and the texture of life. The meaningful act is the result of the reciprocity between these. A subject by himself does not have control over what they do. There is always a part that is ‘unthematizable’ which gives labour its’ meaningful character. To refer to this veiling part of human labour, I will consider the concept of *the other* as the part that is not fully graspable by the human mind. In that sense, the aim of this dissertation is to examine the concept of labour in a more broad context by considering it as a tension between subject and the other.

Keywords: labour, the other

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this dissertation, I will develop a philosophical account of labour as productive and concrete activity of humans. Despite the longstanding discussion over labour, it has mostly been underestimated the way in which labour is the method by which human engages with the world. When one analyses labour only through the critics of the social system, the activities of human beings become limited with this narrow area of discussion. Labour is thus not the act of human beings that is bordered with the rules of social, economic and political system. Humans are involved in the world and in what they do whether it is regarded as labour in the social system or not should be thought of within the context of labour.

Throughout this thesis, thus, I intend to extend the definition of labour to include a variety of human action inside the concept of labour. In that way it becomes possible to think of labour as something that gives human life value. In every area of life, the human is labouring on something and that should be discussed more attentively because it covers a significant part of human life. If one only thinks about labour along with the mechanism of the social system, then most of human activity remains outside of human life. In that sense, enlargement of the concept of labour is necessary to see the fertile side of human life.

Surely, not all activities of humans can be considered as meaningful for life and so it could not be thought of under the concept of labour either. In that sense, it becomes necessary to elaborate the concept of labour to understand what gives labour a meaningful character to enrich the life of humans. In that sense, it is not enough to take the concept of labour to include a variety of human activities but also we need to think over the distinguishable character of labour to keep its' effect on humans as meaningful and valuable. Both by thinking about labour above the limits of how social mechanism defines it, and distinguishing it from the death labour of human makes it a difficult concept to describe. This is because one needs to find another source of value other than the social one so that labour stays valuable without necessarily being approvable socially. When I contemplate this issue, what I found is that the thing that

makes human life valuable is the movement of human beings that is from their subjectivity *to the other*. This movement prevents human from staying in a stable condition and they act toward something other than themselves. Since being stable means being dead, the movement here is the source of human lived experience and therefore, it is also the source of the value that gives human labour meaning.

Hence, the movement that alters the human is the basis to defining labour. Needless to say that, the basis, as it is itself movement, is not fixed so that it is measurable or thematizable by any kind of system of thought, rather it reveals itself when a subject that is involved in the world, *the situating subject*, acts towards the other. Therefore, by using the term *the other* I think I can explain the change in a real sense, and the act that causes this change, I claim, is the source of labour. Labour, in that sense, should be accepted as the transforming activity of the human when they encounter *the other*. To be able to take this concept within this manner, actually, is not easy because it goes outside of the common sense of labour. Yet, it is necessary to see the other aspects of human act to interpret human being different than the expectation of the capital. If we maintain to consider human as victim of the capitalist mode of production, then the individual destiny is entirely given to the hand of capital. As is said by Simone Weil (2004) in the book *Oppression and Liberty*,

The detail of the individual destiny ... of the worker working at the machine disappears like some squalid trifle before the knowledge, the tremendous natural forces and the collective labour which are crystalized in the machine system and go to make up the owners' power.(p.10)

This in fact causes a stifling of any kind of individual value of labour and all the labour is thus defined by the production system. What is accepted as production and what is not is defined by the socio-economic system only. However, the productive activity of humans, as I see it, reveals its value during the act of being human and it is particular to the human that all the encounters of the human with the other is particular and unique.

Thus, the movement as I have said comes from this unique and singular kind of encounter, so all people have the power to express themselves in the act of labouring. This argument indeed will be the main driving force behind my thesis. Though my argument might be seen as a utopic argument in the time of post-industrialization, I do not agree with the idea that the human is bounded entirely to the organizations of the system constructed through the rules of rationality. In the very act of daily life, there

are other sources of human labouring which are outside of this structure. Surely, this does not mean labour is free from the limitation of the already existing structure, but yet accepting human labour as is defined is itself an over-exaggeration of the power of the modern institutions.

Throughout this dissertation, I will gather together some philosophical concepts to discuss labour in a broader context. Every little act of human beings includes potentials to gain the status of being labour on the account of the fact that they transform human simultaneously. The intention to put all human activity under the concept of labour, however, might incline us relativizing the value of all human activity. To avoid this relativism, I need the help of philosophy to evaluate the value of human action and the human himself/herself. For this, I draw from the works of Levinas and Merleau-Ponty in pursuit of the fact that I could consider the human in a broader context. I will elucidate the concept of labour by using the concept of these philosophers by thinking over how these intellectuals use their insight to evaluate the position of subject and the other.

This thesis will proceed as follows:

In chapter one, I will explore how the subject is understood in the history of philosophy, so the way the subject connects with the world can be seen in the philosophical analysis. Besides, in this chapter I will think over the general discussion on the concept of labour; in particular, Weber and Marx and their interpretation regarding labour will be explained briefly. Thus, we can both bring together the concept of labour and subject and also differentiate my concept of labour from the common understanding of it. In that way, I intend to set the stage for further discussion.

Then in the second chapter, I take the concept of subject before I examine labour as my interpretation will not stand without a proper explanation of the concept of the subject. This is important for a full understanding of what I mean by labour. Subject can be mostly interpreted as a stable basis and the ground for starting to analyse the world. However, by considering this notion through the concept of the other leads us to see the inconsistencies of subject. From this, I will suggest that it is a failure to take the subject of labour as the constitutive agent that is completed and stable. To support this interpretation, I will benefit from the philosophical insights of Merleau-Ponty and Levinas on the notion of the subject. Besides, after contemplation on the notion of the

subject, I will think on the concept of labour by following the path of the same philosophers. Since human beings are affected by excessive amounts of images, both their subjectivity and, naturally, their labour will be affected too. Therefore, by dividing those images that surround humans in three as other conscious being, objects and nature, I intend to seek the potentials of labour to be an important part of human life.

Finally, in the last chapter, I will collect the clues which I get from previous chapters to give a renewed description of the concept labour. I used an analogy from Simone Weil's book *The Need for the Root* to explain it better. Here, my intention is not to define what labour is strictly and distinctively, but rather I intend to make the reader sense what labour is in daily life as a life-giving activity



CHAPTER II

LABOUR AND SUBJECT

2.1 Labour

Labour is one of the most important concept discussed in human sciences. The context of the discussions changes from scholar to scholar, but mostly the scope of discussion is limited within certain areas such as commodity production, social status, profit maximizations, leisure time, social independence and so on and so forth. Thus, let us look at some theories that serve as a ground for these issues, which are overwhelmingly discussed in the social areas so that I can differentiate my description of labour from them.

At the midst of 19th century, Weber, who is one of the most distinguished social scientist in the contemporary world, announced a world which depends on calculation, control and impersonality. In fact, this perspective might be seen as the implications of the ‘modern subject’ who uses the cognitive faculties to cover the ‘reality’ and construct it through the principle of rationality. Weber observes the changes of the world, and he presupposes that this rationally constructed world is inescapable, thereby he constructs a social system of thought to describe the new situations of the world, and for him, in this new world, the human to be a subject that should have the faculties to evaluate the rational condition in which is embedded all the social and personal areas such as music, art, science, politics and economy.

His arguments actually depend on some philosophical discussions in those times. For instance, Kant and his cognitive faculties to search for universal reason –to some extent- find its’ reflection in the social-scientific perspective of Weber (Sung Ho, 2021). The subject and object separation and the categories of Kantian Transcendental Self leads to the search for a universally systematized world, human-centred (in that context that is rational human) that is constructed through the faculties of human mind.

At the outset, it seems like humans are rationally aware of the results of his/her acts thereby by acting in calculation the results of actions become predictable. These calculations and evaluations of the acts by human beings may seem as the free-

expression of the self; however, freedom that THE human find himself/herself in is actually constructed by humans, and it is actually strictly formulated through the “universal law”.

As a matter of fact, Weber realizes the new human condition, and he defines it as an ‘iron cage’ which means uncompromisingly bound with the rules of rationality.

No one knows who will live in this cage (Gehäuse) in the future, or whether at the end of this tremendous development entirely new prophets will arise, or there will be a great rebirth of old ideas and ideals, or, if neither, mechanized petrification, embellished with a sort of convulsive self-importance. For the “last man” (letzten Menschen) of this cultural development, it might well be truly said: “Specialist without spirit, sensualist without heart; this nullity imagines that it has attained a level of humanity (Menschentums) never before achieved (Weber ,2005, pg.124)

Although Weber is aware of some possible results of rationalization, he insists on the irreversibility of the system; thus, as an observer, he rather analyses the changes in the society rather than be included in the process of change.

On the other hand, Marx as a follower of Hegelian emanationist philosophy, prefers to think of the other possibilities for the future of human beings and, he insistently gets involved in the changes in the history of human evolutions, that is why he analyses the contemporary capitalist mode of production, and by doing this he foresees compulsory changes in society which will be actualized by the hand of the proletariat. There, Marx thinks the change will come within the change of proletariat because for him the “proletariat has nothing to lose but their chains”. (Marx ,2008, pg.84) For him, being proletariat has a universal character given their universal suffering. In that sense, as the most alienated class, which is at the centre of capitalist mode of production, the proletariat has the power to reverse capitalism.

Additionally, Marx thought that the fall of capitalism is inescapable because of the historical conditions. In that sense he said that “their conditions of life, both they find already existing and those what they produce by their activities.” (Marx&Engels,2001, pg.42) Thus, historical materialism gives values to human actions and to the already existing situation. It is because of the way Marx thinks historical materialism is reciprocal: one is from man to material conditions, the other is from material conditions to man. In that sense, unlike Weberian subject who could have power only by using the tools of an already existing system like calculation, his subject has quite an active role in the history because the subject creates the material conditions by production.

Consequently, the subject as an observer and subject as an actor of history are two distinguished positions in the recent history of the human being. As a result, both perspectives have their own kind of interpretation for the concept of labour. Though Weber wasn't particularly interested in labour, the iron cage defined by Weber and its constructed reason 'Protestant ethic' announced to all of us a new kind of society wherein we live in a rational order which commands us to "work for the sake of work".

Here, although Marxist analysis gives subject an active role, in each moment of history it bounds with the limits of structure; thus, the Marxist theory is pursuing a revolutionary change in the structure made human free. However, he didn't explain how the oppression, inequality will be end just by changing structure. Simone Weil, in her book *Oppression and Liberty*, argued that 'Throughout history men have struggled, suffered and died to free the oppressed. Their efforts, when they did not remain sterile, have never led to anything except the replacing one oppressive regime by another.' (Weil, S., 2014, pg.2) Therefore, rather than the structure, change in subject is necessary to defeat exploitation.

Weil's subject, different than Marx's subject, have power to realize his/her own being by himself/herself, so it is not a result of collective consciousness. Here, there exist a potential belong only to the individual. In any system or in any regimes, that individual have a sense of their actual being. So the only freedom human can get is came from self-realization of individual. Nobody thereby could possibly make free someone from its chains.

Although Marx is right to give subject an active role, the role is too much related with "the outside world". Here the active role of subject is important because only in that way one can dispose of diving in his/her dark selfhood. The way how an individual deal with the other is thus a way to search for a possibility to change, to live. It is not for to make free others but it is for to realize its own being.

The Marxist concept of alienation, in that sense, could be considered as the condition of all who need to turn his/her looking to their being, but although Marx is quite right about alienated subject and exploitation, for he is interest with proletariat and, consequently, industrial firms, the dynamicity of life is also reduced to those parts. Therefore, it seems like as if when that structure changes, the barriers for individual freedom will be eliminated to. To some extent this might be true, but the problem,

here, is that the supreme value is not individual who struggle for the truth of life. That is why, Marxist doctrine is insufficient since it most of the time focus on structural issues that is solved by collective organizations; and by doing this, in fact, he hides the real issues of human being which is self-realization. Collectivity mostly makes individual invisible and by doing this the structural oppressive character of it becomes invisible to. Simone Weil (2001) once more realizes this intelligently and she said, “Spontaneous struggle has always proved itself to be ineffective, and organized action almost automatically secretes an administrative apparatus which, sooner or later, becomes oppressive.” (p.20)

On the other hand, the socio-economic analysis of Marx is still of utmost importance to make an ideological analysis of the oppressive character of capitalist society. He intentionally did not focus on the individual since it might direct his historical analysis to ahistorical subject that hides to current problems of society. (Lukacs, G. ,2020, p.120). And this to some extent true. However, the importance of one issue should not hide the other important points of life. The life has multiple dimensions and thus, labour should include more than what we tend to think. This, I especially, realized when I watched the movie “Rosetta”. In this movie, Dardenne brothers present us the very ruthlessness of the condition of the labour class. Yet, during the movie we could realize that there are other elements that makes Rosetta alive. Those are both the relations with the humans and with the objects and also, surely, with herself. The support of Riquet, the taste of waffle and even the needs of her mother are makes her alive. She changes through them and life becomes more than having a strong social position in the society. Yet, this does not mean Rosetta accept being poor and labourless; on the contrary by the support of these relations she finds power to continue being alive. Thus, the changes come with those relations give her power to deal with the ruthlessness of her condition.

Therefore, in this dissertation, I would like to read labour activity as a concrete and productive activity of human being which potentially lead to change on that particular human. Besides, I would like to search for the value of labour which exist in each labour activity. It is different than both Marx and Weber because in Weber’s theory, labour is valuable when it is integrated in the system, and in Marx’s theory labour is a way to elaborate the values but it –as a concrete thing-has not value itself. Marx states

that (1992) “Labour is the substance, and the immanent measure of value, but has itself no value” (p. 588).

For Marx, proletariat is a class that capable to change the system as system is established over their exploited labour power; however, Marx does not talk about labour as a valuable activity of human being who can potentially change subject. In the text of earlier Marx, it is possible to evaluate alienated labour through its relation with the subject because if there is alienated labour, there is also alienated subject to.

Nevertheless, Marx omits this issue and continues to consider about another issues in his later text such as class struggle. The political and economic result of it is direct him to think about collective consciousness which, as a result, detract his interest from human subjectivity. Thus by focusing over labour as a concrete activity of human which has its value as it is will be my main discussion in that dissertation. To be able to do that first we need to know what we mean by human subjectivity, so in the next section, I will discuss about the subject and some philosophical point of views about it.

2.2 Subject

In this section, I will focus on the several philosophical interpretations on the notion of subject. I do so to exhibit how differences in perspectives of subject helps produce the contemporary reduced perspective on labour which prevents labour being seen as an activity of the human, altering humans to something other than themselves, and thus by delving into the concept of subject, I would like to open a way to extend the concept of labour.

The labouring process lies behind self-actualization as it is interrelated with the subject itself. Subject, therefore, is a crucial concept to understand the changes of labour in the history of philosophy. In other words, since the way one defines subject affects the way they experience the world, realizing the alteration in the definition of subject, in fact; could help us to realize the differences in the perceptions against world.

2.2.1 Consciousness and Subject

Like the most of the concepts of philosophy, the term subject originated from the Ancient Greeks. It is derived from the term *subjectum* (*hypokeimenon*). Aristotle (384-322 BCE) used the word *hypokeimenon* which means “at the bottom of thing” or “that

which lies under”. (Shannon, D. & Wals,J, 2007). Aristotle (2002) argues that, “Substance, in the truest and primary and most definite sense of the word, is that which is neither predicable of a subject nor present in a subject; for instance, the individual man or horse.” (p.3)

Here all the predicates of subject could be applied to the hypokeimenon. It makes things what they are but it is not predicated of anything, it is the ultimate substratum. Any individual and the predicates of the individual depend on the hypokeimenon. (Shannon, D. & Wals,J, 2007). The existence of things depend on this concept so what they are is already determined by this underlying unchanging substratum. All the attributes attached to it but yet it remains as one. The individuality of the existing things, including human individuals, are understandable only by reference to the hypokeimenon.

The human thus is not a subject in a modern sense which based on an understanding of human subjectivity, ruling out the objects. Subject in an Aristotelian sense could be acquainted with the metaphysical meaning of things which means human could connect with them as they are presented; they are not reflexively thought by the human mind; thus, their existence is not dependent on human thinking. Therefore, in the philosophy of Aristotle, there is no individual subject –as we tend to think of it today– that is, separated from the external world. Thus, the discussion on ‘subject’ was not the main problems of the philosophical discussions of the Ancient Greeks, and until Descartes more or less it continued likewise.

After Descartes, however, human subjectivity becomes a starting point for philosophical debates. Descartes gives importance to the human subject before any reflexive realizations of it. So, similar to the notion of hypokeimenon, he searches for an ultimate principle that lies under but is different than Aristotle; this principle depends on human subjectivity. That means that he eventually, constructs and acknowledges the subject as distinctly separated from the ‘outer world’ by which the subject surrounded. Since he wanted to start from self-awareness as an absolute beginning, he detaches the subject from the all the attributes.

This is understandable because he thinks free subjectivity is crucial to experience world ‘as it is’. In his book, *The Search of Truth by the Means of Natural Light*, Descartes clearly states himself about his search on truth. He (1985) said that when

one realizes oneself as conscious being, realizes the right and wrong, the true and the false; hence, in that way the self can prevent the intervention of vulgarity of the ‘outer world’

Therefore, he constructs a thinking subject which can sure of everything by itself, and this subject emerged on the account of the meditation processes he did. Descartes started by being suspicious about everything, that is because he wanted to find a principle, a solid ground for reality. When he was in suspicion from everything, he realized that the only thing he could not doubt is the cogito (thinking self). There, the subject becomes a ground for reality which did not need anything to be supported. In other words, it is independent. For Descartes, *res extensa* which is physical substance, exist in time and space and can be doubtable; on the other hand, *res cogita*, by which he means : *the mind* that exist separately and independently, is indubitable (Yaldir, H, 2008). So, the thinking self here we mentioned is the indubitable reality of the human-being, and thus gives the human its special character among the other entities. By this differentiation, Descartes glorified human beings because of the consciousness they have. He wanted to construct a system which makes everything real enough. However, ironically this aim results in vice versa. As Descartes searched for an absolute premise as a basis of other absolutes, he lost the defects of life which, in fact, provides for the continuity of life. As Martis (2005) indicates,

The subject, once it has been equated with the unverifiable self-perception proffered by theoretical consciousness, has been reduced to something it is not or, worse still, to something non-existent.

By bringing the truth and life together, he removed the distance between them, and at the end he lost life. That is to say, the content of life disappears in his philosophy, because cogito thinks for the sake of thinking only, thereby the only subject is the man, the I. But the certainty of the “outer world” cannot be explainable by the certainty of the existence of the cogito.

Descartes, as is known, divided the soul and body and yet he wants to explain perception and imaginations. He knows that there is outer world as real as inner world; however, the connection between the outer world and the human soul was not easy for him as he saw the human body as a “body to be nothing but a statue or machine made of earth, which God forms with the explicit intention of making it as much as possible like us” (Descartes, 1985). Nonetheless , imagination and perception should be

explainable with some sort of Spirit, and when Descartes realizes that problem, though he continues to think of pure thought as separated, he takes the pineal gland as the smallest part of the matter which is the seat of the soul ¹(Lokhorst, 2020.) Through the pineal gland, for him, experience, perception and imagination becomes explainable in connection with the animal spirit. In that way, he establishes a connection between the experiential world and spirit. Yet constructing a subject does not mean constructing the 'outer world' because subject and outer world are not corresponding to each other in an exact way. Thus, the attempts of Kant to reverse the process of construction gains importance.

In that sense, Kant brings the object of awareness at stake. For Kant, there is no subject who could determine objects from within because without the outer world, there is no inner world as well. Thus, the subject of Kant is more in connection with the outer world than the inner world. But still, the Kantian subject does not grasp the reality of the outer world in itself. In fact, there is always a difference between the inner and outer world, and hence one can claim that this difference makes things real. The reality of things thereby comes from the idea that we may only be aware of the thing as it seems to us (phenomenon) in a representational level but not as how things really are (noumena). That is why here in Kantian phenomenology there is not any metaphysical theorization descent from subject. Although he argues that transcendental subject should have categories to give meaning to the objects when they encounter them, the way it is represented has nothing to do with the object itself

That is because, the subject of Kant is without content before the encounter. Thus, the I of cogito does not mean anything to Kant if it is not the situation for transcendental subject. Like any object we encounter, the thinking subject is a situation for a subject; as a result, the transcendental subject takes 'cogito of I' as representation. (Martis, J., 2005, p.8) Kant (1998) argues that "I would have as multi-coloured, diverse a self as I have representations of which I am conscious". Thus, the cogito of I which is a result of a 'fictional' process of Descartes is not actually a starting point for Kant. In Kantian philosophy, in fact, the transcendental subject constructs itself through those encounters, and that makes the outer world quite important for the realization of self.

¹ In his book, *Passion of the Soul* Descartes gives a detailed explanation on pineal gland. Though mostly his scientific arguments are rejected, still today still some philosopher carry out studies on the pineal gland. See Gobert Darren (2013), for an insightful analysis of passions through reconsideration of the pineal gland.

However, he fails to explain the lived experience of the subject because Kantian philosophy makes the subject a viewer only. Since the transcendental subject never knows the reality of the external, it is always condemned to be in the world of appearances. In a way, it allows the things as in their plurality but it at the same time makes the subject restricted within the world of appearances, as one can never know things in themselves but only representations of them.

As is seen, Kant connect with the objects only by their representations and those representations are not in there before his analysis of objects; however, the existence of world is not simply bound with the existence of self. It is there whether thinking subject exist or not, so that synthetic analysis of objects does not give the truth of objects as they are. For this reason, to gain the real connection within the world one needs to go beyond Kantian philosophy and his transcendental subject.

2.2.3 Existential Subject

Both Descartes and Kant construct the subject as a ground for knowing the 'external world' (the other) but they do this too subject-bounded; so that it makes the subject the only reality. That is to say, the world becomes far from the subject, and it makes the subject as a foreigner/stranger in the world.

But this foreignness might be useful when one takes world and its transcendence as inconsistent situations for a subject, because that subject continuously tries to overcome this inconsistency and yet, in each time this inhomogeneity produces itself in a variety of forms. These uncomfortable situations in which a subject finds itself are –in fact- a source of being a subject in a real sense.

Thus the subject could not be reduced to the causal relations that so called produce the subject as it is, and thereby could not be reduced to the social relations that cover the surrounding of subject by the beginning of the birth. There is always more about the subject. Although one is born into a tradition, the living experience made this tradition belong to the subject. Therefore, there is neither social nor world without the subject. And yet, the subject could not be thought of only as a conscious being since it makes the subject as if it is the only source of reality; on the contrary, the subject, in fact, can be a source of reality only by touching the world by experiencing it, or in other terms being within the world. The world itself does not bond with an explanation of a subject, rather as Merlau Ponty (2005) states that it *is descriptive*.

If a universal constituting consciousness were possible, the opacity of fact would disappear. If then we want reflection to maintain, in the object on which it bears, its' descriptive characteristics, and thoroughly to understand that object, we must not consider it as a mere return to a universal reason and see it as anticipated in unreflective experience, we must regard it as a creative operation which itself participates in the facticity of that experience. (p.71)

Unlike Descartes and Kant this subject is not in a search for a consistency but it reproduces this unexpected encounter within world and so at the same time reproduces the astonishing feelings against world. To illustrate, when I encounter a beautiful forest that consists of a variety of different things such as sun light, clouds, rivers, trees, squirrels and so forth, I am experiencing them prior to any reflexive analysis of them. Even my conscious being itself is not limited only within the laws of the rule that it is based on observation of the external; in contrast, it starts by the feeling of the subject (of myself) as it is, which means I am aware of my being when (or sometimes before) I see 'the other'.

When Hegel criticizes the observing reason, he, in fact, takes position against universal laws which are constituted by pure intellect (Stern, R.,2001, p.48). Under universal categories, one cannot simply and naively constitute a universal law in a way which grasp all the individuality in itself. This universality actually is condemned to be in conflict with individual all the time. Thus, one cannot talk about absolute universality.

At the same time, the way we perceive things cannot be reduced to pure individuality(ego) as the world (the other) always transcend to our perception. On the other hand, it is inevitable for individuals to turn their faces towards the world because it is always there as a source of astonishment. Yet, in each stage, individuals feel themselves foreign to the world and thus turn back to themselves. The tension between universal and individual is not negligible for Hegel. Hegel (1977) states that,

The universal unity into which the living immediate unity of individuality and substance withdraws is the soulless community which has ceased to be the substance-itself unconscious- of individuals, and in which they now have the value of selves and substances, possessing a separate being-for-self. The universal being thus split up into a mere multiplicity of individuals, this lifeless Spirit is an equality, in which all count the same ,i.e. as persons.

Hegelian dialectic, on the contrary, basically stems from the tension between the substance of the things and their qualities that is an ongoing two sided act of the self to realize the world. In each case, this self goes toward the outer world to cover the meaning and then returns to itself and, consequently; this ongoing movement differentiates the subject. This differentiation is quite similar to the Descartes's cogito

but the difference, here, comes from the continuity of the act. Hegel does not construct the subject as stable entity which reproduces the representations of objects through the conscious activity of the self, but rather he wants to improve the subjectivity in each astonishing moment of the encounter with the world.

Therefore, subjectivity becomes more than relations described by the consciousness. An encounter with something other than with oneself when one turn one's face against the world is the process by which the realization of limits of being in the world -as some kind of compulsory realization- emerges. The limits which are realized by humans, in fact, is the way in which individuals construct themselves through the process involved in the becoming (genesis).

Here, by this analysis it becomes possible to negate a reductionist perspective on human experience including labour activity. Because the universal law constructed by the ideal of enlightenment is not enough to comprises all the individuals, there are always individuals who are not included in that subject. Therefore, the ideal of universality hides something bigger, something deeper in human existence.

The 'primordial' ways of understanding that exist in the human 'bodily' perception are actually aware of the reality when they encounter it. Unlike Kant, it is not constructed through a conscious process; on the other hand, it is a perception which makes it possible to see things as they are. When I look at a beautiful tree, I realize it as it is, and at that moment, in fact, there comes out something that belongs both for me and for that tree, or any kind of existences. In that sense, this kind of 'universality' contradicts with the absolute universality because this process is never completed because of the demand of the being individual. It continuously structures the human perception. Whether it ends or not, the attempt of a human being to comprehends existence is valuable and laborious.

Therefore, during this dissertation the concept of labour will refer to any kind of laborious activity of human beings, so that I can think of labour as a productive activity of human beings that even produces the values of life as it produces the new and genuine perception against the world. By thinking over the relatedness of subject and 'the other' and of labour and the 'other', I will intend to extend the concept of labour.

CHAPTER III

SUBJECT, LABOUR AND THE OTHER

3.1 Subject and the Other

In the first chapter, we accept labour as activity of subject. Thus, One first of all needs to explain what a subject is and how it is capable of producing and creating something new. Although the general tendency toward subject is, presumably, based on an accomplished subject consistent within a solid self, subject most of the time is not consistent within self as it is exposed to change. In other words, since subject is not whole with itself, it cannot be regarded as a starting point of movement. For this reason, one needs to see the invalidity of the one-sided movement of subject that is from inner world to outer world.

Therefore, my argument is arising from the idea of the inconsistency of subject which refers to the subject as composed of selves rather than one homogeneous self. Subject is the one who, all the time, tries to evince the reality of the self by acting, by thinking, by speaking and so on; however, at each time there emerges a surplus which makes the process in a continuum. Yet, none of the moment is invaluable although it cannot conclude itself by ending the process. This is because every separation from the self, points out to a way to realize the world.

In the society we live in, there are variety of personas that change from circumstances to circumstances. Thus, we cannot talk about a solid personality because it depends on social circumstances, changed by the society they live in, and thus it cannot be considered in crystalized and solid form. Many of us feel, away from society, as if we are always something other than what our socially constructed personalities are. This is a conscious process that occurred by the individual who abstract himself/herself from society, in fact it comes from desire to be a whole within the self; however, since we live in a society and are shaped by society even this reaction against personas could not be separated from the social , simply because it is a reaction against socially constructed personas.

However, this reaction has a great potential to initiate one to consider about their being. If one feels the resistance to the personality, the driving force which constructs the personality should come from outside of the social. In that sense, it is inevitable to think of the otherness of the self that is not depend on society. If it does not depend on society can we argue that this is happening because of the fact that the human is a conscious being? From this, one can argue that human feel the anarchic elements causing separated, inconsistent selves, and they give them order through reason. Whitehead is one of the philosopher who plays with these anarchic elements to give them order. He, in the *Function of Reason*, said that

We can understand order, because in the recesses of our own experience there is a contrasting element which is anarchic. But sheer anarchy means the nothingness of experience. We enjoy the contrasts of our own variety in virtue of the order which removes the incompatibility of mere diversity. Thus mental experience must itself be canalized into order (Whitehead, 1971, p.33)

Similarly, one can give meaning to the diversity of selves through consciousness. By accepting the subject as unified substratum, one can accept the reason as the ground on which to construct this unification. However, the problem here is that a conscious process detaches one from the in-itself, and by doing this the subject cannot be something other than himself /herself as there is no outside from the transcendental ego of the human. Reflexivity of consciousness is condemned to hide something from us thus adhering the subject to the representational realm of mind.

Therefore, the assumption regarding the juxtaposition between subject and object does not give us a genuine attitude toward life, but still one cannot think of the subject as totally dependent on the outside world, as under the control of object. So the difference between subject and object to some extent remains, but the differences between them are not because of the conscious being of the transcendental self. The self is not under the possession of self. I mean the self has always something foreign to itself, it is in each act of consciousness releases a hidden aspect of the I. In that sense, consciousness should not be thought of the thinking of cogito but rather it is the act of self which acts in two ways: towards something and backward to itself, in each movement what is discovered by I is the insufficiency of consciousness to explain the human.

If I take consciousness as the consciousness of transcendental ego, everything outside is always remains in uncertainty and, I become an enclosed self which cannot have a genuine attitude toward life because everything is so much related with myself ,and

yet it breaks down the genuine connection with myself since self becomes transparent to me in total. In that case, everything other than me remains as possibility but nothing more. Thus it cannot have an effect on me now that I am already a whole with myself. This perspective on life, in fact, makes subject totally separate, and thus nothing in the 'actual life' has genuine meaning for that self, for I neither effect upon the other nor could the other have an effect on me. Thereby, the self loses the hidden part of their being which stimulates oneself to act. The hidden(veiled) part of the self is actually the transcendence of the I.

I, as a being in the world, am not separate from the world. Nonetheless, since I am in the world there is distance between me and the other and, I—as a part of the world—also transcendence like the other that exists around the self; namely, I distance with myself as I distance with the objects I encounter. Moreover, I have a sense of myself and also a sense of the objects I encounter before I know them consciously.

Sight is achieved and fulfils itself in the thing seen. It is of its essence to take a hold upon itself, and indeed if it did not do so it would not be the sight of anything, but it is none the less of its essence to take a hold upon itself in a kind of ambiguous and obscure way, since it is not in possession of itself and indeed escapes from itself into the thing seen. What I discover and recognize through the cogito is not psychological immanence, the inherence of all phenomena in 'private states of consciousness', the blind contact of sensation with itself. It is not even transcendental immanence, the belonging of all phenomena to a constituting consciousness, the possession of clear thought by itself. It is the deepseated momentum of transcendence which is my very being, the simultaneous contact with my own being and with the world's being. (Ponty, M.,2005, p.438)

The long quotation above belongs to Merleau Ponty, a great mind, who realizes the human being and its' boundedness with the world with all its density by understanding the transcendence of human intentionality toward the world. And yet, it is not transcendence that encapsulates all in itself; it is neither Kantian transcendental ego nor Cartesian cogito but it is rather about an engaged subject who simultaneously keeps the distance with the other of the self. The reality thus is the mediation between the self and the hidden part of self.

Cogito in that sense is both the curse and blessing for the continuity of labour activity of the subject which potentially gives the subject a chance to experience the world genuinely; otherwise being a stone and being a human may not mean a lot. The subject should always conflict with the inner being but it is not, as Descartes describes it; to know the absolute principle but rather it is for gaining genuine perception when searching this 'principle' so, if there is a principle it has to be fluid and ambiguous.

The subject as a separated being lives in the world as a foreigner, but when that subject distances within habits and awareness of the separated self, there the subject also realizes the familiarity within that separation. This might seem as controversial argument but, in fact, it is not, because subject could notice the familiarity when the subject realizes the separateness. Without cold there is no hot; likewise, without separation there is no familiarity. Only a person who feels the solitude of the separation can search for the familiarity within the world, and construction of familiarity in that sense necessitate the other to construct the self as the other. This is actually, a laborious activity because being separated is constructed by the activity of subject. Levinas is a philosopher who understand this abundantly. In the *Totality and Infinity* he states that:

The familiarity of the world does not only result from habits acquired in this world, which take from it its roughness and measure the adaptation of the living being to a world it enjoys and from which it nourishes itself; familiarity and intimacy are produced as a gentleness that spreads over the face of things. This gentleness is not only a conformity of nature with the needs of the separated being, which from the first enjoys them and constitutes itself as separate, as I, in that enjoyment, but is a gentleness coming from an affection [amitié] for that I. (Levinas,1969, p.154-155)

In this quotation, as beautifully and poetically expressed by Levinas, the subject feels the other of the self at the moment of encounter, and from that affection in fact s/he could realize or discover the familiarity of the world. Thus, at the first step, the subject has to differentiate himself/herself from the other to create, and to produce. One needs to overcome the total estrangement to produce; otherwise, that person would feel the separation but could not go out of the order of the one's selfhood, and thus could not even act or think. Hence, feeling the separation of self to feel the intimacy and confidence require energy of the human to the highest degree.²

When I labour on something I feel whether it is waste of time or not. But in some cases, I direct myself in another way but in some other cases, I may hold myself in the same area and continue to deal with the same issues although I know it changes nothing in me, contributes nothing to me. In the latter, I deceive myself purposefully although I know I am doing nothing that made me mature. This insistence of labouring on the issue is, in fact, death labour which can make one totally blind. The awareness of those who feel the worthlessness of labour comes from the non-unified structure of the subject who has different degrees of truth along with himself/herself; namely, the

² Though The other of Levinas is the other ethical subject, I use it to think on the otherness of labour. Here, I do not intend to think on the ethical subject. Yet, to sense he connection between labour and the self, I find useful to use the concept other as the way Levinas uses, but surely in different context.

subject recognizes the invalidity of the frozen truth as is already sense the different facets of the truth. And yet, it may not prevent to the semblance of labour value, since, for instance, one may want to protect their status and love social relations that comes from the status, which is the result of fake labour.

On the other hand, in some cases one may feel the labour process he commits himself to is great and makes him more mature than his current state of being; however, this sense of truth might even be a misinterpretation. It might be originated from some of the qualities of the work that make his feelings better during the activity but yet it is just the qualities that actually do not integrate him in the process which, thus, could not change him. This happens because of the other that causes one to not be whole and transparent within himself.

Therefore, I have not possession of myself. Like how the objects have parts hidden from me, I myself have parts hidden from me. This veiled subjectivity is the source of alteration from my childhood to my maturity, and although I commit myself to what I am doing, what I am labouring on, then in one moment it is revealed that I am labouring for nothing. After this realization, in fact, continuity on the same work causes self-deception but nothing else. However, different than the self-deception, misinterpretation includes a reality within itself because the commitment to that work was not fake. So in the second case, I change and this alteration should cause the attitude towards life and the realization of the misinterpretation is, in fact, comes from the other to the hidden, veiled part of me. I am thereby more than I am. After realization of the misinterpretation of the laborious activity of myself, I find myself in another misinterpretation but this one, like the previous one, needs to be searched to its limits to reveal the truth, and then it continues likewise.

From that perspective, thus, a state of human like emotions that, at first, seems internal can be seen in the context of labour. Even emotions are not an internal and independent state of the human being. Although they seem so pure when we feel them, they actually become tangible with the movement of transcendence. Emotions cannot be thought of as unconditional as they reveal themselves only in action. Moreover, this movement is not separated from thought as we tend to think of it most of the time. This does not mean one needs to act without thinking, but rather it is necessary to connect thought and action.

For example, the compassion of a mother reveals itself in the act of mother toward her children, but yet one cannot say it is a state of the human being that excludes thinking. Thus, a mother's compassion is laborious and yet it is the way she thinks. This, therefore, means that in another context, and in another situation a mother could act differently because the object of her action or her thinking is quite different. For instance, if this mother is a doctor, her attention goes toward her patient, and she decides, thinks, and acts accordingly. And yet, in each case, although this attitude includes concrete, tangible relations, it cannot be evaluated as the infallible. None of the relations are capable to grasp it's reality in its whole. Thus the continuity of motherhood is not stable, the compassion lasts only if mother does not lose her object which, in this case, is the children. Similarly, since this mother may also be a doctor and additionally have a variety of identities such as being someone's daughter, the subject is polarized. She is not a possessor of herself. Thus this mother cannot be reduced to the either of the qualities she has. She is always more than those qualities.

Therefore, I am of the thinking that ambiguity of the self and the other is not challenged with the concrete act of the subject; on the contrary, they correspond with each other. Merleau Ponty (2002) equivalently argues that "If we are in a situation, we are surrounded and can not be transparent to ourselves, so that our contact with ourselves is necessarily achieved only in the sphere of ambiguity."(p. 444)

Elsewhere, he makes a statement which strengthen his argument.

Thus we are not perpetually in possession of ourselves in our whole reality, and we are justified in speaking of an inner perception, of an inward sense, an 'analyser' working from us to ourselves which, ceaselessly, goes some, but not all, the way in providing knowledge of our life and our being.(p. 442)

From there, one can say that self is not enclosed in itself and it is not transparent to itself. We are living beings conditioned on the Earth, thereby our beings cannot be possibly considerate as separate from the time and space we live in. We are bounded with them.

Therefore, the movement of the self is not exactly from inside to outside since we cannot think ourselves as internal beings. We are already drawing up ourselves within the reciprocal movement of self. But it never ends, at least in the world we live in. Realizing this, in fact, necessitate active imagination so one can produce reality, it is misinterpreted reality and yet it is concrete, tangible reality of one. There is nothing more real than this in the world. This process of production, I call labour. So reading

a book, listening to music, praying to God, walking in a forest, looking to an astonishing river are all considerable in the context of labour since they are all included in the process of self-realization.

Since self is not a mentally constructed enclosed subject, and since we cannot think of it as separated being, the ambiguity of it (the other) makes it the subject of wonder. This means that we don't know ourselves as we are, so any labouring transcendence to thought. We are not simply conscious beings or at least consciousness cannot be distinguished from the movement of ourselves. Who we think we are, in fact, is an illusion to some extent and yet it is real. The misinterpretation, the illusions are all reality of the human being. The reality of them depends on their misinterpretation because if we say the reality is a universally constructed certainty, this leads us to nothing but nothingness or God.

A subject cannot be thought of as a sum of his/her identities because it transcends itself. Identities are not discrete as we tend to think about them, they are indefinite before subject actualizes them. I do not mean the constituting subject³ makes these identities through thinking over their action but the action itself is embedded to the identity of the subject. If we accept identity as a conscious act of the subject, then it should only be structured by human perception. This depends on the presumption of the fact that one thinks over the action and replicates oneself in the mind exactly the same. This requires subject object separation and noumenal, phenomenal separation, and detachment of the labour and the subject into two discrete things.

Nonetheless, this does not mean we can reduce subject to the actions she/he does, because there is always more. By saying 'there is always more', I don't intend to mystify the subject but rather my intention is to take subject as a different being than the object. I am, as a subject, neither the things that I do, nor the constituting subject which is totally separated from the world I live in. My distance to the objects, and my distance to my identities are not at the same level. I am always more close to my qualities than the qualities of object, nevertheless I am not my qualities. It is because when one establishes qualities in a manner, it becomes the property of the locked self.

³ I took constituting subject and instituting subject differentiation from Fiona Hughes. These terms are used by Merleau-Ponty in *Institution and Passivity*: Course Notes from the Collège de France. She said these terms are used by him to refer "Subject does not constitute the world, but rather institutes within that world."

However, in reality subject always moves toward something, has an effect on something and is affected by something.

This is, nonetheless, not measurable affection. I am in the world and my perception always exceeds my thinking. Therefore, thinking over and over about the identities that I have is useless as it depends on the presupposition of fixed identities. In that sense, the movement of subject shows the reality of our being, and it pushes us to discover our existence in each case. This is a difficult attempt for one to deal with, so I accept it as laborious. Hiding behind the qualities, characteristics and identities that is socially constructed, or putting an identity, that is served as package by society, is easier than dealing with the reality and the limits of our existence.

Labelled groups, or groups that are squeezed in poorly defined identities, generally consist of individuals that think over and over their identities, and try to explain it to themselves; but this, although it seems reasonable, is not an issue solvable by a detached self. As a matter of fact, one discovers oneself only in movement towards an object, so by making the identities that is defined by them their own, they lost their existence. A black person in America, a woman with hijab in Turkey or a Palestinian in Israel, a Muslim in Europe, a Kurdish person in Turkey are compelled to accept the identities that are made for them; what the difficult thing is, in fact, is to discover a 'free' attitude toward life that belongs to their ways of life. Therefore, none of the identities could be accepted as the beginning point or ground. What is more, escaping from those identities also means accepting them as ground; so nothing can be acceptable as a ground to explain one's own subjectivity. So, as has been seen, subject is neither the identities nor the constituting subject that is separated from the social they live in.

I am not what I think I am. Every quality, identities that is given from other to me and from me are not who I am. Thus, I have to think subjectivity through subject and the other all the time. If I think of myself as a successful person in a business sector or in politics, I always fall into hole that is filled with fake identities. The phenomenon of the identity is, when we think reflexively, constructed through the categories of transcendental self, thus we misinterpret the partiality of the subject, that is to say; we experience ourselves always more than the elements that is analysed by the consciousness. All the contemplations over subject consist in the element of passivity.

Even if I bring together a variety of identities to define who I am, there are passive elements that are not awoken to my consciousness. Levinas (2010) defines passivity as ‘more passive than all passivity’. He adds that ‘it cannot be recuperated by representation effected by memory or history’

Thus, it is not wrong to say that the element of passivity is the place where the other emerges. Once I have said this, it may seem like passivity is a ground for the self and the other, but it is not as it is not stable. This element of passivity, within small disparity, is mentioned in Merleau-Ponty’s and Levinas’ texts.⁴ They both think that, prior to the conscious state of the human, passivity affects the self without thematising it; otherwise all the activity of human being becomes the fantasy of self to reaffirm itself in its wholeness. In the book *Radical Passivity*, consists of multiple articles on this issue, Bettina, B. (2009) similarly argues “For Levinas, as for Merleau-Ponty, passivity consists of layers and facets; it is not directly thematizable without incurring paradoxes. Yet passivity is a kind of whole, an abyss from which meaning arises.”

The other, in that sense, is crucial to apprehend human activity, human labour; namely, if the self is possessed by self, then in the activity of self, the labour does not affect the self. Only if the element of passivity and the other are taken as an essential part of human experience, does the activity change, affect and push the human being forward. Thus, for Ponty and Levinas, passivity does not equal with passive. It is, on the other hand, in between active and passive.

As is said by Fiona Hughes (2013), passivity should be considered as “involvement in”, but not as “being effected by”. It is because as Levinas argued “Something, some alteration, affected a self before the intentional ego become aware of it”. It does not the theme of representation rather it is almost like nonexistence that affects the act of self, prior to any conscious realization. Moreover, it never could be thought of as the theme of consciousness, and is thereby never graspable.

Similarly, in the *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty uses the term ‘the resistance of passivity’ to show the irreducibility of the act of perception to conscious

⁴ For a larger context, the differences between Ponty and Levinas gains more importance. In this thesis, the concepts are more close to the way Ponty uses them. But the similarities between the concepts without reducing them to context becomes useful for this dissertation as it is not an ethical discussion. To see the discussion Reynolds’ article “Merleau-Ponty, Levinas, and the Alterity of Other” is useful but I will not enlarge the discussion since it breaks the coherency of the subject.

representation. To be able to do that, he argued that subject is situated in the world so, it is not an atomistic individual that encounters multiplicity and feels himself/herself in total estrangement. And yet, this does not mean the subject could cover the reality by constituting it. The subject in Ponty's sense is the elements of passivity and perceived accordingly. The primordial relation of the situated subject is, thus, quite similar with the Levinas's subject that refuses to 'be domesticated by a theme'.

Reflection can never make me stop seeing the sun two hundred yards away on a misty day, or seeing it 'rise' and 'set', or thinking with the cultural apparatus with which my education, my previous efforts, my personal history, have provided me. I never actually collect together, or call up simultaneously, all the primary thoughts which contribute to my perception or to my present conviction. A critical philosophy attaches in the last analysis no importance to this resistance offered by passivity. (p.71)

As have seen, Merlau Ponty (2005) in the *Phenomenology of Perception* makes a strong argument on the anonymity of the perception. The subject of Ponty is not a transcendental self but rather the subject is primarily situated in the phenomenal field. So the transcendental ego which constitutes the subject by imposing categorical imperatives is not to make the unknown thing known. Subject situated in the phenomenal field where subject perceives object, and communes with object. The subject thus is situated, and passivity is the term to refer the situatedness of the subject. According to Merlau Ponty (2005), for-itself and the in-itself are not separated as we tend to think but they are at the same level. This means that the situated subject he claimed is not dependent on an external world but rather the subject exists within the phenomenal field. For this reason, it is important to understand Ponty, like Levinas, does not get passivity as a term to define a stable ground. The ambivalence, in that sense, would be better term to describe passivity.

So from there, it may not sound so senseless to argue that passivity opens a place for a diversity of selves. So, as I mentioned, subject cannot be considered as enclosed, atomic individuals. Individuality of one in each case regenerated, namely, a subject encounters with the other and the differences all the time which alters his/her position. Nonetheless, the other is not external because of the passivity we talked about, therefore; the other is also the otherness of the selves as much as the otherness of the multiple objects. Thus, what makes us individual cannot be depend on the qualities of the selves as these are always exposed to change, but there is something more about the human that keeps his/her potential of discoverability.

I think there is a mediating factor for a human to be who s/he is in spite of the continuous changes in the qualities, and yet it is not a ground. What I intent here is to think about the concept of labour along with 'the other' so only then what we do, what we labour on made us aware of our very existence. To be able to do this, I would like to use Ponty's instituting subject that he proposes as an alternative to the constituting subject. For him, the instituting subject is involved in the place (and time) s/he lives in. And any kind of activity is not through the constituting power of the self-consciousness but the element of passivity, for him, this is an important factor, to realize human activity, human labour as something more than what s/he prefers because the subject is not detached from the external world, it is in the world, and thus the being of him/her affected from the elements of life both awaken and not awaken (passivity). This means that humans, all the time include selves rather than the atomistic self that is already the origin of their action. The action is parallel with the activity of the self, there is neither self that is distinguished from outside nor outer world that is separately constructed as it is. Both the outside and the self, reciprocally, exist and I think labour emerges through the act of the instituting subject. It is not totally external, nor totally internal, and not totally active, nor totally passive. When the subject is considered through a variety of elements, what s/he does becomes more than repetition, it becomes labour that changes the instituting subject.

Fiona Hughes (2013) points out that Merleau Ponty's instituting subject is surely, at first, designed to display a subject as that 'encompassed being'. This subject can create, produce, and begin without repetition through the movement toward himself/herself and toward the 'outside'. Consequently, Hughes (2013) argues that though it does not do anything within the institution as organizing sector of human life, at the end it relates with it. In her article "A Passivity Prior to Passive and Active", she advocates that,

Institution' has, for Merleau-Ponty, the connotation of inauguration, beginning, and, indeed, creating." In the first instance, he is not concerned with institutions conceived of as public bodies charged with organizing sectors of human life. However, his analysis of the role of institution as the human capacity par excellence prepares the possibility of a reassessment of institutions as organizations created by judgement, but wholly active and wholly passive, because we are the upsurge of time.

Thus the subject, instituting within the world and instituted by world is not merely a subject that constitutes reality, reveals the dual relation that is always more than for-itself and in-itself, intact with the life through experience. That is why, it becomes

necessary to deal with the concept of labour that more or less could be defined as movement of self toward the outside, to apprehend the capability of subject. In addition to the subject and the other, hence, I intend to see labour and the other to think the other and subject not only as a product of constitutive subject, but rather a subject that is more than confined in his/her island of consciousness.

3.2 Labour and the Other

I started this dissertation in virtue of the fact that I want to expand the definition of labour so that it includes every day experience. To be able to do that, it is good to start with the expounding of what we understand from everyday experience. Everyday experience simply is the concrete activity of a human being, embedded in daily life, that is arising from the human engagement with the material reality of the world.

In that sense, the labour, mentioned here, is distinguished from the labour of formal work. In the formal work, there mostly discussion on exploited waged-labour and the tools of exploitation, but the labour in the social realm is more related with the spontaneity of the daily life. This labour is strongly bounded with the social realm, that is why; both the individual and social change through labouring in the daily life namely; when one is altered through the process of labouring, their social bond also transforms as well.

Today, an exploited waged labourer mostly shows himself in the bureaucratic system of the state or in the work place. Mostly, the work place is associated with the Kafkaesque bureaucracy, full of bureaucratic entanglements. All the stuff and people bounded together pragmatically to fulfil duties that are separated from them, causing alienated subjects. The labour here is detached from the subject as subject is not actually the part of what they do. Hence, this environment is the mechanism of exploitation.

This kind of working environment also known as the place of control and reason to organize things in order because these organisations have to define clear and strict parameters of the measurement of labour. And by doing this, consequently, the working environment equalizes the labour of workers under same universal parameters. What makes a person unique is eliminated in the formal manner of universality.

Simone Weil was interested in the bureaucratic machine and its' effect on human subjectivity. Weil, in the *Oppression of Liberty*, insistently criticize bureaucracy as the system that destroys human subjectivity. In that manner, she (2014) said,

The rationalized factory, where a man finds himself shorn, in the interests of a passive mechanism, of everything which makes for initiative, intelligence, knowledge, method, is as it were an image of our present-day society. For the bureaucratic machine, though composed of flesh, and of well fed flesh at that, is none the less as irresponsible and as soulless as are machines made of iron and steel.(p.13)

As Weil argues a man's subjectivity lies where one actively engages into the process. There, however, a person puts aside the personality and acts within the rules of the universal. Work here is more like a duty one needs to accomplish, but it is not the way of one's participation in life. Here, Inese Radzins infers from Weil's arguments on labour, whereby she searches for another interpretation of labour to make the subject engaged.

In that sense she especially, draw our attention to the 'equalization of labours under universal'. She (2017) advocates that "This equalization of labor leads to the objectification of the worker, whereby the laboring individual becomes a commodity, comparable to and replaceable by any other. Life is obliterated as real individuals are reduced to universal things, be those members, workers, consumers, or inmates."

Replicability of one's work means that the uniqueness of that person's subjectivity is obliterated by the formal manner, and every work, that is done by workers, are the same for the continuity of the system. That is why, in the formal mechanism of the work, one does not need the others.

Therefore, passing from constituting subject, which "domesticate the other in a theme", to instituting subject of Merleau Ponty, which is based on bodily experience of the world, is quite significant to co-exist with the other. In that sense, what one does as a clerical worker, for instance, does not have to correspond with the others' since the product of one' labouring is not simply a conscious project of oneself that could grasp the other labouring process. Instituting the subject, as is said, is not simply a conscious subject that is enclosed in itself, the movement of that subject is reciprocal which means this subject institutes the labour but at the same time is instituted by it. Surely, here it is good to point out that labour is a concrete, productive and creative power rather than an abstract power of human beings. Whereas labour as abstract power of the human separates both the labour product and process from the human,

concrete labour makes an individual part of it. It is because the product is not the representation of mind, here there is a real, sensible connection with the world that makes labour effective to alter the subject.

So that, the human as a conscious being transcends through the labour process. Surely, one does not live alone in a society but with other people. They are all part of the labouring process. In that sense, the other workers in same environment are conscious being as well but the consciousness they have is not an assumption of the self. They are in the world, having a body that involved in that world; so, their existence is not dependent on the assumption of the conscious self. In that sense, consciousness here is not transcendental ego, the constituting subject that is carried over his/her conception of what it is to be a conscious being. Therefore, the conscious activity of others should be different, so to with labour. This difference gives a space for productivity even in a strongly, rationally organized working environment. In that way, every one of the human being's life becomes an irreplaceable valuable and unique life, not the same life. Thus, when some encounter within the other, the life of the other will be inspirational to that person.

Until there, what I have talked about is the conscious other but the other should be divided as the conscious other and the unconscious other which is object since we do not live in a void together with other human beings. Instead, we are surrounded by multiple material elements. Like the conscious subject, objects are in the world and they are separated from me. I am not an object neither are the other conscious subjects, but still they are not reducible to the qualities or the function they have. As Graham Harman, who finds current discussion of the objects insufficient and shallow, said that (2011) "Objects needs not be natural, simple, or indestructible. Instead, objects will be defined only by their autonomous in two separate directions: emerging as something over and above the pieces, while also partly withholding themselves from relations with other entities." In that way, he aims to take object as irreducible elements, making our living realm more inspirational. From that perspective, I cannot grasp all the aspect of the tools that exist in an environment because there is a transcendental field that keeps the incompleteness of an individual existence of things. Thus the objects are not simply sources of the production process, there is always something more about them that I cannot hold in total. For instance, when I perceive a table, it is not only a functional unity that I use to produce, but also I perceive it through a broad

background. I cannot separate it from that background, and I cannot observe what the function of that table is for the labour process. This background is also not simply the complex relations of the environment. All the tools are in there as a part of the labour process, yet reducing them to relations and functions made the whole process of the product of the constituting subject because it is based on an assumption as if there is a complex unity in there that opens to my analyzation and if I could make this properly I can grasp it. This however, prevents the potentialities of the labour product as different than subject. Subject in all this process produces itself and itself, so this perspective also excludes the other.

Hence, the world is not in there and established through already existing causal relations which is open to our analyzation. Thereby, mostly labour is considered as being in a position in these relations and analysing the world, getting as much information and sources from the world. When one understands the rules of relations then could be in the production process by following them. However, the production is mostly external to human being and human loses his/her position as subject that is intertwined with the labouring activity. As a matter of fact, the production in that sense is mostly based on consumption by getting from the sources of the word as much as possible. It does not alter human being except feeding his/her greed.

So what makes us call an activity as labour? It is not easy to define this because labour is not an activity which is used for a particular kind of human activities. I am an engaged being in a social world, and in social world meanings cling into context. I act toward something without thinking, most of the acts thus are habitual rather than conscious. Merleau Ponty (2005) states that “habits express our power of dilating our being in the world, or changing our existence by appropriating fresh instrument” (p.166). In that sense, habit is neither a conscious activity nor an involuntary activity, it is the way we live, how we engage with the world. Thus, in that sense, it could be considered as a part of labour and it makes the subject open to change. This change is within the phenomenal field; it is not the change of the detached being. For instance, a musician does not think while s/he is playing instrument, and yet it is voluntary act of the musician. This habitual act of the musician is his/her labour. Or a poet writes a poem by bringing the words together is labour of the poet because s/he senses the harmony of the inconsistency of the words.

Similarly, one who walks through the street, which is surrounded by a variety of elements, does not mechanically go from one place to another that already exists without his/her subjectivity, because if that is the case then, none of the steps are worth the energy spent. This movement is a way of involvement to a world in which one lives. Thus I am calling that labour as it is an endeavour to live, to exist. In that sense, getting a place in rationally constructed organizations is not the factor that can define an activity as laborious. On the contrary, most of the time the status and the money given by those organizations hide the meaningful labour activity of human. When one is hooked by the ascribed roles, then getting them easily becomes the real aim. This, in fact, means that the value of labour depends on how labourless it is. Although it is nonsense and paradoxical, the general acceptance regarding labour is derived from this perspective. Even, Marxist analysis, as it is only reads labour by analysing the mechanism of oppression, overlooking how labour is crucial in human existence. Since labour is thought of with respect to the expectation of capital, it turns into a mere abstraction and so, excludes the lived experience of human beings.

Thus labour here is productive labour of one to transform both the social and the human that live in the society. Otherwise, the social dominated by the rationalized organization that, in total, see human as a part of mechanism carries out the expectation of capital. Yet, sometimes, the labour we mentioned could be destructive rather than productive. As it transforms both the human and the social, it is actually alien to most of the expectations of capital. So here what I describe as labour- not necessarily- could be in conflict with the common definition of labour. By describing labour as an activity of the subject that potentially transform him/her, I draw the general framework of labour to think about it in a broad context. Then, lets continue to think over the concept from there.

3.2.1 Labour as the Other

Above, I evaluated the other as the objects and subjects that surrounds me because, as was said, neither of them could be thought of as the property of the self. Thus since labour is result of the connection between subject and subject as other, and object and object as the other, labour could not be explainable as the property of self. In that sense, labour as a concept to cover these discussions over subject and object could be taken as other as well.

Previous discussion on the other was to open a way to contemplate on the latter. In this section, thus, I will think of labour as the other so I could think of the concept in a more broad context which covers all the practical activity of human beings. In that sense, I will differentiate vapid activity and the meaningful activity of humans by using *change* as a criterion. Thus, labour could be thought of as an activity that alters humans to something more than who they are. This means that labour is a way to transcendence.

Hence, if we take labour as the other, there emerges a chance to evaluate it as the activity of a human which pushes him/her to something more. When labour is taken as other, it frees itself from the possession of self, thereby it can alter the subject. In other words, since labour changes the subject it should be something other than the subject, otherwise; it cannot have an effect on the subject. Both what I produce, and the way I produce it is in divergence with self. If it is corresponded by the self, then it cannot change self but only produce the variations of the self. Therefore, it should be more than self and its' conscious processes.

However, this does not mean I can abstract labour from subject because labour is still the labour of that particular subject. It is only possible by a mediating factor as otherwise it should be either too separated from self or too much embedded in the self. Between this other and the self, there is a mediating factor, we should suppose, that states the transition between the other and the self whereby labour becomes neither of them.

Here, the mediating factor is not obtainable with an analogy of two things, but rather it is from that of proximity and difference. It is not an analogy because it does not depend on the sense of sameness between self and the other. Rather it is, as defined by Levinas(1969), "is contact with the other. To be in contact is neither to invest the other and annul his alterity, nor the suppress myself in the other." (p.86). Thus, labour does not totally define who we are nor it is totally separated from who we are.

The concept of proximity and alterity, here, as is explained by Levinas, is quite meaningful to open the discussion more toward the way we intend. The way Levinas uses the concept proximity and alterity is different than the common perspective on it. He uses the term proximity and alterity in a more complex manner wherein the terms lose their oppositional meaning. He, in other words, uses them as transitional that

render the borders between subject and the other invisible. The border here exists as an area that separates subject and the other but since it is invisible it is not like a strict, solid distinction. If we apply the other to the labour, we can see the same border between the subject and the activity of subject in daily life. In the life we live in, it is not easy to say we are subjects that are different than what we do and yet, we cannot also say that the things we labour on define who we are. In there, the concept of other and the proximity and alterity could help us explain the relations between labour and the subject better.

The term alterity is used by Levinas describe the primordial bond with the other which is there before the conscious realization of the other as the other.

The sense of alterity itself maintains open every kind of openness, even that to distant terms or immediately oncoming elements. The "deepest" level of life - that of vulnerability and susceptibility to pleasure and pain- is taken to be constituted not by a relationship with death, a relationship of being with nothingness, but by a relationship with alterity. (Lingis, A. 1978, pg. XVI)

It is, as is explained by Alphonso Lingis in the introduction of *Otherwise than Being*, a concept for Levinas to describe something that is "*always already there*" from which humans acts(responsibility) arises. He clearly uses the term alterity for the other human beings but it is, in that sense, applicable to labour as well because labour within its' alterity opens a way to consider it as life-giving activity. When labour is thought of as the primordial bond of humans with the world, labour takes an important place in human life. Mostly what one does is habitual rather than conscious, it is not regarded as a *real* part of human life, and is detracted from the value it has. Therefore, seeing labour as a primordial activity of human being makes it a way of partaking in the world.

In addition to alterity, the term proximity, which is mostly used by him in *Otherwise than Being*, gains importance to explain how labour could change a human. Within the term alterity, the otherness in labour is indicated clearly but how it affects a human is not explained. It only explains labour as more than a conscious process or as the other, but it cannot, on its own, clarify how something outside of the control of mind could change it. So the term proximity could deliver a solution to this problem.

Alterity, for Levinas (1969) , "is the very expression of immediacy". The immediacy of it is the source of the proximity, as it is prior to any presentation. Thus, within the proximity the other is always in contact with the self, hence, in that context the labour

is always an experience of a human that made her/him open to impact. Thus the immediacy of alterity, or proximity, prevents the separation from labour too much so the relations continue. Moreover, it also prevents the loss of the self in the labour as the term proximity goes with alterity not in contradiction but in integration. As Bernasconi(2018) said “it is striking that the language of absolute alterity never disappears from Levinas’ writings but coexist alongside the language of proximity that, as we have seen, was present early on but which fell into background within Totality and Infinity before coming to the fore in *Otherwise than Being*.” (p.6)

In addition to that, Alphonso Lingis (1978) indicates that both the alterity and proximity are the terms that tell us more than discrepancy but they are in transmission.

The relationship with alterity, which is what escapes apprehension, exceeds all comprehension, is infinitely remote, is, paradoxically enough, the most extreme immediacy, proximity closer than presence, obsessive contact.

In that sense, this gives us a right to claim that labour as the other is separate from the self and also it is in relation with the activity of the self. In that way, it becomes possible to say that what one labour on has a significant role in one’s life to change it more than the limited domain of the self.

Here, the transitional relation of proximity and alterity find expression under the term passivity. Passivity is a condition of prior possibility which “operates as the not yet determined movement out of which the abstraction of active and passive emerge.” (Hughes, 2013) With the term proximity and alterity, the transition from the self the other is explained as something more than active and conscious control of the intentional subject. For Levinas (1969), passivity is a term to describe the exposure of alterity whereby subject is not seen as self-contained ego but as incarnated body open to the other. This dualism between proximity and alterity explain us the transitional meaning of passivity which the border of exteriority and interiority becomes in indistinct and hazy character. In that sense, like how Fiona Hughes (2013) said “passivity means being part of a larger context over which we exercise only partial control.”

Like Levinas, Merlau Ponty gives us similar result on the term passivity, it is a term to reject a total control through apperception. As is said by Hofmeyr (2019):

Merleau-Ponty also shares with Levinas his critical eye for ontologies as full: on the objective side, the world, conceived as full being (the same sort of being Levinas found filling in all gaps and breaks, so that, in order to conceive of transcendence, he had to

have it cut across or into the being-time continuum, or weave through this verbal continuum in the modes of sensation and adverbs). On the subjective side, Merleau-Ponty refracted ontology into the multiplicity he called 'perception'. For him, to say Being is to state a fiction. It results from 'an isolating analysis(p.2)

The ambiguous relation with the world and self, that is intentionally constructed by Ponty, find its' place in the concept passivity. The other in the same that breaks the wholeness of the being comes from the absolute, radical passivity of Levinas and find its' expression on proximity and alterity. Similarly, Merleau Ponty mostly refers to the break that prevents the comprehension of the whole. He argued similarly with Levinas' other in the same when he said "impregnations of others".

In that sense, as well as the conscious integration of one to the labour process, unconsciousness in it should be regarded as a meaningful participation of subject. In that way, it is possible to see the important place of daily activity in human life. The concept of passivity as, involvement *in rather than caused by*, becomes crucial to comprehend the engagement of human to life as a part of the situation.

As mentioned before, the mediating factor between self and the other is the way to explain the human engagement with the world. In that sense, I accept the passivity as the mediating term as suggested by Fiona Hughes. She (2013) thinks passivity is a term that corresponds with mediation. This term is both for Levinas and Ponty prior to constituting conscious (for itself), so it is not thematizable. And yet, it is not a mystic term to make thing ambiguous rather it is sensible in the act of a human. It, in other words, makes human acts concrete. Passivity, in that sense, makes the other sensible so I become aware of the difference of the other before I know it. Here, the other could be considered both as object and person I encounter with, and as the other of the self that exist already in the present in an unawaken form. For instance, I sense that the labour will change me, but I do not know how the change will be in the future. It is a sense prior to knowledge of the other, but it necessitates the actualization of labour to merge. Thus it pushes the subject towards something other than himself/herself: it is then not constituting subject put the other in a theme but an instituting subject that involved in the process.

Instituting subject, rather than constituting subject, is as subject that is labouring in the border of the other and the self. The element of passivity is affective also when we think on the concept of labour. It is because what one does, what one produce is not only the result of an active subject that is full of qualities, but rather there is always

some elements that are not awoken. Those elements of passivity, however, more than passive, as a matter of fact, they represent the part of labour that is uncontrollable. Therefore, human activity is not measurable through a line that shows degrees of passivity and activity. All the activities of human include passivity and activity within themselves. It gives a hazy character to human labour and the labour product, thereby, in each time what I am working on is something other than me and yet is instituting within self and instituted by self. By keeping the distance with me and the labour product, in fact, the elements of passivity ‘construct’ the other.

What is called passivity is not the acceptance by us of an alien reality, or a causal action exerted upon us from outside: it is being encompassed [c'est un investissement], being in a situation [un être en situation] —prior to which we do not exist—which we are perpetually resuming and which is constitutive of us.

Merleau Ponty (2005), here, by using the term passivity gives clarity to the instituting subject that is involved in the experience. Experience of the instituting subject is not separated from the situation that s/he is in; namely, the connection with the other does not depend on causal relations. There is always more than causal relations that derive from the proximity and difference, and through difference and proximity one could sense the other as other, thereby construct and be aware of his/her individuality in each encounter.

From this point of view, I see no objection to accepting labour as the awareness of the individuality. That individuality is not constructed once and for all, it is always in continuity. Thus, the connection between the self and other is reciprocal and dialectical. The dialectical relations between them is not ended with synthesis because besides the self and other, there is always one another in the deeper level. The transcendental field is comprised of multiple others and so the relation of two cannot be isolated from this field that veil a hidden aspect all the time. I am, as an individual, come into being in this primordial field by involving and engaging within rather than as a detached being that posits his /her own rules and dominates over the other. Thus, I am bounded with something else than my construction. This is, as is said by Ponty, prior to knowing. My perception is not simply the result of my conscious interpretation. I am bounded with the primordial field that I am situated in. In other words, the transcendence of this field directs my action toward something that I did not know before, consequently, I find myself surrounded by a field that I cannot affect directly.

This, as a matter of fact, both gives what I do the character of enchantment and apprehension. If what I labour on is simply reducible to the sequence of activity following each other mechanically, the feeling of enchantment is lost, but if I sense the harmony of my action within the field I feel the enchantment. For instance, a musician playing an instrument is enchanted because of this harmony between the rhythm of the music and his/her being. And the audience at the same time feels the enchantment when they listen to it. They are not the same person with the musician, but yet they feel enchanted. They are not as active as musician, most of them may not be educated to understand and know the rules of music; nonetheless, they participate in the musical performance. Here, both what the musician and the audiences do are laborious.

However, the same field that made an action laborious might turn it into dead labour. The subject senses that the activity they are engaged in cannot be controlled by them in total, so they feel anxious about the result of it. They may thus lose the sense of meaning. For instance, when a musician becomes wholly absorbed by the rhythm and lose the sense of control, then it causes a disaster; since the music is separated from him, it becomes meaningless melodies. Therefore, musicians should feel their existence as the part of this field on the condition that keeping the difference they have. Thus, this field is neither homogeneous nor heterogeneous.

3.2.2 Nature and Labour

Until now, the places we talked about are more related with the secondary places which is constructed by human hands. The streets one walks through, or an instrument played by a musician are all human constructions. But before that, there is nature which is beyond human control more than cultural areas. Human control over these areas therefore is even less than over social areas. The world, or the nature was there before the emergence of humans at a stage of history; thus human are always bounded by the rules of nature. Today, people tend to think of nature as no longer a threat to human society; it is quite the opposite. Nature is still there affecting human life but somehow through the mechanism of exploitation, the bond between humans and nature is veiled. The social culture, constructed strictly within the rules of rationality, represents itself as the only reality; nevertheless, we still breathe, we still get food from earth, we still use fire to cook our meals, and thus we still are a part of the nature that we born into. Labour in the daily life is thus still strongly connected with the nature.

Before industrialization, human labour and its connection with nature was more explicit. Crafting, farming, and trading were the basic ways of labouring in those times. During this time, people used some tools to exercise power over nature. This power, however, is not one directional because human also sensed the power of the nature. Thus, one cannot consider humans as separated beings from nature. Even today, though we live in an illusion, we can sense this reciprocity. When I take nature as the other, I can feel both the difference and proximity. Although I am strongly bounded with the nature, I am not nature. To illustrate, when I see a tree, surely, I don't think I am tree, so I feel the distance with the tree. But there is a primordial relation between me and tree that cannot be reduced to the representation of tree in my mind. Before that secondary attitude, I sense the difference between me and tree; and this alterity is beyond my conscious apprehension, so since it is before the representation of it, it is close to me. This is a paradoxical argument but yet true. Thus, when I perceive the tree, I feel the sense of proximity. The way I perceive it, and the perception itself is laborious act, because it is difficult for one to catch, to sense this resistance of passivity. For this reason, the attitude towards nature is not simply based on domination; though mostly what is laborious is defined through the power of control. There is more, we can discover, about the relation with humans and nature.

Levinas(1969),though his analysis is more related with the responsibility and thus his driving motivation is ethical, saw the interrelatedness of two terms: proximity and alterity.

But the subject is exposed to alterity before it can gather itself up and take a stand. This closeness without distance, this immediacy of an approach which remains approach without what approaches being circumscribable, locatable there, Levinas calls proximity. The other, my neighbor (le prochain) concerns, afflicts me with a closeness (proximité) closer than the closeness of entities (prae-ens). The relationship with alterity, which is what escapes apprehension, exceeds all comprehension, is infinitely remote, is, paradoxically enough, the most extreme immediacy, proximity closer than presence, obsessive contact.(p. XIX)

Here, if we apply what Alphonso Lingis said, in the preface of the *Otherwise than Being*, to relation of nature and human, it means a lot for my argument. It is ,though, a strict distinction and a radical distancing from Levinas's context , how Levinas think on the distance with the other and human is quite fertile to think on any relations including the relations between human and nature.

Here, I do not point out the relation between human and nature to give a nature a romantic character but rather I would like to elucidate the strong bonds with human

and nature. Even a moment of looking show us this strong connection. Thus, it is just a delusion to think about labour without thinking about nature. Even the challenges, wilderness of the nature is a part of human nature but the daily habits of human ignore the limits of nature. Therefore, not only humans are alienated to cultural environment they live in, but also they are alienated to the nature.

To be able to understand the bond between human and nature, scientist mostly take nature as a system. However, nature is not a system as is thought mostly by scientists. The human subject, as an instituting subject, is engaged within nature. Therefore, what they do, what they labour on is intertwined with nature. Regarding nature as a system might be useful for scientist; nonetheless this definition cannot elucidate the bond between humans and nature. In fact, when one endeavours to define nature as a system and try to understand it by solving the complex relations of things in nature, it hides the primordial bond between them. I mean how we experience nature is mostly not the way science explain it to us. For instance, I still experience sunrise and sundown though scientifically the sun is neither rising nor going down. But can we simply say sunrise and sundown are not real experiences?

Thus, before one situates in the world, it is not possible to understand it. Surely, this does not mean nature is subjectively constructed and depends totally on this construction, but rather the relation between subject and nature is reciprocal. There is an ongoing tension between our perception of nature and the way nature present itself to us.

Nature was here before us. The way we perceive the world is ambiguous as we cannot see the objects by observing them point by point. Rather, when we observe a thing, it is always in the context that exist before me. Thus, I am, as a subject, situated in the natural area and my perception perceives some of the things more clearly than the other things, and yet the scene I experience includes both the clear and ambiguous images. Thus, what I sense is always condemned to an incomplete apprehension of things. This is not a lack of human perception. On the contrary, the ambiguous pattern of things makes them real for us, and in each encounter the things I encounter invites the subject to perceive itself in a certain manner.

This actually depends on the situation of the subject in that particular context. However, this context is not a bunch of relations that is solvable by calculation, rather

it is the result of a sense of the subject which shows the transcendence of the act of the subject. Yet, it is not mere construction of subject, it is the result of dialectic between subject and the nature.

In that sense, Ponty states that “My voluntary and rational life, therefore, knows that it merges into another power which stands in the way of its completion, and gives it a permanently tentative look.” (p.404) Here, as is seen in the quotation, Merleau-Ponty (2005) realizes the elements of passivity that present nature as other for me. The thematization of nature through consciousness does not explain us human experience, there is a primordial relation between nature and human that serves itself before conscious realization of the self.

This contribution of Merleau-Ponty is quite important to grasp the meaning of labour for human beings. Today, the education system is science-based and in the isolated school environment people are educated to be informed about the system of nature. They are now quite sure that the world is revolving around the sun. This as a socially accepted norm is more real than the experience of sunrise and sundown. I am of the opinion that the hierarchy between some labours is derived from the hierarchy between these two perceptions. As is said by Simone Weil (2005)

A lot of people think that a little peasant boy of the present day who goes to primary school knows more than Pythagoras did, simply because he can repeat parrot-wise that the earth moves round the sun. In actual fact, he no longer looks up at the heavens. (p.42)

In that sense, it is not wrong to argue that the way one sees nature is parallel with the understanding of what is accepted as labour and what is not. The lived experience of human beings is full of labour. Since, at the beginning, I accepted labour as an activity that changes humans, anything, any perception can be considered under this concept. Even the way I look at river, tree and sun are parts of human labour.

In that context, if we return back to the discussion over the oppressive mechanism, we can comprehend that what gives social its’ oppressive character is very much embedded in the social. As asked by Simone Weil (2005), I would like to ask why is a peasant boy accepted as unintelligent if he does not become professor or engineer, and why do all peasant boys want to be professor or engineers? As it is buried in the social, for one to sense the reality of their existence is quite difficult and laborious so, in that circumstances, what could be more laborious than this?

Simone Weil, in that sense, attentively realizes that even in Marxist arguments, the labour class seen as lack of any nutritive value and thus the most alienated class they are. This humiliation for Simone Weil brings nothing but labourless society that is full of individuals either fall into spiritual lethargy or attack violently to others those who are able to keep their genuine position in society to follow the truth of life.

Therefore, it is crucial to accept concrete labour which keeps humans in a way to follow the genuine attitudes towards life. Labour, in that sense, is not an activity entirely belonging to humans nor is it separated from humans in total because in each case it makes humans open to control by the mechanism of oppression. Thus it is different than the subject but yet still it is proximate to the subject. If we accept labour as the other in that sense what Levinas (1969) said about proximity gains importance, "Proximity appears as the relationship with the other, who cannot be resolved into images or be exposed in a theme."

The world, as is seen today, is reduced to causally constructed relations (iron cage). Thus, mostly contribution to this system that is occurred by accepting the rules of it, might be seen as domination over it but it is nothing other than an acceptance of incompetence over anything even over the who you are.

This system reduces human labour to a task, to a project and hides the living labour of human being. The living labour of humans is the primordial relations of human with the world that reveals the existence of the other. In each encounter, one could realize the relation with the other when dealing with the world. Thus, there is no underlying reason behind human labour which is taken as other seeing that if one assumes an underlying reason that the labour one does becomes anticipated. The incomplete apprehension of the other for human is before any expectation about it, so it is what changes humans; otherwise, a human returns to himself/herself over and over again without really moving away from his/her selfhood.

Consequently, as I tried to do from the beginning, the main issue is to sense the existence of other to structure labour as a concrete activity again. To be able to do that, the term passivity, proximity and difference are quite helpful as they help us understand the act of human being prior to the representation or the images of the constituting subject. Thus, taking up the things I encounter as other shows the potentialities of this encounter to emerge the living experience of one. The other in

that sense could be taken as material objects, as human beings, as labour, as production and so on. None of them are simply under the control of the conscious being, nor are they exterior to humans entirely. They become inspirational to human beings provided that they see them as incomplete and not as network of a casual relations. From there on, I would like to think about the possibilities to enlarge the concept of labour and to describe it broadly.



CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

In the previous chapter, I gave variety of clues to the way in which I re-describe the concept of labour. All my endeavour is to achieve to reposition labour as a life-giving activity of humans that exceeds the border of the self. Labour, thus, is not simply characterized as an external human activity since it also defines who we are, and how we encounter with the other. It is a transformative act of human being dispersed on all sides of daily life. It is not simply a completed task or project for one who desires to satisfy the needs, rather it is the way humans engage with the world from the beginning of life.

In the post-industrial life, life is reduced to the private life, on the other hand public life is where one is included into the socially measurable rational area. None of the activities belongs to the human but they are more like a duty for humans if they do not fulfil it, they are punished. They lose their social status or they cannot earn enough to satisfy their needs to maintain life. Inese Radzins(2017) argues:

The problem arises because Capital sets the parameters of working by imposing a measure, or value, on all things—most notably, the laborer. The commodification of labor itself is characterized by a problematic equalization that universalizes what can never actually be compared: life itself.

The work of one who has social position in a firm, for instance, is easily replaced by the another employee. This is because none of the products are belong to the employee but rather they are already defined by the system of work. This means that there is no *the other* in that place of work. Thus what one thinks of as labour today is mostly restricted by those who define one; however, what they do is not productive labour. An enclosed self that cannot engage with the world is actually construct things through their mind and cannot move away from the mind they have. Thus, the constituting subject that is corresponded with the system quite well as this subject always reproduces himself but not something else. It is not open to change even when it seems he change. All the modifications in the reproduction of the self, therefore are all the modifications of the same.

In this thesis, what I would confute is this subject that comes up against a brick wall. If everything is equal and part of that universal whole then, for that subject there is no place to go but himself/herself. Equalization as is said by Inese Radzins(2017), makes impossible the difference for a subject so subject is labouring for nothing. A labour that has power to change subject and produce life is necessitate the other that is different than the self; namely, the other could not be infusible in the same. As Inese Radzins (2017) said “Labour is a life producing activity, and since each individual life is unique, each labour also should be unique.” Otherwise, the human is as young Marx stated is objectified and alienated, which means the subjectivity of the human is abolished.

Who we are does not show itself in the private domain where we get rid of all the duties of work but rather what we do shapes who we are. Therefore, the labour and the subjectivity could not be severed from each other but they should be thought of together. Subject is situated in the world, and acts towards the world thus the world is not a hostile place where we merely have conflict with but the place we born into.

If the subject is in a situation, even if he is no more than a possibility of situations, this is because he forces his ipseity into reality only by actually being a body, and entering the world through that body. In so far as, when I reflect on the essence of subjectivity, I find it bound up with that of the body and that of the world, this is because my existence as subjectivity is merely one with my existence as a body and with the existence of the world, and because the subject that I am, when taken concretely, is inseparable from this body and this world. (Ponty, M. 2005, p. 475)

So, from there I take the concept of labour as living communication with the world with which the subject is engaged. This subject is involved in the world through the capacity of labouring, and producing. In that sense, as I said before, labour is a life producing activity it is always more than what the desires of capital is. Human beings always have the potential to produce something other than themselves so they change over time. In other terms, humans transcend themselves through the act of labouring; namely, they are doing things that help to exceed themselves. The labour thus is a way of thoughtful engagement within the world but this thoughtful engagement shows its value at the moment that it happens. It is not something that is thought before and actualized later properly but this way of thinking appears itself in the labour and in the product.

The production is not in the mind of humans, by definition it is concrete and emerges within the human interpretation of the world. Therefore, it is the result of the different

poles: human mind and the exterior, and shows us this difference does not makes them insurmountably separate but rather it gives a product that means they are somehow in connection. The production here occurred in a place where things are proximate to each other before any categorization of conscious. So there is a contiguity between me and the other before I encounter the other, so when I encounter I sense the proximity that brings us in the same field, thereby I could produce and what I produce is thus not reducible to the conscious production of self. It is other than the self. Though I took this concept proximity from the philosophy of Levinas, but the way I use it is different than his ethical purpose. How Levinas thinks about this concept is quite important for me still, because by recontextualizing I use the concept similar to his way of thinking.

In his philosophy, the alterity and the proximity, though they are opposite terms, used almost reciprocally. In *Otherwise Than Being*, he stated that,

Proximity, as the "closer and closer," becomes the subject. Proximity is the subject that approaches and consequently constitutes a relationship in which I participate as a term, but where I am more, or less, than a term. This surplus or this lack throws me outside of the objectivity characteristic of relations.(Levinas, 2010, p.82)

Thus in his philosophy, proximity is not simply a term to express the homogeneity or sameness but it is where the plurality emerges, where the plurality seen as proximate.

He states, "I am a term irreducible to the relation, and yet in a recurrence which empties me of all consistency."(Levinas, 2010, p.82) This attitude, this resistance to reduction is what makes his philosophy important for my thesis. The living labour is a distinct phenomenon and not reducible to the reproduction of the material elements, it rather reproduces life itself. And as Inese Radzins (2017) said reproduction of life is not like any other reproduction but it is particular and distinct for any individual. One's labour is not simply an area that is specialized, it occurs perpetually to reproduce life.

At this stage I would like to forestall a misunderstanding by explaining what I mean by 'individual'. Individual, here, is not used for an atomic individual who is exposed to those relations. What makes the labour distinct and particular is the inimitable experience of human situates in the word as part of it. Being part of the world and the act of involvement is maintained by human beings; otherwise, it does not do anything with the labour. Yet, the individual is surrounded by others and this ongoing tension between self and the others makes an activity of human special to that person. Through this ongoing activity, the production is more than any material elements, it is life.

Being in a situation is the important aspect of the reproduction of life. It does not mean being stable in a condition but rather it should be in motion. That is why in the previous passages, I explain the term passivity as “more than being passive.” Passivity as a mediating term is in between seen and unseen, conscious and unconscious, active and passive. Therefore, when one is involved in, it means it is an involvement to replace current situation with other. The involvement; however, is not based on calculation and certainty; rather it is result of the tension between the ‘the project in the mind’ and the unknown., ungraspable product of the effort to complete it. The disparity between the thing in my mind and the unpredictability of the reality is the sources of the concrete labour of the human.

Thus in daily life, the concrete labour of human is the change of the situation they are in. The change here occurred through both the contribution of the self and the obscurity of the situation. Passivity refers to the reciprocity; it is not a one directional constitution. Life is not something that arranged in accordance with the rational plans, the ambiguity of it makes it magical and at the same time concrete. For instance, sometimes we found ourselves in condition that we understood our past experience better, but this does not occur through the stable mind that is not engaged with anything. At the moment we live in we labour on something that emerge the meaning of our past experience, so before one needs to act to reproduce the whole life in a meaningful way. Even when one stops and think about the experience, it is toward something rather than toward their inner self. So even returning to themselves show its meaning through the word that is external which may show us the external is not that much external and the internal is not that much internal either. Hence, labour may lead one beyond what s/he taught, either explicitly or implicitly, in the life s/he experiences.

The ambiguity is may be best exemplified by Simone Weil. The work is, for her, as activity of human to join the world and the beyond. That is why it is associated with human dignity. She is using analogy of child to be born to expound the expression of the junction of the world and the beyond in the work of human. She said that a pregnant woman who is sewing a layette for her baby is more engaged with the works than a woman in prison who is sewing a layette as a duty. The first work is more embraced by the woman and thus more valuable, however, the latter is a work of woman who is afraid from of being punished. Thus she argues that the work here is not only about

the mechanical process because though both woman follow the same path to complete sewing the layette, the effect of work on them is different. For her, this attachment to the work depends on the connection between the world and the world beyond. Immediately following this arguments, she claims:

What is required is that this world and the world beyond, in their double beauty, should be present and associated in the act of work, like the child about to be born in the making of the layette. Such an association can be achieved by a mode of presenting thoughts which relates them directly to the movements and operations peculiar to each sort of work, by a process of assimilation sufficiently complete to enable them to penetrate into the very substance of the individual being, and by a habit impressed upon the mind and connecting these thoughts with the work movements.(Weil, S., 2001,p.92)

Surely, as a Christian mystic Simone Weil tries to make connection with the world and the world beyond, and sees this as the source of human dignity. Thus, work is a spiritual engagement to the world. She is searching for spirituality in the act of the human rather than in the classical religious tradition and faith (Radzins,I, 2017). She interprets humans as a being situated in the world, and the tension between the world and the world beyond reproduces life. In addition to tension between the word and the beyond, we can add to this the tension between the conscious and unconscious, or the seen and unseen, known and unknown.

The passivity as a mediating term is actually used to identify the play between the seen and the unseen. It abstains to see world as external to human and a place of human control and expound the connection between world and human as a reciprocal relation. Human do not exist before being in a situation; human live in a larger context that could have possibly exercise partial control. (Hughes, F.2013) The encounter with the other show us this limited power of us over the world.

Besides, it shows the limitation of human is the sources of the creative and the productive act of human being. From the words of Weil, it is the source of the human dignity. As a matter of fact, this unknown or the other effects who we are by effecting what we do. We are surrounded by the multiple others that makes our life open to creation; thus by think over the concept of labour and other together, I intent to sense this possibility. Yet, in many ways, it is not easy to support this with strong argumentation because this re-consideration over the concept labour with this way, in its nature, full with the paradoxes. This is only understandable by looking the texture of daily life. It is not theoretically structured before participation in life; but rather it ecomes invisible in the concrete labour of daily life which we encounter with the other.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

RULES TO FOLLOW IN THE BINDING OF MASTER AND PHD THESES

1. In the bound of master theses, black bound cloth and in the bound of the PhD theses, navy blue bound cloth must be used.
2. In the covers of the bindings, 1.8 mm cardboard and in the spine 2.5 mm cardboard must be used.
3. The paper and the cardboard dimensions must be as follows both for theses and projects;
Paper dimensions: 20 x29 cm
Cardboard dimensions: 20.5x 29.5 cm
4. The spine must be flat and the dimension of the spine must be 5 mm larger than the covers.
5. The binding cloth must be cut straight and the inner face of the covers must be covered with domestic Bristol (180 grams).
6. Spine cloth and the ribbon must be red.
7. A white blank page must be placed after the front and before the back covers.
8. It must be printed on one side of the paper only.
9. For the letter font on the front cover 16-pointMS font and for the spine of the binding 12-point MS font must be used. Margins up and down must be 2 cm. For long titles, only the initial part of it can be used. The writing must be printed with the stamping type writing machine.

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