

## **ABSTRACT**

This study is centered on the idealism of George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770 - 1831). It is anchored on a tripod of theme, problem and methodology. The theme of this study is Hegel's idealism. The problem is the status of women in Hegel's idealism, and the methodology is postmodernist phenomenological ontology. This tripod of theme, problem and methodology is further premised on the theoretical framework of Inter-subjectivity which offers us the opportunity to explore the polarity in Hegel's idealism as it relates to women. The work is primarily a critique of Hegel's idealism from a postmodernist phenomenologico–ontological perspective. The critique of Hegel idealism focuses on his dialectics which is the logic of Hegel's idealism. In other words, if Hegel's idealism projects dialectically, and if in this dialectics of reason;

- (a) matter stands in opposition to reason that is, spirit,
- (b) it follows that there is an antagonistic reciprocity between reason (spirit) and matter,
- (c) leading to a lopsided reconciliation of this antagonism.

The implication here is that synthesis in Hegel's idealism is not the synthesis of opposites, but the reconciliation of spirit to itself. By the foregoing, if Hegel's idealism is made the foundation for human interrelationship, it will always create a polarity between the sexes and among the races. The polarity of sexes rather bifurcates the male and female gender, than reconcile them, thereby posing a dangerous precedent if left unresolved. The objective of the study therefore is to unmask and resolve the polarity in Hegel's idealism. It is in the light of this that we embarked on a postmodernist phenomenologico – ontological deconstruction of Hegel's idealism, in order to posit a pluralist platform that will inculcate a win–win temperament; hence, acting as a basis for ameliorating the so much diversity among the sexes, thereby promoting the orientation of gender neutrality.

## 0.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The subject matter of this study is Hegel's idealism, which posits reason as the absolute foundation of freedom in all human endeavours. Hence this study examined Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1967) in the light of his *Reason in History* (1953) and his dialectics. In these two books, Hegel (1953: 11) projected reason as the basis of freedom and development in whatever dimension. This remains irrefutable. More so, Hegel's assertion that 'reason ruled the world... reason rules the world, and there is a reason in nature... (Ibid: 13) is a universal principle. However there is an anti – climax in Hegel which borders on the politics of assigning the power of reason that belongs to all humans to the male and denying the same to the female. This anti-climax amounts to polarity; this is because reason which is a universalizing principle is taken to a point of discrimination against other humans. This means that this *compartmentalization of reason* in Hegel's Idealism limits the universal essence of philosophy. This shape-divide between the universalizing and particularizing essence of philosophy manifest in Hegel's idealism amounts to a polarity. Polarity is seen as the mentality which propagates the doctrine of monistic dualism which has the tendency to propagate segregation and discrimination. In traditional logic, this sort of attitude that seeks to enthrone the orientation of exclusivity is known as the law of excluded middle (Okoro, 2005:129).

Monistic dualism is one of the chief criticisms against Hegel's idealism. Hegel's idealism carries within it the polarity syndrome. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1967) Hegel puts forth a phenomenological presentation of world historical consciousness which presented itself as it is; with the female manifesting as subservient to the male. According to Hegel, world history is propelled by reason or absolute spirit (1953: 20). Hegel (1931: 477) saw the woman as incapable of attaining self – consciousness. In Hegel's (1931: 482) words; '... the unconscious spirit finds its existence in the woman, through the mediation of whom the unconscious spirit comes out of unrealistically to actuality'. This self - consciousness, for Hegel (1953: 22 - 3) is striving for freedom. As interesting as it is women cannot attain self – consciousness and therefore are not free. That is why Hegel presented woman as lower than man. This amounts to an exclusion of women from participating in world history. In *Reason in History* (1953: 21) women were portrayed as the victim and the down trodden in history. When we consider this writings on reason and women, we observed that there is a polarity in the sense that if reason is

what makes us human and women lack this metaphysical power of reason, then women are less human. Hegel is not alone in this manner of thinking. Within the writings of mainstream western philosophers, women were seen as mentally inferior and incapable of doing philosophy. It has been argued that western philosophy has been projected to be the experience of men (Grimsheiw, 1986:7). Women philosophers (Beauvoir, 1952: iv-xix, Ihansi, 2002: 1, Butler, 2000: 12, Mills, 2003:217) have questioned just as many have rejected the importance of Hegel's philosophy of gender. Hegel's idealist appraisal of the status of women is seen as being sexist.

Another polarity in Hegel's idealism concerning the status of women is in his theory of the *ethical*, an interpretation of how the human society has progressed in the course of history considering the role and place of gender. Hegel (1977: 288) argued that "the difference in the physical characteristics of the two sexes has a rational basis and consequently acquires an intellectual and ethical significance.... Man has his actual and substantive life in the state, in learning and so forth, as well as in labour and struggle with the external world.....Woman on the other hand, has her substantive destiny in the family and to be imbued with family piety is her ethical frame of mind". An analysis of Hegel *ethical* shows that the woman lacks conscious existence and she cannot know herself. This shows how the differences in opposite sexes acquire an intellectual significance. This is a polarity in his thought. Hegel conceives family life as negative ethical life (1967: 477), in Hegel's words '.... her ethical life is not purely ethical ...it is a matter of indifference, the wife is without the moment of knowing herself ...' and the man, Hegel wrote, in naturally distinct self – consciousness of actualized existence. Hegel wrote that reason is what makes us human and the engine of freedom. Hegel also made the male the Hero and a strong ally of reason or the absolute. Hegel bifurcates the concepts he used in his idealism, for instance thus consciousness and unconsciousness, divine law and human law, actual and passive existence, ethical and unethical significance, historical and unhistorical. One observes that the universalizing mission and principles in philosophy is being used to discriminate thereby causing polarity in his idealism.

Hegel (1977: 29, 30) wrote that the dialectics is the method by which human history unfolds, meaning that reality and human experiences are in dialectical transition. One may agree with Hegel that the women were lacking in the historical consciousness in his time, but the denial of reason to the female and the denigration of women as mentally inferior made Hegel's

methodology super - impositional and determinist. And the fact that the women and their consciousness are not in dialectical transition is absolutist, lopsided and a polarity in his thought. An essential problem of Hegel's idealism therefore is that since spirit is unable to resolve the conflict within itself, it means that it is also incapable of resolving outside itself, in this instance the conflict of sexes. Hegel himself explains this when he wrote that '... the specific opposition of the two sexes, whose natural character acquires at the same time is the significance of their respective ethical determinates (1967: 478). The spirit is the center in itself; it is in itself and with itself. Spirit is being in itself (self – contained existence) this is freedom. This means that Hegel's dialectics cannot resolve the struggles between the sexes, rather it will polarize it the more. It operates on the principles of monistic dualism. Dialectics is a forward linear movement; the only way the subservient should gain supremacy is to over throw the supreme. Hegel's development of dialectics from logic of reason to logic of history facilitates antagonistic reciprocity.

In all these, one revolutionary aspect of Hegel's position became clearer. While Hegel still frequently argued that the subject matter of philosophy is "reason" (that is the "absolute"), the unconditional presupposition of all human account giving evaluation and thereby an understanding of the "whole" within which the natural world and human deeds were "part". He always construed this claim to mean that the subject matter of philosophy is history of human experience itself. Philosophy was about the real world of human change and development. Hegel understood this to mean the collective self-education of the human species about itself. While writing on the woman, Hegel again excluded women from self – education and from participation in observation of self – consciousness to its immediate actuality. This is another polarity which this work shall seek to resolve.

By going through the works of Hegel, one observes that the most important of his ideas were formed gradually in response to a number of issues in philosophy and often in response to historical events. His language and approach were so heterodox that he has inspired as much controversy about the meaning of his position as about its adequacy. Hegel's philosophy was considered to mark the highest point yet reached by the modern intellectual endeavours to comprehend the world in rational terms according to Croce (Stumpf, 1983: 236). By the same token, it could appear as the termination of an epoch, and perhaps of the philosophic enterprise

as such. Hegel had cast into the mode of an all-inclusive system, and the heritage of all proceeding metaphysical thought (*Ibid*; 235). The significance of Hegel for this research stems from the fact that Hegel made dialectic a logic of history in philosophy. The development of this notion through the various forms of concrete human experience gives us the philosophical interpretation and vindication of the place of philosophy in history. Besides, Hegel's idealist dialectics of history is comprehensive and all – inclusive. That is to say that, for Hegel, the different expressions of his philosophy constitutes the ground for a variety of philosophical systems.

Hegel conceived consciousness to be experience, and experience is to be perceived. This apart, phenomenological positivism begins with facts of experience and followed by reflection, intuition and description of the phenomenon of experience. However, one can see from the works of Hegel that Hegel's philosophy claims to represent all forms of reality which include cultural, social and political forms of organization. Hegel remains the first thinker to have set forth the aim of representing, in logical form, the rise of consciousness as it gradually unfolds sense-perception to reason as absolute knowledge of the world and all there is in it. Thus, Hegel's *Reason in History* is optimistic in that it gives us a glimmer of hope that women could be freed from dominance and metaphysical conditionings if it proceeds rationally, dialectically threading the necessary path of the universal reason. Upon this glimmer of hope we proceed to deconstruct Hegel's idealism. This work attempts the ontological deconstruction of the status of women as presented in Hegel's idealism from a postmodernist phenomenological perspective. At this point of the polarity is where we make departure from Hegel. This means that we require a more up to date methodology to re – examine Hegel's analysis of reason as the foundation of freedom using a postmodernist phenomenologico – ontological analysis.

### **0.1,1 Statement of Problem of the research**

The essential problem tackled by this work is the resolution of the polarity in Hegel's idealism which presents the view that reason is that which makes us human hence the foundation of human freedom, on the one hand, and reason as gender biased, on the other hand; thereby implying that women lack the power of reason for self - emancipation. This assumption is commonly projected in philosophical writings that women are rationally and mentally inferior,

and are not included in the formation of western philosophical canons. This assumption erroneously permeates classical western philosophy as exemplified by Hegel in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Hegel's idealism is a description of the rationally necessary path of history. It is a portrayal of how women have fared and conducted themselves in history; not a postulation of a permanent mode of human experience.

That freedom is propelled by reason and Hegel's denial of women participation in reason shows that within Hegel's (1967; 498 - 499) thought women cannot gain their freedom. In other words, if reason according to Hegel is the engine of freedom, and the woman should not participate in freedom, is discrimination, this is polarity.

It is against this background that the present study deciphers two opposing views concerning Hegel's placement of the woman. For instance, in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel, following Hebraism, developed a philosophical thinking that entrapped women into perpetual slavery. But in *Reason in History* he rejected outright the stereotypes that make freedom dogmatic. Genuine as this may be, a deeper look would reveal that he merely destroyed the myth of the historically given created by Hebraism in order to impose the German patriarchy. This means that the Spirit of absolutism still continues in Hegel's Idealist philosophy. A problem thus ensues and this concerns the point that Hegel ends up constructing a higher and a more comprehensive form of absolutism. Second, Hegel makes the hero (a male factor) the greatest ally of Absolute Reason, making women part of the victims. Third, Hegel's dialectics of history proceeds on the antagonism of opposites, meaning that the conflict between the sexes can never be resolved. Should it be resolved, it would always be in favour of the male hero. Fourth, Hegel himself argued that the philosopher is essentially the product of his culture. Hence, being a product of patriarchy, as exemplified by the German culture, he cannot radically depart from it. This means that his disdain against Hebraism notwithstanding, he remains a product of patriarchy. Consequently, we posit that Hegel's postulation of reason as the basis of historical freedom offers a glimmer of hope for women liberation only after it has been deconstructed.

Hegel foresaw the possibility of women freedom as exemplified in nations like the United States of America and Europe. We argued that Hegel idealistic dialectics is lopsided, and crates more polarity in the sense that in those societies where there is gender freedom, there is also extreme

gender intolerance, which is evident in high rate of divorce, single motherhood, homosexual marriage and the like. This means that freedom has been granted but there is no synergy between the sexes. We also argued that waiting for natural dialectics for reconciliation of sexes as espoused by Hegel will take forever; this is where the postmodernist phenomenologico – ontological tradition comes to the rescue. Thus this work undertakes a postmodernist phenomenologico – ontological resolution of this polarity in Hegel’s idealism with the aim of producing a gender – free philosophical orientation for the emancipation of women from the traps of Hegel’s idealism and other absolute system; wherever they may be found.

From this, we proceed to argue that Hegel’s phenomenological dialectics of reason (spirit) absolutized gender inequality in classical western philosophy. This is because the idea of ‘the woman’ in classical western philosophy portrays her as lacking the capacity to reason as exemplified by Hegel’s philosophy. This means that the concept of the woman as a free person whose difference from the man is entirely incidented and whose authentic selfhood depends on emulating universal (male?) standards, such as rationality, consciousness and objectivity, is a strong orientation in classical western philosophy. This mode of thought is obtainable not only in Hegel, but in the works of mainstream philosophers. From this we proceed to argue that philosophy and philosophical discourses have been largely presented in ways that are bias against the female gender.

### **Statement of the Thesis of the Research**

This work argues the thesis that the resolution of the polarity in Hegel’s idealism that presents reason as what makes us human and the foundation of freedom on the one hand, and reason as gender biased on the other hand, through a postmodernist phenomenological ontology forms the basis for women self – transcendence and self – transformation from Hegel’s idealism. This also forms the basis for promoting a new orientation for gender neutrality.

For Hegel, freedom is the engine of history. But this freedom which constitutes the engine of history is propelled by reason or what Hegel calls spirit. This means that freedom in history cannot be achieved without reason. This being so, we argue that reason is the ultimate foundation upon which women liberation / freedom from the shackles of Hegel’s idealism could be

achieved. By this logical entailment, we proceed to deconstruct reason to be gender neutral, using the postmodernist phenomenologico – ontological perspective.

Again, Hegel's (1953, 5) idea of the three methods of writing history destroyed the *myths of the given* as presented by some traditions portrayed by Hegel's idealism namely, the Hebraic culture, the Islamic and Christian religion on the place of women in the society even though he denied them participation in historical consciousness. Needless to say, Hegel's submission re-enacts the fact that Hegel himself was a product of patriarchy and his philosophy was meant to propagate patriarchy. We proceed to argue that although Hegel anchored his metaphysics of freedom on gender inequality, a postmodernist phenomenologico – ontological analysis will resolve this polarity in Hegel's idealism.

### **0.1,2      Aims and Objectives of the Study**

This work aims at critiquing and unmasking the polarity in Hegel's idealism that denigrates women as lacking the power of reason and being mentally inferior, and as such, masquerades as God – given and as universally tenable. This work aims at a postmodernist phenomenologico – ontological deconstruction of classical philosophical presentation of women in history, especially Hegel's philosophy. This deconstruction is necessary because Hegel's idealism as with classical western philosophy disseminated the spirit of patriarchy, and as such becomes universally tenable.

This research seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- To expose the polarity in Hegel's works; *Phenomenology of Spirit* and *Reason in History*
- To show that Hegel's idealism inevitably promotes metaphysical and epistemological systems that are gender biased. This can be seen from the fact that the hero is the greatest ally of Absolute Reason, making it essentially male and patriarchal.
- To argue that Hegel's seeming rejection of the presentation of women in his *Reason in History*, is highly pretentious. In *Reason in History* Hegel presents a universal account of history which seems to refute the Hebraic denigration of the woman, but the actual manifestation of his idealistical analysis is heavily biased against women, making it necessary to embark upon a postmodernist phenomenologico – ontological deconstruction of his idealism.



- To show that Hegel's idealism offers no hope in the attempt of building orientation that would help to bridge the gap between the opposite sexes.

### **0.1, 3 Significance of the Study**

The significance of this work lies in the fact that this study evaluates Hegel's idealist presentation of women as typified by classical western philosophy from a postmodernist / phenomenological perspective, with the intent of updating Hegel's idealism afresh and in the light of contemporary challenges. This ensures that within Hegel's idealism women can be freed from the entrapment constructed by his thought and as typified in historical consciousness and tradition in classical philosophy. It also creates for us an opportunity to apply classical western philosophy to feminism, this enables us to explore the ways in which female philosophers, women philosophers and feminist philosophers are interacting with classical western philosophical tradition. Other significances of the study are as follows:

- It destructures absolute systems such as Hegel's idealism, that encourage the divide between the superior and inferior, and in this instance, discrimination against the women who have been presented as rationally inferior.
- To show that Hegel's idealism though comprehensive and critical of Hebraic worldview is nonetheless absolutist, monistic and reductionistic, making it necessary to deconstruct it in order to create a platform that would propagate the complementarity of opposites.
- Consequently the work intends to redress the lopsided nature of Hegel's idealism, which absolutizes patriarchy.

### **0.1,4 Scope and Delimitations of the Study**

This study covers in details Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit* and *Reason In History*. More especially his principles of idealism which forms the basis of his dialectics, and his ideas on consciousness and self -consciousness, nature and status of women, the master- slave relationship, the absolute spirit, his commentaries on the *Antigoné*, his theory of alienation and the 'other' in the society. It also looks at the idea of own-ness, identity, experience, family and state in Hegel's *phenomenology* of Spirit. Hegel's *Reason in History* was adequately studied.

More so, in order to properly situate the problem of the status of women in Hegel's idealism and in western philosophy in general, the postmodernist phenomenologico – ontological method is employed to deconstruct the classical presentation of women in history as exemplified in Hegel's idealism and classical western philosophy. The limitation of this work is on the primary source which is Hegel's work. They were all written in German language and since we do not understand German, we rely on the available translations in English language. An initial problem of selecting from the translator or editor text that best captures Hegel's Idealists philosophy was encountered.

This work is a search for a methodology for reconciliation of sexes through a postmodernist phenomenologico – ontological analysis. This work looks at a methodology that will help us to inter – penetrate each other; this will ensure empathy and tolerance. Although in places like northern Nigeria, some states in Africa, Iran, Arab world, and India, women are still experiencing subjugation and cultural discrimination. And Hegel idealism as the culmination of thought is not portrayed as the rational justification of all that exist and that the apparent denial of freedom to the female sex in Hegel's theodicy is the stage that reason had attained in his time. This notwithstanding, Hegel foreseeing America as the land of the future which will translate the concept of freedom to all sexes and to all nations, proved that Hegel is a progressive philosopher of penetrating vision and foresight, not one condemned to orthodoxy and tradition. We have to argue here that even though Hegel's idealism absolutizes sexual differentiation, it is a temporal transition of spirit in search of self – fulfillment not a permanent condition of affairs.

### **The Purpose of the Study includes;**

To show that Hegel's idealism as a reflection of knowledge in his time and place is subject to revision, modification and deconstruction in line with contemporary trends.

To show how Hegel absolute principles and dialectical methodology as guides to human experiences and freedom, is that to which Hegel subjected his fallibilistic thinking about the female as a sub –sex.

To reconcile the polarity of sexes in Hegel's thought through a postmodernist phenomenologico – ontological analysis thereby redressing the lopsided nature of Hegel's idealism.

## 0.15 Research Questions

The following fundamental questions embellish our research thus:

- How can we possibly deconstruct and thereby reconcile the paradox in Hegel which on the one hand, grants the male the power to revolt and on the other hand denies the female the same power?
- In what ways can we address the ontological and epistemological problems placed on the status of women by Hegel's idealism?
- How can a postmodernist phenomenologico - ontological delineation of the polarity in Hegel's idealism materialize into the establishment of an orientation that promotes gender neutrality?
- What possible alternative orientation can be initiated to tackle the problem of polarity of sexes propagated by Hegel's idealism?

## 0.1,6 Operational Definition of Terms

The concepts used in this work include:

- a. **Woman:** in this study refers to the female gender which stands in inter – subjective discourse with the male gender.
- b. **Ontology:** Is used in this study as simply the theory of Being as Being where Being is regarded as the ground of grounds or the ground or foundation of all things. In this line of thought, any ontological inquiry, this seeks the most fundamental principles embellishing a thought process, with a view of refuting or conserving it.
- c. **Hegel's Idealism:** For the purpose of this study, this refers to Hegel's metaphysical thought or theory which regards Absolute, Reason, or Idea as most primary stuff of the universe, It is an all – inclusive, comprehensive but monistic system.

- d. **Hegel's Dialectics:** This is used in this work as Hegel's logic of history, which in actual fact refers the process by which the Absolute manifests itself in history in order to bring about change..
- e. **Dialectics:** Dialectics here means the reasoning or logical structure that holds together a continuous argument or exposition. It is a method of acquiring knowledge and obtaining truth. It could also mean at least in Hegelian and Marxist terms, the logic of History. In this work, dialectics is regarded essentially as a logic of history
- f. **Freedom:** Freedom in this context is seen as the capacity for self-actualization self-consciousness, self-orientation, emancipation and transcendence of the woman. The dialectical transition of the woman's capacity to develop to full bloom, to perfection, is freedom.
- g. **Philosophical history:** For the purpose of this research, philosophical history is understood in two senses; the metaphysical and the epistemological. Philosophical history as a pure act of consciousness, which makes consciousness the foundation of history (Okoro, 2011: 192). This generates two issues; the metaphysical foundation of history and the epistemological evaluation of history. The metaphysical foundation holds that history has its foundation in the human mind, while the epistemological evaluation questions what constitutes historical reality in knowledge.
- h. **Hermeneutics** in this instance is a method of interpretation and the way to ontology.
- i. **Phenomenology** in this study is a method of deconstruction for prying loose rigid systems. It is also used as the study of a method of extraction of knowledge of essence through what appears to us.
- j. **Patriarchal:** The word patriarchal is an adjective depicting maleness as the custodian of culture. A tradition that has found its way into philosophy whereby, philosophy is said to be male - centered.
- k. **Postmodernism:** This is the late twentieth century movement in philosophy that reacted against the modern philosophy that sees knowledge, reality and truth as one. Postmodernism promotes diversities, plurality and multiplicities.
- l. **Postmodernist phenomenology:** In the context of this research means that reality can be understood from several mutually exclusive, complete, and true descriptions of the world. This means that postmodernist phenomenology provides us the ground for the critique of

the 'myth of the given'. This justifies our ways of looking at reality (issues of gender) as compared with other ways.

- m. **Postmodernist phenomenologico – ontology:** is interpretation of pluralism (inter - subjectivity) in reality. For the purpose of this research, the interpretation of what the world means to us individually relies on the several interpretations of concrete experiences over idealism and absolute principles. Thus the result of one's experience will necessary be fallible and relative than certain and universal.
- n. **Metaphysics** is the study of reality and transcendence; in this context it is the radical, thoughtful, contemplation of gender reality.

### **0.1,7 Theoretical Framework**

Theoretical framework is the theory and the support on which a research work is based. In philosophy, it remains the philosophical foundation or principle of a research work. Therefore, theoretical framework provides a systematic and scientific point of unity or coordination for any research. This study adopts philosophical inter-subjectivity as its theoretical framework. This is because postmodernism provides ground for inter – subjectivity of thought and a fair ground for the proliferation of ideas. Postmodernism is characterized by its rejection of overarching grand or meta-narratives deployed in the modern epoch of philosophy to explain and justify human history and progress. The Discourse in postmodern phenomenology begins from dissensus or disagreement not consensus or agreement. This means that reason, history and the status of women cannot be entirely determined by an individual subjectivity of views as presented in Hegel's idealism. The views of other philosophers like Simeon de Beauvoir, Kate Millet, existentialists, African metaphysics and postmodernist were also discussed. The result is that postmodernism is distinguished by its post-structuralist-inspired denial of transcendental realities, fixed meanings, facts and the correspondence theory of truth. Inter-subjectivity as a theory of Postmodernism produces among other things tentative beliefs, playfulness, style, and neo-pragmatism in philosophy. Inter-subjectivity also produces the linguistic turn, presentism, relativism, the reality – effect, deconstruction, self-reflectivity in philosophical literatures, doubts about referenciality, and the ultimate failure of absolute system (in this instance, Hegel's idealism) as a universal tenable philosophy. Inter-subjectivity challenges hierarchy and authority

and promotes the acceptance of ‘the other’ as legitimate. Inter-subjectivity encourages doubts and uncertainties, as this will help us to explore how we can represent the relationship between ourselves (women) and the philosophical past. We see ourselves not as detached observers of the past, but as participants in the creation. The above position of postmodern phenomenology corresponds with the theory of Inter-subjectivity of view in hermeneutic phenomenology. Intersubjectivity principle combines both inductive and deductive procedures of analysis making it more technical and advanced than Hegel’s idealism, which is predominantly deductive and therefore deterministic, impositional and reductionist. The combination of inductive and deductive investigation yields a method of analysis called interpretation. Interpretation shows that reason cannot function in isolation of the human imagination, which in the first place is the faculty of synthesis. This way, Hegel’s notion of reason is dissected and purged of its absolutism. However, the postmodernist phenomenologico-ontological deconstruction of the status of women in Hegel’s idealism is premised on the ground that women possess the rational capacity for self-rediscovery. It is this ontological power that provides an emancipatory direction, institute transcendence and serves as the foundation of all human development.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this research, we intend to operationalize the concept of ontology in analyzing the status of women in Hegel’s Idealism. The selected literatures for this study are obtained from the primary and secondary sources with their full details provided in the reference section. The original works of Hegel constitute the primary sources of this research, and is the theme on which this study is based. However the critical commentaries on Hegel, ontology, phenomenology postmodernism constitute the secondary sources. The lapses established through this review is what this study intends to fill.

In other to show how reason has been absolutized and alienated from the women in Hegel in particular and main stream philosophers in general, the literature shall be reviewed according to the following themes: the status of women in classical western philosophy, we shall proceed chronologically and systematically here; Hegel on the status of women; the women debate in classical western philosophy and the postmodernist phenomenologico-ontological deconstruction of Hegel.

## **The status of women in classical western philosophy**

What is the status of women in classical western philosophy? The controversies on the status of women date from the Pre-Socratics. The Greco-Roman world accorded no legal rights to women. The women were seen as in terms of their domestic roles in the family, and were isolated from the polis. This is unlike the men who do the thinking and structuring of the polis and had legal rights and access to formal education (Ludwig, 1908, 12). This shows that women were seen as the 'other,' and inferior to men. The lacuna here is that women were not seen as persons but things to be possessed. Rights are inherent to persons and not things. Women's right will therefore largely depend on the legal and customary status of women.

In the ancient period, Plato (428/7 B.C. – 348/347 B.C.) did not see great difference in the nature of man and woman. Plato argued that no nature is higher than the other. Plato wrote that the only difference between male and female is that the male begets and the female brings forth. Plato concludes that natural gifts and talents are to be found in both male and female. Plato did not see sex as a barrier for self-development of women. He advocated for same education, equal opportunity in all occupation and he was against sex or gender discrimination, which was obtainable in his era (Plato, 1953: 150). He also advocated for educational and technical empowerment of women. Plato's analysis differs from this work in the sense that Plato did not bring out reason as the metaphysical power for women development rather, Plato encouraged the women to emulate male standard by training and educating themselves without developing their inherent power of reason. He saw women from the male – perspective of human excellence, thereby devalued the feminine unique attributes. This shows that Plato's discourse on women is lacking the ingredient for inter - subjective discourse as evidenced in the postmodern phenomenological ontological approach.

Aristotle (384B.C. – 322 B.C. ) unlike Plato, found women as not capable of full exercise of human reason and are as such inferior to men. For him, the type of knowledge possessed by women is a special one (Aristotle, 1941:94). Aristotle saw the woman as inferior and deficient to her male counterpart. In his biology, Aristotle wrote that the fully rational part of the soul, the "deliberative faculty" was not present at all in slaves and was ineffective in female. The whole of Aristotle's philosophy was based on the assumption that one class of human beings,(namely free male), should lead a life that he saw as self-justifying and others live a life that is merely a means

to this. Aristotle's writings grounded the idea of gender discrimination, inferiority, and denied women access to participate in humanity. His writing like Hegel's subjugated women.

In the Igbo culture, the social status of the woman depends on how 'fruitful' (the number of children she was able to nurture) she was as a mother and on her economic contribution to the family (Ikpe, 2009: 51). Every of her property or wealth is owned by her husband despite his incompetence to discharge his role in his family (Achebe, 1958: 31). As an individual she is not recognized but as groups, associations, women are recognized and have access to social and political affairs. Furthermore, Igbo world - view is bi – furcated in accordance with the complimentary roles played by gender. And their women are trained from childhood to accept the submissiveness they encounter in their homes and marriages, while the male are trained to be adventurous and to be the head of the women in marriage and in every other social condition. The traditional Igbo society believes that the dignity of a woman lies in her husband (Úgwú Nwanyi wu di ya). This to an extent imposes a social psychological trauma passed from one generation to the other on the life and times of a typical Igbo woman. This shows that within the Igbo culture, the women are trained in such a way that their metaphysical power of reason is left dormant, nonfunctional and ineffective. This means that the power of transcendence is underdeveloped and will not make provision for women to be free persons. More so among the Igbos, there is this phenomenon of complementarity between sexes, which allows a woman considered to be successful to become a man and partake in decision making. Not only that, Igbo culture tolerates male-daughter and female – husband relationships. Male-daughter is a situation where the eldest daughter in a family is allowed to stay in her father's house and have her children especially where there is no surviving male in the family. Whereas female-husband is a situation where a woman marries another woman to bear children that will answer the husband's or father's name and maintain the lineage (Nwoko: 2009, 92). A critical analysis of this can be seen as (a) the woman role to sustain patriarchy (b) a woman trying to assume the role of male, this amount to self inferiorization (c) This is a negative transcendence, which is against the principle of metaphysical complementarity of sexes; and this is where this study differs from that obtainable in Igbo traditional culture. Moreso, the issue of denial of widowhood rights and disinheritances of women in Igbo culture are part of the various forms of discrimination against women. The full blown discussion of these discriminations and their justification is beyond the scope of this study, we suggest it for further research.



Lucius Annaeus Seneca's (C.4B.C. – A.D.65) writings encourage mostly the woman to rise above the societal conditioning of their placement in the society. He exhorts both men and women to nurture self-reliance, self-determination, self-control, which yields one of the greatest pleasures. Seneca urges all of humankind, regardless of sex, to seek the same knowledge and improvement (Motto & Clark, 1993:12). Seneca did not emphasize on rationality which dowers human with the power for transcendence to alter their situation and dare to be free. Women have been denigrated as lacking in this intellectual ability and rational capacity. And so are lacking in the capacity for self - reliance, self - liberation and self-transformation.

The medieval period did not see women better than the ancient era. They were religious and theological in their perspectives. Abu Hamid Muhammad Al Ghazali (1158 - 1111) in his book, *The Revivification of Religious Sciences* gave a detailed description of how Islam integrated the sexual instinct in the social order and placed it at the service of God. He starts by stressing the antagonism between sexual desires and the social order. Al Ghazali places women below men. Seeing women as evil, is the most negative qualification and a total relegation thereby encouraging discrimination against women. This shows that women are less than men, and lack in the rational capacity to become human. It is power of reason that places human above other animals, denying women of such capacity, is keeping them less than human. Hermeneutic phenomenology in this instance will be used to pry loose such absolute system which encourages hierarchal relationship.

Another Islamic scholar Fatima Mernissi in her book *Beyond the Veil* argues that women are seen in two perspectives within Islam. Thus, an explicit theory that sees men as aggressive and women as passive and an implicit and unconscious theory, which sees women as inherently inferior but who must be controlled precisely because of their potential equality and power. Their power according to the implicit theory lies in their sexual ability to attract men, weaken their will and distracting men from their higher spiritual and intellectual pursuits. Women are therefore always a destructive force and so their sexuality must be veiled and regulated (Mernissi, 1987:20,27,41 -45). The problem here is that "the entire Muslim social structure, seen as an attack on and a defense against the disruptive power of female sexuality" needs to be examined. Mernissi says that one of the implications from this analysis is that for Islam, humanity is constituted only by males, women are being perceived as external threat. This shows

that Islam is an absolute idealist system as Hegel whose deduction method and analysis is reductionist and deterministic, thereby lacking the ingredient for inter – subjective discourse as evidenced in the postmodern phenomenological ontological approach.

Thomas Aquinas (1225 - 1274) in *Summa Theological* saw women as naturally subjected to men because in men the discernment of reason pre-dominates. Aquinas conceives of the woman as a misbegotten man. Woman is the helper of man only in the work of regeneration (Aquinas, 1999:77). Just like Aristotle Aquinas thought that the semen is superior to the egg. He did not consider the fact that without either the male or female, there would be no reproduction. Well, the argument of superiority of semen and egg during reproduction is not within the scope of this study. Be that as it may, there are several misconceptions on the nature of reproduction, that is, the biological aspect of human life. This position of Aquinas is a reflection of common belief among the ancient and the medieval people. Again we notice the deliberate intent to scheme women out of the class of rational homo sapiens, making Aquinas presentation of women more biological than rational.

In the modern period, main stream philosophers like Kant (1724 - 1806) in his book, *Observation of the Feelings of the Beautiful and Sublime* (1764) saw the female as incapable of being moral. According to Kant, the female who he regards as the 'fair sex' has much understanding as the male, but it is a beautiful understanding whereas, understanding for the male is a deep understanding. This, at best signifies the identity of the sublime. For Kant, women lack the capacity for complex reasoning and virtuous actions, and so less than her male counterpart. Women are inferior to men and they should be subservient to their husband in marriage. For him, and public life is beyond women. Kant denies women the opportunity to participate in morals and state affairs. By logical entailment, it means that women are less rational than men. Author Schopenhauer (1788 - 1864) in his article on *The Women* (1851) did not leave this same argument of putting women behind. He wrote that 'the way in which her body is formed shows that she is not meant to undergo great labour whether of the mind or of body' (*ibid*; 434). Schopenhauer thought that biology determines rationality this is very fallacious. Thus one is not capable of reason if nature endowed one with feminine body. Once again women have been denied the ontological power of human existence; the capacity to reason.

## Hegel on the Status of Women

Hegel's account of women is found in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The *Phenomenology of Spirit* has been construed by some scholars as representing Hegel's notion of metaphysics. We can argue that in the Hegelian context, philosophy is understood as a form of "absolute spirit". Hence to understand Hegel's placement of the woman, there is the need to begin with his idea of the spirit. The Absolute spirit is the point of fusion or unity of historical reality with subjective freedom. According to Hegel (1931: 438) "Reason is spirit when its certainty of being all reality has been raised to truth, and its consciousness of itself as its own world, and of the world as itself". He draws a distinction between two stages of development of social existence. These are spirit-as-substance and spirit as ethical. Spirit further comprises subjective spirit (Individual self-consciousness), and objective spirit (social existence).

The subjective spirit or individual self-consciousness, according to Hegel, is the abstraction of all previous shapes of consciousness which result from spirit's self analysis by which it distinguishes its moments and dwelling from a whole and with each. The isolating of those moments presupposes spirit itself and subsists therein. In other words, the isolation exists only in spirit, which is a concrete existence. In this isolation physical realities are but appearances real reality as such, they are only moments or vanishing quantities which are shown by their advances and their retreats into their common ground and essence of spirit, making consciousness the general ground which embraces sense-certainty, perception and understanding.

Spirit in Hegel's idealism unifies three main concepts: Freedom, Reason and Self-consciousness, which are interdependent; almost to the point of identity. The only interest of spirit is to realize its own principle of true freedom, and it does this by unfolding as human history, where the consciousness of universal, rational freedom is the driving force. This driving force is passive and submissive in women and aggressive and domineering in men. Hence, the germane qualities for development are more pronounced in men than women (*Ibid* 438).

In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel sees the woman's function as that of a guardian of the "sacred claims of the family". His analysis of women in the *Philosophy of Right* oscillates between the family, civil society and the state. Among many writers, there is a concern to expose the limits of the Hegelian analysis of female virtue and potential as being grounded in a

discredited biological essentialism. Hegel understands women to be by nature destined to fulfill the role of passive embodiment and as a nurturer of family values, while her male counterpart assumes the challenge of progressively transcending natural immediacy, creating a cultural sphere of free moral action of politics, art, science, religion and philosophy. From this point, you can use the *Antigone* story to substantiate the point that she represents the pervasive drive against the family, social and ethical order established by patriarchy. This means that for Hegel, reason is the driving force of freedom in history is not resonant in women. It would amount to an anomaly for such to manifest. According to Hegel (1977: 29, 30), dialectics is the method by which human history unfolds, that is history progresses as a dialectical process. Hegel's aim was to set a philosophical system so comprehensive that it would encompass the ideas of his predecessors and create a conceptual framework in terms of which both the past and future could be philosophically understood. Hegel believes that the whole history is a tremendous dialectic the major stages of which chart a progression from self-alienation as slavery to self-unification and realization as the rational, constitutional state of free and equal citizens "*without women*". This is a paradox of sexes. Hegel's dialectic has been criticized that it "played a major role in the downfall of the Liberal movement in Germany by contributing to historicism and to an identification of might and right, encouraged totalitarian modes of thought.... (and) undermined and eventually lowered the traditional standards of intellectual responsibility and honesty" (Popper, 1900: 395). This notwithstanding, Hegel's dialectics will lead to a lopsided reconciliation of the antagonism between the sexes.

### **Hegel and the "Women" Debate in Classical Western Philosophy**

From the on-going discussion on the status of women in classical western philosophy, we see that apart from Simone de Beauvoir, who was included in the history of French existentialism, there is virtually no woman in evidence on the three-thousand-year history of western philosophy. We see that western philosophy has historically discussed or included women as an afterthought. Unfortunately the omission of women was not benign neglect but based on the assumptions that female are deviant or secondary instances of human being, and the male are of the species was understood to be paradigm. From our historical literatures in classical western philosophy, we are meant to believe that women are not merely deviant or secondary, but rather inferior to men, and their social subordination has been justified on the basis of their different

inherent capacities, only some of which have to do with the biological fact that women gave birth to babies and men do not.

More so, it has been supposed in classical western philosophy that women are less rational and more emotional than men and therefore less suited in philosophy. We are faced with the following issues: (i) the problem of no women philosopher in the history of philosophy; (ii) the gender of reason; (iii) the paradigm of differentiation between the sexes. On a deeper perspective, we might challenge some philosophers especially Hegel, on the very distinction between emotion and reason, and the traditional emphasis on the maleness of reason. These suggest that philosophy has come to proffer methods that conform to the paradigmatic 'masculine' style encouraged by our culture. Feminist philosophers contended that the historical treatment and omission of women is itself a symptom of the traditions limitation, while claiming to be universal and all-inclusive. It could be argued that philosophy has not taken account of the woman perspective since to a large extent, a person's gender conditions the way she or he approaches the world. In essence, perspectivism as doctrine in philosophy is also applicable here.

Another reason for the complexity of the status of women in philosophy stems from the fact that being female amount to being a second rate human being. Women are then left in perpetual struggle of retrieving self from the fort created by the male factor. Young (1990: 1) and Phoenix (1988:153- 175) noted that this is represented in the historical and cultural heritage over the centuries and millennia. In philosophy for instance, the concepts of autonomy and rationality have been associated with masculinity (Lloyd, 2004:78-87). In this instance, morphology represents new figurations aiming to subvert traditional imagining of female subjectivity. When we talk about the idea of women emancipation, it is both historically and theoretically associated to the enlightenment idea of freedom, neo-liberalism and extreme individualism which characterize our present day society such that freedom has become contestable. It is not all about interpreting Hegel's attitude towards women or in reading his *Reason in History*, but more about the search for an emancipatory direction and meaning for feminist defiance of masculinity.

Furthermore, Judith Butler (1988:519) has argued that gender is not an essential category. But the various acts of gender create the idea of gender. And without the acts, there will be no gender at all. In other words, which one is first, gender or gender acts. All this shows negative and

oppressive characterization of women, even in history of philosophy. One major issue here is that feminist historians (Grimshaw, 1986: 49; also Lloyd, 2004) of philosophy have argued that the historical record is incomplete and the philosophical tradition is completely flawed because of the way its fundamental norms, ideas or concepts like reason, objectivity, subjectivity have been made gender bias. We proceed to argue that women having being excluded from classical western philosophy and have been denied access to participate in universal realities of philosophy and history. Hence consciousness which is the foundation of philosophical- history and allied terms such as reason and thought, have been largely presented in ways that are bias against the female gender. This means that the concept of women as free persons, whose difference from man is entirely incidented and whose authentic selfhood depends on emulating universal (male?) standards such as rationality, consciousness and objectivity is a strong orientation in philosophical discourse. From this perspective, it is argued that women have been insidiously encouraged by much mainstream ideal of human excellence as paradigmatic, with the consequence that their own unique feminine characteristic and capacities have been judged inferior. Well discussions on what is truly feminine, women's significant difference from men and how the female nature might be able to be retrieved from beneath layers of historical and social cultural conditioning is beyond the scope of this stud, we shall leave it for further study.by universal male standards, we mean that (a) philosophical standards are created by men who as well teach them as universal standards. And (b) these universal standards are appropriated by the male. Be that as it may, we argued that through postmodernist phenomenologico-ontological Analysis, it is possible to have gender free values such as rationality, freedom, self-consciousness irrespective of what men and women have made of them. From the phenomenologico-ontological perspective, the study intends to provide an evaluation of that which constitutes the basis of a transcendental evaluation of women's status in Hegel's idealism and a postmodernist phenomenological appraisal of the history and status of women in classical philosophy.

As it pertains to the status of women in Hegel's idealism in particular and traditional western philosophy, there are two groups; those that believe that biology provides the answers, and others who look at the matter from social and historical perspectives. Those who see it from biological point of view include feminist scholars like Susan Brownmillers, (1975) Andiea Dworkin (1981), Adrienne Rich (1976) and Mary Daly (1973). Interestingly, these scholars share a common

ground with traditional opponents of women's liberation who claim that both male and female have a natural destiny such that traditional gender roles, rooted in irreducible biological differences, ought to be respected. Such feminists agree that important male and female potentials can be traced to biology, but contrast the violence and aggression resulting from male biological features while the gentle, life-affirming, nurturant qualities are associated with female physiology. For example, Susan Brownmiller's (1975, ix) thesis that "all men, by nature, are rapists and that even though all do not rape, all benefit from the power relations arising from their shared biology". Other scholars postulate a trans-historical, but not explicitly biological set of needs and decisions, characteristics of men in all ages, which lead to the systematic suppression of authentically feminine nature. The pseudo – historical concept of patriarchy has been widely employed in this context to signify the unnatural domination of women by men. Through a complex 'genealogy' of women's oppression, Dworkin, Rich, Daly, and many others point out how, in cultural phenomena, ranging from pornography and prostitution to religion, marriages, motherhood and heterosexuality, the patriarchal culture has imposed male power on its female victim.

For thinkers like, Simone de Beauvoir (1953), Kate Millett (1971) and Betty Friedan (1963), the notion that for woman, 'biology is destiny' must be resisted. They argued that lived circumstances as exemplified in domestication and child-rearing are not entirely human, and women who accept this socially-constructed belief in a pre-given female destiny are accomplices in their own enslavement. The only means beyond this self-imposed oppression is actually to seek a reversal of roles accepting and identifying oneself with the male model of transcendence, which is traditionally presented as a neutral ideal, available unusually to all human beings. Women who achieve self-liberation will do so by leaving the home to find a place in the labour market and by fully exploiting all technological means available to ensure their full transcendence of the physical and cultural exigencies of conception, reproduction and family responsibilities. Following through on this logic, the radical feminism of Sulamith Firestone envisions an androgynous utopia in which reproduction has been entirely given over to technology, thus finally freeing woman to be the equal of men. From all opposing positions we noted that feminism neither advocates for a return to the traditional ethos nor does it propose the liberation of women from feminine nature.

This study holds the ground that females should self-consciously celebrate themselves as women and work towards recovering an authentically feminine identity, free of dependency on norms and expectations generated by male dominated culture. Women's unique reality must be retrieved and revalorized, such that her genuine difference from man will no longer be articulated in terms of its otherness, in which feminine qualities have been evaluated as being inferior or lacking in logic, emotional maturity philosophical stamina or scientific dexterity.

What this amounts to is that the method to be employed in tackling women's problem must be comprehensive, holistic, dynamic, and profound. To this task, women and feminist intellectuals have made serious attempts at proffering certain systems of thought for the emancipation of women;[i] Some think that the only way out is to take a fresh feminist stand point. [ii] The other way is the rational transcendence of womanly immanence or embodiedness in nature (existential) and [iii] The third is by appropriating the traditional history of philosophy. To this effect, such thinkers like Mary Daly (1973:26) suggest that the only avenue of escape is to retreat into a primordial, separate female sphere where, freed of the strictures of masculinist thinking, they can encounter an independent authentic feminine identity in which women can cease to play the role of complement and struggle to stand alone as free humans.

Although she advocated for individualism, she proclaims that women must take back the power stolen from them by men. Daly's vision is of a redeemed individuality, rooted in nature, in life, and in the immediacy of a pre-reflective feminine spiritual harmony. Another perspective is that of Simone de Beauvoir's existentialism. She stressed on the free, rational transcendence of womanly immanence or embeddedness in nature. These suggest, as her standing point, the idea of woman as a potentially autonomous self sufficient individual whose identity is to be forged independently of prevailing socio-political expectations and institutions. There are opposed versions of what constitutes woman's authentic freedom, which grew out of competing contemporary dogmas regarding what it is to be an individual thus; (a) the enlightenment, liberal-revolutionary view that abstract rational equality among persons and the capacity progressively to transcend natural limits, are universal features of the human condition, which override all differences of race, class, or sex, (b) the claim that certain natural differences are essential to individual worth, that genuine freedom is realizable only through negating the life-



denying principles of abstract human equality and a common rationality putting in their place a 'concretely lived' subjectivity, rooted precisely in those natural distinctions and capacities so devalued by the prevailing human ideologies.

One can infer that all the sides formulated their analysis of woman's current situation and their recommendations for achieving her true freedom; in terms of post speculative philosophical positions, which themselves stand in extreme opposition, both to one another and to traditional accounts of the individual's proper relation to social and political institutions. They are dependent, for their vitality, upon other philosophical movements such as: socialist/marxist humanism, existentialism, liberal democratic individualism, Nietzschean anti-liberal individualism, which are themselves critical responses to nineteenth century speculative metaphysics, reactions against prevailing intellectual, cultural and ethical norms in the name of a fully actualizing, free humanity. Much of contemporary feminist critique of traditional philosophy must be seen not as unprecedented direct confrontation with the limits of such philosophy's patriarchal understanding of women, but as mediated through its reliance on categories forged in earlier non-feminist critical assaults on the foundations of traditional thought. This study is a postmodernist phenomenological deconstruction of the status of women in Hegel's idealism, and traditional classical philosophy. This deconstruction is necessary because classical philosophy disseminated the spirit of patriarchy, is severely bias against the female folks. And the stand of this work is for women to see themselves as rational and radically free individuals fully at home in a world of their own making which is the starting-point of and goal of post-speculative, post metaphysical and postmodernist thought.

### **The Postmodernist Phenomenologico- Ontological Deconstruction of Hegel**

Women researchers like Patricia Mill (1993) describes Hegel's account as being asymmetrical, illegitimate, and consigning women to a degraded, subordinate station inadequate to their true human worth as free, fully natural individuals. Luce Irigaray (1985) has addressed Hegel's account of women's function as that obtainable in the ancient Greek polis. Hegel's prejudice against women notwithstanding, his idealism offers some glimmer of hope for the emancipation of women. For instance the story of *Antigone* on a second thought refutes the created myth that women are rationally and mentally inferior and passive. In fact, the picture created in the figure

of *Antigone* by Hegel serves as a model of the evolved and self – liberated person for modern women. Here, Hegel unwittingly portrays woman as a free, ethical agent with the potentials to move beyond the limitation and regimentations created by patriarchy. Hence inherent in Hegel's dialectics and phenomenology is an obvious contradiction. According to Mills (1987: 36) woman has no contradiction to negate between herself and first nature. She lacks negativity because she is confined within the spheres of "mere animal life"(Neller,1996:253). Scholars like Benhabih(1991:84), Oliver, Irigaray insist that the dialectical movement from family life to civil society and from civil society to the state is unavoidably predicated upon a trans-historical assumption of women's irreducible "otherness" as evidenced by Hegel. Hutchings Kimberly (2003:12) argues that Hegel prefigures the reductive pattern of internal philosophical debates on women and this lapsed into one sidedness and exclusivity in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*. But Antigone becomes, like a man, a participant in both sphere, by acting in the public sphere on behalf of the private sphere. Antigone becomes the precursor of the women who, in the recent past, proclaimed the personal as political. At this point, the glimmer of hope offered by Hegel for the errand patron of women diffuses. It is here that we reach anti – climax in Hegel's idealist evaluation of women. By daring to challenge the public order established by patriarchy, *Antigone* is presented as being emotional than rational, making it necessary for deconstruction of his idealism. The basic issue in discourse on the status of women in Hegel's idealism is that the places where Hegel takes up women, he relegates them to the family status, as being emotional outside of reason, to being an unreflecting subjectivity.

Furthermore, Mary Wollstonecraft in *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1963:33), argued that there is no logical ground for regarding women as lacking in rationality, or preventing their participation in public (political) life. Most women (Friedan, 1963: also Millet, 1961 and essentially Simeon De Beauvoir, 1968) writers have argued that biology is not destiny. Shulamith Firestone (1979: 98, 99) envisions an androgynous utopia in which reproduction has been entirely given over to technology, thus finally freeing woman to be the rationally equal of man. Irish Young and Hanna Arendt wrote on the phenomenology of feminist experiences. They did not divert from that of Simeon De Beauvoir as such. Firestone's work could be seen as a revision of the unobstructed pan sexuality of Freud's polymorphous perversity, which would probably supersede hetero/homo/bi-sexuality, the tyranny of biological family would be broken.

Firestone's work has been criticized for racist contempt, fear, loathing and abundant stereotypes, ethnocentrism, historical myopia, and historical inaccuracy (Hooks; 1996, Simeons; 1979).

De Beauvoir's *Second Sex* (1964) gave a full phenomenological description of the nature, experiences and the limitations of the woman. She argued that the biological experiences of women were a major reason for the males' conquest of the female, especially during the pre historic era and some other historic events. Beauvoir based her work mostly on Hegel's master-slave relationship and the problem of the other, unlike this work, which is examining Hegel's ideas in general, and focusing on what Hegel wrote about women, their inability to participate in politics, in historico – dialectical consciousness and in classical western philosophy in general. Another radical stance towards the maleness of the western philosophy and the subjugation of women in philosophy was taken by Luce Irigaray (1985), who indicated what is suppressed and hidden in the tradition. Irigaray uses highly unconventional methods of interpreting canonical philosophy texts in order to uncover the ways in which the feminine or sexual difference is repressed in them. For example, she uses humor and parody rather than straight forward exegesis. And she points to instabilities and contradictions in philosophical text as symptoms of Patriarchal thinking. According to Irigaray, Patriarchal thinking attempts to achieve universality by repressing sexual difference. Moreover, the presence of contradiction or instabilities in philosophy text is symptomatic of the failure of Patriarchal thinking, to contain sexual differences.

One major difference between this study and other researchers is that Other writers on Hegel and women reviewed and interpreted his thought based on his comments on women, *Antigone*, family and marriage. This is unlike this study which focuses prominently on Hegel's methodology; that is his dialectics and his entire works especially *Phenomenology of Spirit*, *Reason in History*, *Philosophy of History*, *Philosophy of Right*, and *Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences*. It is noted that the dialectic is the logic of Hegel's idealism. It cannot be used as the basis for the resolution of the differentiation in Hegel's idealism. Rather this study argued that the dialectic provides the thinness of Hegel's subjective account on the status of women and the metaphysical grounds for his philosophy. The other works reviewed did not identify the polarities in Hegel's idealism. More so, they did not provided methodology of

reconciliation between the sexes. This is unlike this study which provides a postmodernist phenomenologico-ontological resolution of the polarities in Hegel's idealism.

However, Foucault's (1960) analysis of sexuality is closest to this work. Foucault destroyed absolutisms in history. He brought out the contextualized as a factor in history and in the repression of sexuality in the western society. These interdictions have constructive power: they have created sexual identities and a multiplicity of sexualities that could not have existed, such as power relations, creating divisions between those dominating and those being dominated. However Foucault 's work differs from this study in many ways, first his presentation of history of sexuality as *ars erotica* (erotic act as in the Orientals) and *Scientiea Sexualis* ( the science of sexuality in the western world) is entirely different from this study because this work examines sexuality in Hegel's idealism. Secondly, he wrote from a postmodernist perspective. He took on sexuality of all kinds including homosexuality, bisexuality, but this work focuses principally on the status of women in Hegel's idealism. We proceed from here to examine the denigration of women as rationally inferior in classical western philosophy as being less rational than the male gender. This shows that Foucault's focus is radically different from the subject matter of this research.

This work uses Hegel's idealism which makes "reason" the logic of history and the foundation of freedom as a launch pad for the emancipation of women only when it has been deconstructed. If Hegel is right that history fulfills the demands of reason, the citizen of the final state should enjoy the satisfaction of all human aspiration; he should be a free, rational being, content with his situation and exercising all of his powers, emancipated from the bonds of prejudice and oppression, then his dialectic will lead to the decay of humanity, the re-barbarization or even re-animalization of man. In other words, the fact that reason is the foundation from which the human quest for self – realization, self – actualization and self – emancipation derives is absolutely undeniable. The wrong thing with Hegel is that he denies this power of reason to women. And the dialectic does not reconcile the sexes, rather it polarizes them more. This is because in Hegel's idealism Spirit reconciles itself to itself, matter stands in opposition to reason. When this dialectics is laced upon human relationships, it results in a lopsided reconciliation. It is at this point of blatant discrimination against the female gender that we depart from Hegel and proceed upon a postmodernist phenomenologico – ontological delineation of Hegel.

### **0.3 METHODOLOGY**

This study is library-based. The methodology of this research is postmodernist phenomenologico – ontological analysis. Hegel’s philosophical postulations on idealism, dialectics, consciousness, women, state and history are consulted, collected, studied and analyzed. Postmodernist phenomenologico – ontological analysis provides us the grounds to exercise rigorous analysis, critical reasoning as well as conceptual clarification in this study. Through rigorous analysis, Hegel’s idealism is examined, dissected and all sides are comprehensively evaluated for a better appreciation and objectivity. In philosophical analysis, all presuppositions, assumptions and prejudices which tend to colour our ability to make objective assessment are suspended or bracketed out, to enable thinking become clear and lucid.

It also follows deductive analysis. Deductive analysis as a process of reasoning by which the truth of the given proposition (in this instance the status of women in Hegel’s idealism) by inferring that the truth of the second proposition is involved in and therefore, derived from the first proposition. This deductive analysis has been used to argue and appraise Hegel’s idealism. In this research, this method is used to infer a justification for the deconstruction of the status of women (conclusion) in Hegel’s idealism (a premise). Through this method, a valid and logical argument of establishing the ontological foundation for the place of women in traditional philosophy is achieved. Needless to say, this approach is in line with the postmodernist phenomenologico – ontological approach.

More so, postmodernist phenomenologico-ontological analysis adopts critical reasoning as its method of investigation in this study. It requires a proper and comprehensive evaluation of a given issue. It is therefore ontological because it goes beyond a given situation to the point of unearthing the fundamentals of the situation, with a view to generating concepts that are useful in understanding the situation under reference. In the postmodernist tradition, this manner of discourse is known as bringing the hidden to the open.

Conceptual clarification serves the purpose of delimitation of the scope in meaning of the concepts used. The purpose of this is to avoid confusion in order to lay down an intelligent and valid standard, which in the postmodern tradition is known as the process of deconstruction.

Two types of sources would be consulted in this work. They are primary and secondary sources.

Primary Sources include;

- a) Georg Wilhelm Fredrick Hegel major works such as *The Phenomenology of the Spirit* (1977) *Reasons in History* (1975), *The Philosophy of Right* (1967), and *Philosophy of world History* (1956).
- b) Works on the life and times of Hegel (Hegel, 1931, Audi, 1987)
- c) The dialectics of Hegel (Audi, 1987)

Secondary sources:

- a) Commentaries on Hegel with particular reference to his ideas on history, women and the ethical.
- b) Philosophical works on women from philosophical - historical perspective
- c) Works on phenomenological ontology starting from Husserl (1970), Heidegger(1962) and Unah (1996, 2004)
- d) Works on philosophy of History starting from Michael Foucault,(1990, 1997) and Okoro Chiedozie (2011, 2012).

## CHAPTER ONE

### HEGEL: BACKGROUND AND PHILOSOPHICAL POSTULATIONS

#### 1.0 Introduction

Hegel is a unique philosopher, with voluminous ideas, and a lot of political exegesis about his time. He also developed his Logical method of explanation of events in human history. This logical method is known as dialectics. But when his dialectical method is considered in relation with logical approach to philosophical problem, this dialectical method will be considered dubious. No other philosopher, or intellectual has been and remained a victim of the revolt against idealism except Hegel.

This notwithstanding, Hegel's writing became more interesting when he fused his thought in historical phenomenon. Hegel philosophical thought germinated from how the ethical community could be organized and how the national state could be all-sustaining, all embracing, and he was inspired by the Greek polis. One can see all these in Hegel's expression of the ethical life, ethical spirit, nation spirit (Volkgeist) (Volk Religion) especially in three of his major books; *phenomenology of spirit*, *philosophy of Right*, *Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences* and *History of Philosophy*. In these books, Hegel displayed exceptional shrewdness, combined with self-centered religiosity, high-mindedness, and painstaking attention to concrete details in articulating his thought, and practical sense of business. Hegel was stuck in the revolutionary enthusiasm of French Revolution that made him took freedom as a core virtue in his philosophy. Carl J. Fredrich (1954: xv) make this remark; "For Hegel, even more than Kant's, was a philosopher who spun his subtle threads of Logic and metaphysics in response to a deep and abiding political drive".

Even though it was generally difficult to understand many passages of his work, Hegel is really abstract, but one unique thing about Hegel is his strength and capacity for distilling the general from the concrete detail in such a way that for him it remains concrete. Many authors had showered a lot of invective against Hegel, for instance Schopenhauer words of disrespect for Hegel in as he could say; 'There is no philosophy in the period between Kant and myself only mere University Charlatanism' (Stumpft: 1994: 342). But from another angle, a philosopher

critic, Morris Cohen has called Hegel the greatest philosophy of the nineteenth century. A proof of this is that there has been regular rebirth of Hegel among German professional philosophers. Not only that Rudolf Haym's famous critique of Hegelian system, Han Rosenberg in 1927 added an essay on the history of Hegel interpretation which he begins with the following broad assessment.

As the great completer of a period of philosophical and speculative thought, Hegel is a unique figure with near gigantic power his universal mind joined the spiritual and historical reality and the mass of thought of thousand years... as synthesis of antiquity and Christianity beyond anything attempted so far. Not only because of his encyclopedic universalism and the arch-tonic marvel of its structure but even more by the riches of original, profound, extraordinary effect which has exercised the system of Hegel will forever occupy a pre-eminent position... Hegel has exercised a proud and lasting influence upon learning and especially the science of man upon political thought and upon life itself up to the very present (Hegel, Carl. Friedrich, Trans., 1954: XVI).

Hegel through his works attempted to answer the problem of human destiny and the meaning of man's existence. We see this idea runs through Hegel's works.

For a lucid understanding of this study; we are going to discuss G. W. F. Hegel's philosophical orientation, we are going to discuss the biography of Hegel, his academic work, his methodology of dialectics and his influences on other philosophers. Hegel's notion of the spirit shall be discussed as well. This will enable us to understand his idealism. We shall also discuss the aim of his philosophy in relation to the period he lived.

## **1.1 The Man Hegel**

Hegel, George Wilhelm Friedrich was born in Stuttgart in 1770. He was the son of a minor financial officer in the court of Duchy of Wurttemberg. His mother died when he was eleven (Audi 1987: 311). He studied theology and classical language. He was friendly to the great genius of Romantic poetry Holderlin and Schelling. At forty one, he married a twenty year old Marie Von Tucher in 1811 (Ibid; 312).

Hegel lived through Germany's most brilliant years, when Bethoven was born and when the poet-scientist, Goethe, was twenty years old. Kant was forty-six years old and had not yet written



his classical philosophical works (Ibid; 312). At an early age, Hegel was deeply impressed by the Greek writers as the sources of modern philosophy. He was engaged in lively discussions over the issues of French Revolutions with his friends, Holderlin and Schelling. During his five years at Tubingen, his interest gradually turned to the relations between philosophy and theology. It was when he left the university that his interest in philosophy finally flowered. He became a family tutor for six years and he wrote some minor works that nevertheless contained germs of the major problems he eventually made central in his philosophical works (Ibid; 313). In 1801, he moved to university town of Jena, and in 1805 he became professor. He moved to Berlin where he remained until his death from cholera in 1831 at the age of sixty one (Ibid; 314).

## **1.2 The Philosophy of Hegel**

Hegel writings are unique, for they deploy comprehensive, very determinate reflection on the interrelations among the entire various classical alternatives in philosophy. He attempted to understand the way in which such relations and transition were also reflected in the history of art, politics and religions of various historic communities. He came to think that philosophy should be a recollection of past history, an account of the developing attempts in the development of other human practices. And that through the understanding of the logic of such development, a reconciliation of some sorts, with the implications of such a rational process in the contemporary life, or at least with the potentialities inherent in contemporary life would be possible (Ibid; 313).

In all of these, one revolutionary aspect of Hegel's position became clearer. Hegel insisted that the subject matter of philosophy was "reason" or the "absolute", which acts as the unconditional presupposition of all human activities and thereby gives an understanding of the "whole" within which the natural world and human deeds were "part". He always construed this claim to mean that the subject matter of philosophy was history of human experience itself. Philosophy was about the real world of human change and development. Hegel understood this to mean the collective self-education of the human species about itself.

By going through the works of Hegel, one observes that the most important of his ideas were formed gradually in response to a number of issues in philosophy and often in response to historical events. His language and approach were so heterodox that he has inspired as much controversy about the meaning of his position as about its adequacy. Hence, a summary would be as much as a summary of controversies as of the basic position. Hegel's philosophy was considered to mark the highest point yet reached by the ancient intellectual endeavours to comprehend the world in rational terms according to Croce (Stumpf, 1983: 236). By the same token, it could appear as the termination of an epoch, and perhaps of the philosophic enterprise as such. As Aristotle had given systematic form of the legacy of Plato and of the ancient world in general, so Hegel had cast into the mode of an all-inclusive system, and the heritage of all preceding metaphysical thought (*Ibid*; 235).

### 1.3 Works of Hegel

The *Phenomenology of Mind* (*Ibid*; 236) was the first fruit of Hegel's intellectual maturity. It appeared in 1807, when he was thirty-seven years old. The book was actually preceded by several miscellaneous publications on theology and philosophical subject. The most important of them all was his essay entitled "on the difference between the philosophical systems of Fichte and Schelling" (*Ibid*; 237) published in the *Critical Journal of Philosophy*, in 1802. In 1821, he published *The Philosophy of Right*. He also wrote the influential *Science of Logic*, and in 1816, he published his *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Science in Outline*. It is in this work that he presented the grand structure of his philosophy in its three-fold thus; logic, philosophy of nature, and philosophy of mind. His other books include *Philosophy of History*, *Philosophy of Aesthetics*, *Philosophy of Religion*, which were published after his Death (Audi, 1987; 313).

The *Phenomenology of Spirit* has been extravagantly praised as well as vehemently condemned. It is a work of vast scope. In this work, Hegel tried to relate man, his experiences, history with his essence. It tried to take a journey from sense perception to realization of one's self, and recognition of one's destiny. This work could be misinterpreted as a mixture of history and psychology. Truly this work is neither history nor psychology. It makes use of both history and psychology as its material but it is itself a grounded work on metaphysics, philosophy in its deepest sense. We shall dwell more on the phenomenology in chapter two below.

This study also made use of two translated version of the phenomenology namely the *Phenomenology of Mind* by Baillie (1967) and *Phenomenology of Spirit* by A.V. Miller (1977). There are other translated versions from W. Wallance (1971). But the emphasis here is not on the version, but on the use of the words mind and spirit.

The mind and spirit odyssey did not as such make much difference from the translation. The word “mind” does not render the personalized character of the spirit which seems essential to Hegel’s conception. The word “spirit” in English is a neuter, but in German, it is a masculine noun. For instance “*der Wirkende Geist*” conjure up the nothing of a person, actually and creatively at work, whereas the working mind would suggest something quite different; it injects at the same time a subjectivist aspect which is certainly alien to Hegel most insistent intention in German, the word *Geist* has two distinct, though related meaning. For instance Hegel use’s zeitgeist meaning ‘spirit of the times’ and another instance Holy Ghost ((the Holy Spirit) as pertained to Christian trinity that is *de Heilige Geist*. In this situation the translators have three options. First to use ‘mind’ throughout, to use ‘spirit’ throughout; to use which ever seems most appropriate in the context. The third position may not be appropriate especially when we consider the various meaning of spirit as ‘team spirit’, the word ‘spirit’ has an inescapably religious or mystical flavour. A spirit is a ghostly, disembodied being. Well Hegel in his philosophy did not intend to refer to just ghostly disembodied being (s). But we can understand the *Geist* when Hegel is making his reference to Geist as a long-standing philosophical debate about the nature of the mind. Since one has to acknowledge that the spirit is a personalize entity in Hegel’s thought. And it is as well the most objective entity that reconciles itself to itself.

Not only that Hegel gave this work the subtitle, “science of the experience of the consciousness”, which suggests that consciousness makes numerous sensationalism, which could be an objective scientific knowledge the ‘thises,’ ‘I,’ ‘by itself,’ ‘to itself,’ but also that Hegel through his expressions tried to capture all the proceeds of the mind to grasp concepts about reality and explain the unity not as sensuous, but shows the availability of dialectical method to proclaim it universal. We see from Hegel’s explanation that experience is that aspect in the life of the spirit by which the spirit becomes conscious of itself. At the time, it is the responsibility of the

phenomenology to illumine the process by which this happen. Kuno Fischer has in his celebrated analysis of the *Phenomenology*, put the matter thus, “since consciousness related to subject as well as differentiates itself from them, the things and the self itself are the themes of the first two main stages: the first is the consciousness of the things, and the second that of the consciousness of the self ..... The consciousness of things and the consciousness itself are related like the objects and the self, like the objective and the subjective (given), the unity and identity of which is according to the sections of identity, reasons: hence reason is the theme of third main stage which may be designated as that of consciousness of reason. But reason is according to Hegel (and to express it in Hegel’s terms), not a substance but a subject, that is it is reason consciousness of itself or spirit; the revelation of the spirit in the world order and its highest stage the idea of God in the world, that is the representation of the divine, absolute or religion which is perfected in the true knowledge of God. The true knowledge of God is the absolute knowledge, thus; the phenomenology distinguishes between the second and the last stage between consciousness of the self and absolute knowledge of three main stages; ‘Reason,’ ‘spirit’ and ‘religion’” (Hegel, C.J. Fredrich, Trans. 1954: XXVI).

Philosophy in Hegel’s opinion seeks true knowledge. For us to understand how true knowledge starts, Hegel says it when the sense experience encounters the phenomenal world. We shall discuss detail in chapter two.

Hegel’s *History of Philosophy* (1956) (Translated by J. Sibree) is an outstanding work. In this work, Hegel shows how history reveals the gradual unfolding of the truth, from the dialectics of the spirit. This work is a philosophical frame of history. It more so remains the center of Hegel’s philosophy simply because Hegel’s whole philosophy is historically conceived. The *Philosophy of History* remains the heart and center of Hegel’s philosophy. It presents the fact that Hegel’s philosophy is historically conceived and his whole system is as fundamentally thought out in historical terms as no other philosophy before him. All his basic concepts such as world spirit, reason, freedom, receive their meaning and significances within a historical context. History is seen as the march of freedom. This march of freedom is interpreted as what the world spirit

wants, as it seeks to realize itself. And in its efforts to realize itself, it employs peoples, world-historical peoples (especially great cultures and civilizations) to do its work.

Be that as it may, the aim and scope of that civilizing process which all hopeful thinkers recognize in history, is the attainment of rational freedom. But the very term freedom supposes a previous bondage. The *History of Philosophy* is divided into four parts with elaborate introduction explaining history as original, reflective, and philosophical, geographical basis of History, and classification of historical data. Part one discussed the oriental world, while the Greek world, the Roman world and the German world were discussed in parts two, three and four respectively. *Reason in History* (1956) comprises essentially part one of *History of Philosophy*.

Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* was written in 1821, under the double title, *Naturrecht und Staatswissenschaft im Grundrisse* and *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* meaning *Natural Law and Political in Outline; Elements of the Philosophy of Right*. In this book, Hegel wrote that the idea of right, its concept and actualization is the subject matter of the philosophical science of right. The task of science of right is to develop the idea. By the idea, Hegel meant the rational factor in any object of study, out of the concept or what is the same as to look at the proper immanent development of the thing itself. Hegel conceives right in two senses;

(i) When it has the form of being valid in a particular state and this legal authority is the guiding principle for the knowledge of right. In this positive form, that is for the science of positive law and (ii) Right acquires a positive elements in its contents (Hegel: 1977b, 15 - 16). Hegel more so distinguished between law from philosophical point of view and natural law from positive law. Hegel also discussed abstract right, property, wrong in part one where as issues as morality were discussed in the second part. Hegel's ideas on ethical life (women and family), civil society, state, constitutional law, international law and world history were discussed in the third part.

The *Science of Logic* (1830) is seen as the only complete, matured, and authentic statement of Hegel's philosophical system. Hegel's *Logic* is the part one of the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*. Sections 1 – 25 is a new introduction to the system, sections 26 -28 deals with the three historic attitudes of past thought to objectivity, the very important sections

(79 - 83) dealing with three basic moments of all logical thought, and finally the three systematic chapters on the Doctrine of Being, the Doctrine of Essence and the Doctrine of the Notion. In the first chapter of the *Encyclopedia*, Hegel wrote about the divine Absolute, the goal of philosophy as well as religion can only be approached in philosophy through explicit thought; all other forms of experience, such as feeling, intuition, picture-thought, and the like are only implicitly cognitive, and can at best offer us metaphors of the Absolute as it appears to thought. The Absolute was seen as an existent Reason, which is not only present in our subjective self-consciousness, but also actual in the world, though not only discernable on the surface. The nature of thinking subjectivity is the well elaborated in the second chapter. In section 26 – 83, Hegel discussed the three philosophical attitudes of objectivity; with the old, pre-critical and realistic metaphysics. Hegel sees the old, pre-critical and realistic metaphysics as superior to the critical philosophy in that it took the laws of thought to be the fundamental laws of and forms of things and assumed that to think a thing was the means of finding its very self and nature.

The outcome of the logic of Hegel is the axiomatic convergence, which can also be seen as a coincidence of what is and what ought to be, which is also the categorical imperative that this coincidence or convergence should be a continuous pursuit without end.

#### **1.4 His Philosophic Aim**

Hegel's historical significance lies in the fact that he accomplished, with extra-ordinary and systematic thoroughness, what Kant could not do (Stumpf; 1983: 235). Kant had argued that metaphysics is impossible, that it is impossible for the human mind to achieve theoretical knowledge about reality (Kant, 1956: 119). Hegel, on the other hand, set forth the general proposition that "what is rational is real and what is real is rational". And from this, he concluded that everything that is, is knowable (Ibid; 237). This is an elaborate metaphysics, which provided a new basis for thinking about the very structure of reality and about its manifestations in morality, law, religion, art, history and above all, thought itself.

More so, Hegel was particularly pre-occupied with the problem of a systematic philosophy, a way of accounting for the basic categories of the natural world and for human practical activity that

would ground all such categories on commonly presupposed and logically interrelated, even inter-deducible principles. In Hegel's term, this was the problem of the relation between logic and a philosophy of nature and a philosophy of spirit (Audi, 1987: 312).

His other problems concerning the completeness, interrelation and ontological status of such a categorical structure were quite prominent, along with the continuing interest in the relation between a free, self-determining agent and the supposed constraints of moral principles and other agents.

### **1.5 Hegel's Philosophic Influences**

Hegel's philosophy was shaped by Greek philosophy, the German Society, and Kant. With Rousseau and German Romantics, Hegel shared many doubts about the political and moral implication of the European enlightenment and modern philosophy in general. He campaigned for what he called the "*principle of modernity*". His fear was that the modern attack on feudal political and religious authorities would merely issue in the reformulation of new internalized and still regressive forms of authority (Audi; 1987: 312). Hegel's written works became much more influenced by these theoretical projects and their attempts to extend Kant's search for the basic categories necessary for experience to be disseminated and evaluated and for a theory of the subject that, in some non-empirical way, was responsible for such categories. More so, his dissatisfaction was with the absence of public realm or any forms of genuine social solidarity in the German States, and in modernity, in general. According to Hegel, his obstacle is with the "positivity" of the orthodox religions of the day, which led him to various attempts to make use of Greek polis and classical art, as well as early Christian understandings of love and a renewed "folk religion" as critical foils to such tendencies. For some time, he also regarded much traditional and modern philosophy as itself as a sort of lifeless, since it only contributed to contemporary fragmentation, myopia and confusion (Ibid: 313) in the society.

However, in the decade of his death, there was a great deal of work by self-described Hegelians on the history of law, on political philosophy, and on aesthetics. Most of the prominent academic defenders of Hegel were interested in theology; also many of those scholars who were interested in defending the interpretations of Hegel were also consistent with traditional Christian view of a personal god and personal immortality. These began to change the works of young Hegelians

such as D.F Strauss (1808 – 74) Ludwig Feuerbach (1804 – 72) Bruno Bauer (1809 – 82) and Arnold Ruge (1803 – 80) who emphasized the humanistic and historical dimensions of Hegel's accounts of religion (*Ibid*; 314). They rejected the old Hegelian tendencies towards retaliation with contemporary political life. So they began to reinterpret and expand Hegel's account of the productive activity of human spirit.

In Great Britain, the proponents of Neo-Hegelianism include Bernard Bosanquet (1848 – 1923) J.M.E. McTaggart (1806 – 1925) and especially F. H. Bradley (1846 – 1924). They were all interested in the metaphysical implications of Hegel's idealism. T. H. Green (1836 – 1882) and Edward Caird (1835 – 1908) took up the holistic themes in Hegel and developed a Neo-Hegelian reading in politics and in religion (*Ibid*; 314).

In Germany, Hegel continued to influence a number of different schools of neo-maxism, Hegelian Marxists, Frankfurt School, or ethical theory group especially Theodor Adorno, Marx, Horkheimer, and Herbert Marcuse. It continued even to influence and forge an unusual link between Hegel and post war existentialism (*Ibid*; 316). Hegelian themes have continued to resurface in contemporary hermeneutic, communitarianism, ethics and increasing attention given to conceptual change and history in the philosophy of science (*Ibid*; 317). This has meant for many that Hegel should be regarded not only as the origin of a distinctive tradition in European philosophy that emphasizes the historical and social nature of human existence, but as a potential contributor to many approaches to philosophy. We are yet to discover other aspects of Hegelianism as we move into his *Phenomenology of Spirit* (*gist*).

## **1.6 Hegel's Notion of the Spirit (*Geist*)**

The concept of spirit is complex and obscure in the context of the Hegelian literature. Yet, it can be argued that there is indeed a reflective relation in the process of the appearance of what we understand the notion of the spirit and that its development is the rational development and preceding movement of the mind. Hegel argued that the development of spirit started from the object of consciousness and rose to be the notion of reason. Reason, when we observe the unity



of ego and existence, the unity of subjectivity and objectivity of for-Itselfness and in-Itselfness, it finds for itself the character of implicitness of being and consciousness of reason. This character constitutes the nature of absolute fact, this is the beginning of “spiritual reality” (*das geistige Wesen*). Consciousness, in this case, is a formal knowledge of reality. Hegel argues that spirit to be termed ‘spirit’ seems better to interpret the word ‘Geist’ than the word mind. This is because spirit is mind at a much higher level of existence (Hegel, 1931: 456). Hegel describes the notion of spirit directly as reason in these words; “Reason is spirit, when its certainty of being all reality has been raised to the level of truth, and reason is consciously aware of itself as its own world, and of the world as itself” (Ibid; 457). That is to say;

This consciousness.... is a particular individual distinct from the general substance and prescribes arbitrary laws.... takes itself to be the power that passes judgment on them.... seen to be self-contained and self-sufficient spiritual reality..... The self-contained and self-sufficient reality, which is at once aware of being actual in the form of consciousness and presents itself to itself, is spirit (Ibid; 458).

Individual reality can be grasped as a form of spirit only in retrospect. Its essential spiritual being (*Wesen*) is seen as the ethical substance, thus spirit is concrete ethical actuality (*Wirklichkeit*). Spirit is the immovable, irreducible basis and the starting point for the action of all and every one. Its purpose and goal, is ideally implicit nature (*Ansich*) of all self-consciousness (Ibid; 458). The characteristics of the spirits are as follows; it is a universal product, it is wrought and created by the action of each and all. Thirdly, it constitutes their unity and likeness and identity of meaning for its existence, the self, action (*Ibid*). It is the resultant universal spiritual being that manifests in the resolution of the essence into individual forms. This shows that all previous mode of consciousness are abstraction from the spirit and the isolation of modes only exists within the spirit, which is existence. In his words;

The isolating of such moments presupposes spirit itself and requires spirit for its subsistence.... Taken in isolation, they appear as if they existed as they stand..... Their real ground and essential being showed that they are merely moments or vanishing quantities..... Spirit is thus consciousness in general, which contains sense-certainty, perception and understanding (Ibid; 459).

Spirit can be seen as immediate consciousness of its immanent self and its objective self, as the unity of consciousness and self-consciousness and this type of consciousness is reason. When

reason, which is spirit, is seen by spirit to be reason, which is actually in spirit and its world, then spirit has come to its truth, which is the essential nature of ethical life actually existent. (Ibid; 460) Hegel's concept of spirit unifies these main concepts: Freedom, Reason and Self-consciousness which are interdependent, almost to the point of identity. The only interest of spirit is to realize its own principle of true freedom, but it does this by unfolding as human history, where the consciousness of universal, rational freedom is the driving force. Before it is fully developed, ethical life is substance without being spirit. The spiritual essence, Hegel calls 'ethical substance'. Hegel's paradigm of ethical substance is the world of the ancient Greeks, the polis. Hence, ethical life in this is substantial, merely sense, is not yet spirit, because it is not yet self-consciousness.

Spirit, as far as it is the immediate truth, is the ethical life of a nation, the individual, which is the world....The living ethical life is spirit in its truth.... Ethical consciousness is destroyed in the formal universality of right and legality, thus spirit traces one of its worlds in the element of its objectivity as it in a crass solid actuality; this is the realm of culture and civilization, while against this in the element of thought is traced the world of Belief or faith, the realm of the inner life and truth (Wesen) (Ibid; 410).

As the ethical world and other worlds attain their goal and final result, the actual self-consciousness of Absolute spirit is the resultant of these actions.

### **1.6,1 Criticism of Absolute Spirit in Hegel**

There are many schools of thought which philosophers defend. For instance, all the different types of materialist and Naturalist views have their defenders. Hegel pantheism has generated a lot of argument rather than having defenders. Some argued that certain Hegel's philosophical assumptions be de-mythologized. We are left to ask: why is Hegel's central thesis dead? Why is it that no one actually believed Hegel's central ontological thesis that *the universe is posited by a Spirit whose essence is rational necessity*? This is unlike many much less relevant thinkers in the eyes of other contemporaries, such as the mainstream, Enlightenment philosophers, Helvetius, Holbach, Bentham – or the reactionaries such as Burke, can boast followers today in this sense, that there are still people who share their ontological or metaphysical views.

We can proceed to say that part of the answer to the question of why Hegel's ontology was abandoned, lies in the development of modern civilization in an increasingly industrial,

technological rationalized direction. This civilization is in a sense the heir of enlightenment. Now while Hegel's philosophy claims to be the fulfillment of enlightenment thought; his tried to combine with this, and with each other two strands of thought and sensibility which were so much reactions to as extensions of the Enlightenment. Hegel's philosophy can be seen as an attempt to realize a synthesis that the Romantic generation was groping toward: to combine the rational, self – legislator freedom of the Kantian subject with the expressive unity within man and with nature for which the age longed (Taylor: 1975, 539).

Hegel wanted to present this synthesis in fully rational forum, that is what makes him an heir of the enlightenment and what marks him off from the Romantics. It may be seen that he was moved by philosophical purposes which went beyond and against the main trend of the enlightenment materialist. The seventeenth century revolution brought about a definition of the self; men defined themselves not in relation to a cosmic order, but as subjects who possessed their own picture of world within them as well as an endogenous motivation, their purposes or drives. This means that the world was no longer seen as the reflection of a cosmic order to which man was related, but as a domain of mental, contingent fact, to be mapped by the tracing of correlations, and ultimately manipulated in fulfillment of human purposes. This vision of an objective, natural world was, as we saw, valued as a confirmation of the new identity before ever it came to be Important as the basis of our mastery over nature. This objectification extends beyond external nature to englobe human life and society, and the result is a combined vision of man as an: associationist, psychology, utilitarian ethics, atomistic politics of a social engineering, and ultimately a mechanistic science of man.

## **1.7 Dialectics; Hegel's Methodology**

### **1.7,1 Dialectics: Hegel's Philosophical Methodology**

The word dialectics originated from the Greek word *dialed tik*. It means the art of conversation. It is a method of philosophizing by means of question and answer employed by certain ancient philosophers, notably Socrates. Dialectics is the practice of dialogue between two or more people who hold different ideas and wish to persuade each other. Aristotle thought of dialectic as the search for the philosophic basis of science. He used the term as a synonym for the science of

logic (Collins, 2003: 109). In philosophy, dialectics is an interpretative method in which the contradiction between a proposition (thesis) and its denial (antithesis) is resolved at a higher level of truth (synthesis).

Dialectics could also be seen as the reasoning or logical structure that holds together a continuous argument or exposition. In philosophy, Zeno the Eleatic was said to be the inventor of dialectic. Zeno's (Denton, 1903: 116 – 119) characteristic method was to take an opponent's hypothesis and deduce from it two contradictory conclusions thereby rendering it absurd. Heraclitus was also known for his dialectical reasoning. Although, Plato's dialectics is a development from that of Socrates, it usually starts from an assumption taken to be true for the purpose of the argument, then proceed through question and answer in a methodologically rigorous way until a conclusion is reached. In all, dialectics has been seen as a method of acquiring knowledge and obtaining truth (Vlastos et al, 1994: 1).

Furthermore, dialectics sometimes signifies philosophy itself rather than a philosophical method. As a philosophical method, Aristotle (Diog, ix 25ff viii 57) thought it inferior to deduction. But it is used to describe the general arguments or ideas of a work or an author. Kant sees dialectics as the "Logic of illusion" or the misuse of logic to believe the appearance of solid belief. It is one of the jobs of true philosophy to reveal the places where reason transgresses its proper boundaries, producing the illusions of transcendental metaphysics (Kant, 2003). Different forms of dialectical reasoning have emerged in the east and in the west, as well as during different eras of history. Among the major forms of dialectical reasoning are Socratic, Hindu, Buddhist, Medieval, Igbo, Hegelian, Marxist, and Talmudic. But the basic theoretical principles could be summarized as follows;

- ▶ Everything is transient and finite, existing in the medium of time
- ▶ Everything is made of opposing forces (contradiction)
- ▶ Gradual changes lead to turning points where one force overcomes the other (Quantitative change leads to qualitative change)
- ▶ Change moves in spirals "(sometimes referred to as Negation of the negation)"

This shows that the history of dialectics is identical to the extensive history of philosophy. In the medieval period, dialectics was one of the three liberal arts taught in medieval universities as part of the trivium. The trivium also included rhetoric and grammar (Abelson, 1965: 82). In the mid nineteenth century, the concept of dialectics was appropriated by Marx and Engels and retooled in a non-idealistic manner, becoming a crucial notion in their philosophy of dialectical materialism (Okoro, 2008: 221). Thus, this concept has played a prominent role on the world stage and in world history. In contemporary polemics, dialectics may also refer to an understanding of how we can pierce the world (epistemology), an assertion that the nature of the world outside one's perception is interconnected, contradictory and dynamic (ontology). It can also be seen as a method of presentation of ideas and conclusions (discourse).

Interestingly, the concept of dialectics was renovated and given life by Hegel. According to Hegel (1977: 29, 30), dialectic is the method by which human history unfolds, that is history progresses as a dialectical process. Hegel's aim was to set a philosophical system so comprehensive that it would encompass the ideas of his predecessors and create a conceptual framework in terms of which both the past and future could be philosophically understood. This requires a full account of reality itself, thus Hegel sees the subject matter of philosophy to be reality as a whole. This reality or the total development process of everything is called the Absolute or the Absolute spirit. Hegel believed that the task a philosophy is to chart is the development of Absolute spirit. This takes the following processes.

- (i) Making clear the internal rational structure of the Absolute.
- (ii) Demonstrating the manner in which the Absolute manifests itself in nature and human history.
- (iii) Explicating the teleological nature of the Absolute, that is, showing the end or purpose towards which the Absolute is directed, (although Hegel believed that the Absolute must be pure thought, spirit or mind in the process of development).

However, Hegel's dialectics refers to the necessary process that makes up progress in both thought and the world. The process is one of overcoming the contradiction between thesis and antithesis by means of synthesis and the synthesis becomes contradiction and the process repeats

itself until final perfection is attained. Although, Hegel did not use the thesis → antithesis → synthesis terminology, Hegel did use a three-valued logical model, thus in Hegel's terms; Abstract → Negative → Concrete. Sometimes Hegel would use immediate → mediated → concrete. Hegel used these terms hundreds of times throughout his works (Hegel, 1996). The formula: Thesis → Antithesis → Synthesis does not explain why the thesis requires an Antithesis. Also the formula, Abstract → – Negative → Concrete suggests a flaw in any initial thesis. More so, it is too abstract and lacks the negative of trial, error and experience. The same applies to the formula, immediate → mediated → concrete. Hegel maintains that the concrete, the synthesis, the Absolute, must always pass through the phase of the Negative, which is Mediation. This is the actual essence of what is popularly called Hegel's Dialectics.

More so, Hegel uses the term “subtraction” or “overcoming” (*Aufhebung*) to conceive of the working of the dialectic. This term indicates the preserving of the useful portion of an idea, thing, society and so on, while moving beyond its limitation. In the Logic, Hegel describes a dialectics of existence, first existence must be posited to pure being (*sein*) but pure being upon examination, is found to be indistinguishable from nothing (*Nichts*). When it is realized that what is coming into being is, at the same time also returning to nothing (in life, for example, one's living is also a dying), both Being and Nothing are united as Becoming (Hegel; 1812: 176 – 179). Another example from the phenomenology is on the certainty of sense experience and Hegel expresses the dialectics as:

First I point out the Now... as sometime that has been, or as sometime cancelled and done away with. I thus annul and pass beyond the first truth, and in the second place, I assert as the second truth that it has been, that it is superseded, but thirdly, what has been is not, I then supersede, cancel, its having been, the fact of its being annulled, the second truth negate thereby the negation of the now, and return in so doing the first position (Hegel, 1931: 156).

Hegel claimed to make implicit contradiction explicit. Each stage of the process, was the prove of contradictions inherent or implicit in the preceding stage. Hegel believes that the whole history is one tremendous dialectic the major stages of which chart a progression from self-alienation as slavery to self - unification and realization as the rational, constitutional state of free and equal citizens.

The important principles of Hegel's duties are the transition from quantity to quality, which he terms the measure. The measure is the qualitative quantum; the quantum is the existence of quantity (Hegel, 1874: 107 – 111). The other principle is the Negation of the negation, which he also terms *Aufhebung* (sublation). Something is only what it is in its relation to another, but by the negation of the negation, this something incorporates the other into itself. The dialectical movement involves two moments that negate each other, a somewhat and 'an other'. As a result of the negation of the negation, "sometime" becomes 'an other', this other is itself somewhat, therefore it likewise becomes 'an other', and so an ad infinitum" (Ibid; 93).

From the on-going analysis, something in its passage into other only joins with itself, it is self-related. In becoming there are two moments, coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be by sublation, that is negation of the negation, being passes over into nothing, it ceases to be, but something new shows up, is coming to be. What is sublated (*outgehoben*) on the one hand ceases to be and is put to an end, but on the other hand, it is preserved and maintained (Hegel, 1812: 185). In dialectics a totality transforms itself, it is self-related.

### **1.7,2 The Criticism of Hegelian Dialectic**

Critics argued the Hegelian dialectic cannot be mechanically applied for any chosen thesis and that any selection of any antithesis, other than logical negation of the thesis of the thesis is subjective. If the logical negation is used as the antithesis, there is no rigorous way to derive a synthesis. In practice, when an antithesis is selected to suit the user's subjective purpose, the resulting "contradictions" are rhetorical, not logical, and the resulting synthesis is not rigorously defensible against a multitude of other possible synthesis. The problem with the model, "Thesis-Antithesis-Synthesis" model, is that it implies that contradictions or negations come from outside of things. Hegel's point is that they are inherent in and internal to things. This conception of dialectics derives ultimately from Heraclitus.

Generally, dialectics have been criticized; Sartre and Popper criticized dialectical reasoning in different ways. According to Sartre;

Existentialism, like Marxism, addresses itself to experience in order to discover their concrete synthesis. It can conceive of these synthesis only within a moving dialectical totalization, which is nothing else but history or, from the strictly cultural point of view, which we have adopted here – “philosophy - becoming – the world” (Sartre, 1982: 318).

Karl Popper also attacked dialectical method for its willingness to put up with contradictions. Popper concluded the essay with these words;

The whole development of dialectic should be a warning against the dangers inherent in philosophical system – building. It should remind us that philosophy should not be made a basis for any sort of scientific system and that philosophers should be much more modest in their claims. One task which they can fulfill quite usefully is the study of the critical methods of science (Ibid; 335).

Popper also unleashed a famous attack on Hegelian dialectic, in which he held that Hegel’s thought was, to some degree, responsible for facilitating the rise of fascism in Europe by encouraging and justifying irrationalism. In section 17 of his 1961 “*addenda*” to the open society entitled “Facts, Standards, and Truth: A Further Criticism of Relativism” Popper refused to moderate his criticism of the Hegelian dialectic, arguing that it “played a major role in the downfall of the Liberal movement in Germany by contributing to historicism and to an identification of might and right, encouraged totalitarian modes of thought.... (and) undermined and eventually lowered the traditional standards of intellectual responsibility and honesty” (Popper, 1900: 395). Some argued that Hegel’s dialectics has allowed globalists to lead simple, capable, freeborn men and women back into superstitious, racist and unreasonable age of imperial control over private property, trade and production. This means that Hegelianism stifles the spirit of pluralism.

### **1.7,3 An Analysis and Evaluation of Hegelian Dialectic**

Hegel used dialectics to explain the whole of the history of philosophy, science, arts, politics and religion. But many modern critics point out that Hegel often seems to gloss over the realities of history in order to fit it into his dialectical mold. Hegel has outlined that the purpose of dialectic is “to study things in their own being and movement and thus to demonstrate the finitude of the partial categories of understanding” (Hegel, 1874: 81). According to Marx:

The mystification, which dialectic suffers in Hegel’s hands, by no means prevents him from being the first to present its general form of working in a comprehensive and conscious manner. With



him it is standing on its head. It must be turned right side up again, if you would discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell (Engels 1877: 4).

In the work of Marx and Engels, the dialectical approach to the study of history became intertwined with historical materialism. Engels argued that all of nature is dialectical. Hegelian - Marxist thinking affects our entire social and political structure. The Hegelian dialectic is the framework for guiding on-thoughts and actions into conflicts that lead us to a predetermined solution. If we do not understand how the Hegelian dialectic shapes our perceptions of the world, then we do not know how we are helping to implement the vision. Although Hegelian dialectic could be seen as a tool, which manipulates us into a frenzied triangular pattern of thought and action, yet every time we argue in favour or against any ideology, we are playing the game of dialectics. More so, the synthetic Hegelian solution to all these conflicts can't be introduced unless we all take a side that will advance his dialectical methodology and thought. This is seen in everyday life, its plays with high speed and velocity. For instance, the pervasions of dialectics can be felt in expanding domestic police action, land grabs, insane wars against inanimate objects (especially the climate, which is the latest), in polity, and an individual liberty. Be that as it may, the only way to realize the limitations of controlled thoughts and guided thoughts is to step out of dialectic.

At this point, the essential question is; is it possible to step out of dialectic? An understanding of Hegel's motivation will enable us to see the influence of his dialectics in our various destinies. Hegelian conflicts steer every political arena on the planet, from the United Nations to the major political parties, all the way down to local school boards and communities and households. Dialogues and consensus are building as primary tools of the dialectics, and in some perspectives, terrorism and intimidation are also acceptable formats for obtaining the goal. Perhaps focusing on Hegel's dialectics and avoiding getting caught up in their impenetrable theories of social evolution might get us to opportunity to think and act our way towards freedom, justice and genuine liberty for all to say, no matter what the issue, the invisible dialectics aims to control both the conflict and the resolution of differences and leads everyone involved into a new cycle of conflicts.

The Hegelian dialectic presupposes the factual basis for the theory of social evolutionary principles. Hegel's formulae has been so successful that in 2003, all United States domestic and foreign policy is dominated by "communitarian thinking", the whole country is living under the new laws and yet Americans most affected by "impenetrable" Hegelian laws have never once heard the term used. The fact is that the Hegelian dialectic sets up the scene for state intervention, confiscation and redistribution and thus is against our entire constitutional based society. The Hegelian dialectic is not a conspiracy theory because the conspiracy theory is a fraud. We have all been duped by global elitists who plan to take totalitarian control of all nations, people, property and produce. Communitarian plans exist in every corner of the world and nobody at the local level will explain why there is no national legal avenue to withdraw from the United Nation's community development plans. This shows that Hegel's dialectic has played a prominent role on the world stage and in world history. In Hegel's words; "dialectics" is the method by which human history unfolds; that is history progresses as a dialectical process.

## **Highlights**

Hegel lived through Germany's most brilliant years, when Bethoven was born and when the poet-scientist, Goethe, was twenty years old. Kant was forty-six years old and had not yet written his classical philosophical works. One unique difference between Hegel and other philosophers is that for Hegel, a philosophical theory to become convincing when it is precise and comprehensive. Hegel believed that the subject matter of philosophy is 'reason' or the 'absolute'. Philosophy in Hegel's account comprises logic, philosophy of nature and philosophy of spirit. The subject matter of logic is the 'idea' that is 'externalized' in nature and returns to itself as 'spirit.' Hegel always construed this claim to mean that the subject matter of philosophy was history of human experience. Philosophy was about the real world of human change and development.

He published his first book in 1807, the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, which is the comprehension of the development process of the subject (spirit) as certain of itself to the truth of its certainty. The *Phenomenology of Spirit* is also seen as the chronology of the various epochs in the development

of human thought. Hegel philosophy was shaped by Greek philosophy, German society and Kant. Hegel agreed with Kant that philosophy must be the work of reason, but held that philosophical reason is a faculty the possibilities of which Kant had not grasped. Hegel's written works become much more influenced by these theoretical projects and their attempts to extend Kant's search for the basic categories necessary for experience to be discriminated against and evaluated and for a theory of the subject that, in some non – empirical way, was responsible for those categories. Kant saw the categories as forms of thought which order or unify experience and qualify appearances, not things in themselves. Hegel re – interpreted categories as the distinction between appearance and reality; that is, the distinction between incomplete and complete comprehension of things. This means that categories are no more forms of thought but forms of things.

Hegel believed that the categories are related in a particular way; dialectically connected. Dialectics according to Hegel is the method by which reality unfolds, that is history progress as a dialectical process. Hegel did use a three – valued logical model; Thesis → Antithesis → Synthesis or Abstract → – Negative → Concrete; immediate → mediated → concrete. Hegel maintains that the concrete, the synthesis, the Absolute, must always pass through the phase of the Negative, which is Mediation. This is the actual essence of what is popularly called Hegelian Dialectics. Hegel achieved his aim to set a philosophical system so comprehensive that it would encompass the idea of his predecessors and create a conceptual framework in terms of which both the past and future could be philosophically understood. Although Hegel has been criticized as being difficult to expound, some writer believed that Hegelian system collapsed soon after his death in 1831. This is because men saw that Hegelian system was not equaled by performance in this ambitious system and for many other reasons. The fact is that we cannot escape Hegel.

The merits of Hegel's dialectics are much. Hegel used this system of dialectics to explain the whole of the history of philosophy, science, arts, politics and religion but many modern critics point out that Hegel often seems to gloss over the realities of history in order to fit it into his dialectical mold. Hegel has outlined that the purpose of dialectics is “to study things in their own

being and movement and thus to demonstrate the finitude of the partial categories of understanding” (Hegel, 1874: 81). The Hegelian dialectics presupposes the factual basis for the theory of social evolutionary principles. Hegel’s formulae have been so successful that in 2003, all U. S. domestic and foreign policy is dominated by “communitarian thinking”, the whole country is living under the new laws and yet Americans most affected by “impenetrable” Hegelian laws have never once heard the term used. The fact is that the Hegelian dialectic sets up the scene for state intervention, confiscation and redistribution and thus is against our entire constitutionally based society. Hegel foreseeing America as the land of the future which will translate the concept of freedom to all sexes and to all nations, proved that Hegel is a progressive philosopher of penetrating vision and foresight, not one condemned to orthodoxy and tradition.

## CHAPTER TWO

### HEGEL'S IDEALISM: AN EXPOSITORY ANALYSIS

#### 2.0 Introduction

Having discussed the biography of Hegel, we shall look at Hegel's idealism. This chapter shall provide an expository analysis of Hegel's ideas on consciousness, understanding, self – consciousness, recognition, 'the other', reason and history. Our knowledge of dialectics (section 1.7) from the previous chapter will assist in a clearer understanding of how Hegel developed the process of apprehension of reality. Hegel's idealism was built on the analysis of sense-certainty and perception as the processes of consciousness. Consciousness is seen in the dialectic (see chapter one, page 41) process of sense-experience and at the stage of perception, arrived at thoughts, which bring together in the first instance in the unconditioned universal element, which is self-existence. This is the true object of consciousness. The true being of things has the characteristics that it does not exist immediately for consciousness; rather consciousness takes up a mediated relation to the inner, in the form of understanding. It looks through the intervening play of forces into the real and true background of things. The middle term combining the two-extremes, understanding and the inner of things, is the explicitly evolved being of force, which is now and henceforth a vanishing process for understanding itself. Hence it is called Appearance (*Erscheinung*). The course of this inferential process furnishes the further characterization of what understanding detects in the inner world by the aid of the middle term and gives rise to the experience understanding goes through regarding this relation of terms when joined and united together.

It was seen that in the inner being of the sphere of appearance, understanding gets to know the truth of appearance itself and not appearance in that of play of forces. But this inter-play of forces in Hegel's idealism expresses absolutely universal moments and the process of those moments. While understanding merely experiences itself raised above perception, consciousness reveals itself united and bound up with the supersensible world through the mediating agency of the realm of appearance, through which it gazes into this background that lies behind appearance. Here, appearance is withdrawn. What we have is the inner being [the ego] gazing into the inner

realm-the vision of the undistinguished self-same reality, which repels itself from itself, affirms itself as a divided and distinguished inner reality. But at the same time the two factors have immediately no distinction. What we have here is *self-consciousness*.

However, this knowledge of truth of the idea of the realm of appearance, and of its inner being, is itself arrived at after a long and tedious process which the modes of consciousness, “meaning”, “perception”, and “understanding” disappear. Furthermore, the notion of self-consciousness gets completed in three moments. [a] pure undifferentiated ego is its first immediate object. [b] This immediacy through going mediation has its being only by canceling the independent object, in other words it is desire. The satisfaction of desire is the reflection of self-consciousness into itself. This is the certainty, which has passed into objective truth. [c] The truth of this certainty is a two-fold reflection, the reduplication of self-consciousness has an object, which implicates its own otherness or affirms distinction as a void distinction and therein is independent. The individual form distinguished, which is only a living form, certainty cancels its independents in the process of life. It ceases along with its distinctive difference to be what it is. The object of self-consciousness however is still independent in this negativity of itself. It is for itself genus, unusual flux or continuity in the very distinctiveness of its own separate existence. It is a living self-consciousness. Self-consciousness has before it (another) self-consciousness.

However, the self’s consciousness of self in another self are distinct and separate from each other. The difference is in the first instance, a question of degree of self-assertion and self-maintenance. One is stronger, high and more independent than the other. More so, capable of asserting exposition of the notion of this spiritual unity in its duplication brought before us the process of recognition. The one that is independent and its essential nature are to be for itself. And the other is dependent and its essence is life or existence for another. The former is the Master or Lord, the latter is the Bondsman. This background of Hegel’s thought is the remarkable human phenomenon of the subordination of oneself to another, which we have in all forms of servitude, whether slavery, serfdom or voluntary service. Servitude is not only a phase of human history; it is, in principle, a condition of the development and maintenance of the consciousness of self as a fact of experience.

In fact, The *Phenomenology of Spirit* is the comprehension of the development process of the subject (spirit) as certain of itself to the truth of that certainty. It was argued that in the context of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, philosophy is understood as a form of the "absolute spirit". The fact is that Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* is for the purpose of this research the chronology of the various epochs in the development of human thought. That is it is not Hegel's thought but it is a historical account that he used to demonstrate how the spirit is developed.

*Reason in History* is an exposition of Hegel's idea on history. Hegel's *Philosophy of History* tries to bring reason in historical events or records. Hegel was seen as the greatest of the speculative philosophers of history. His works on history in this section were exposed, explained, criticized and evaluated. Hegel brought out the significance of history. History, for Hegel, is the development of spirit in time, just as nature is the development of the idea in space. Hegel built his systematic philosophy of history in the great trained idea; nation spirit. This self-consciousness of the idea is spirit, the antithesis of idea and nature and the development of consciousness is history. History is the 'autobiography of God' or the reality of God, God and the world belong together. Without the world, there is no God. The point where spirit and nature meet is human nature; freedom is spirit trying to cause development.

In other words, the development of spirit towards consciousness of itself in world history is the development of even proper freedom. World history therefore is the progress of freedom. The state is an organization of freedom. Hegel recognizes the four kinds of men involved in history. The purpose of history is to perfect man. Hegel was able to achieve his vast philosophy through his dynamic dialectical method. In Hegel, philosophy and history met. He was the outstanding philosopher of history as well as historian of philosophy.

Consequently there are lots of lesson from Hegel, which will help us to rethink the history of philosophy. The first is that Hegel's methods of writing history show that there is no objective history. Hegel shows how history of the world is none other than the progress of the consciousness of freedom that is every historical struggle is a struggle for freedom. Freedom is the engine of history. The essence of freedom is to learn lesson from the past. How do we integrate these noble ideas to re-interpret and harmonize our society the way we see the other?

These ideas form the kernel of his idealism. For an explicit understanding of Hegel's idealism there are notions like consciousness, Understanding, self-consciousness which forms part of his thought shall be explained. We have to state that in this chapter, we are going to employ some Hegelian terminologies to enable us do a proper analysis of his idealism.

## **2.1 Consciousness, Understanding and the Self-Consciousness in Hegel's Idealism**

### **2.1.1 Sense Certainty and the Incompleteness of the Particular**

Sense certainty arises from sense experience. It consists in keeping mere apprehension (*Auffassen*) free from conceptual comprehension (*Begreifen*) (Hegel: 1966, 149). What matters is the concrete content, which sense certainty is furnished with, the content it presents at first makes it appears as the richest kind of knowledge and the trust or most authentic knowledge. Moreso, it has the object before itself as its entirety and completeness. Hegel says bare fact of certainty is reality and admittedly the abstractness and the poorest kind of truth, which contains solely the being of the fact it knows (*Ibid*).

In this form of certainty, consciousness takes the form of pure ego. This means that "I" in such a case, am merely qua pure this. The essential point for sense knowledge is merely it is and *bare fact of being* that simple immediately constitutes its truth. What constitutes the concrete actual certainty of sense? In sense experience, pure being that breaks up into two "*thises*"; one is the "I" and the other is the "object". On reflection, neither of the distinctions is merely immediate nor mediated. "I" has the certainty through the "Object" through the actual fact and again exists in that certainty through 'an other', through the I. In sense certainty it is important to understand the dialectics and the distinction of essential truth and particular example of essence and instance, immediately and mediation. The object exists in simple immediacy and as the essential reality. The other is the non-essential, as mediated. Thus in Hegel's words;

Something, which is not *per se* in the certainty, but there through something else, ego, a state of knowledge, which only knows the object because the object is, and which can as well be as not be (*Ibid*; 151). The object is the real truth, is the essential reality... it



remains and stands even though it is not known, while the knowledge does not exist if the object is not there (*Ibid*).

The object carries the true content of sense-experience. The universal is therefore in point of fact the truth of sense-certainty. It is as a universal that we give utterance to sensuous fact. The universal is uttered when what sense-certainty means is not actually and absolutely expressed. Language and its limitations make it difficult to express in word any sensuous existence, which we 'mean'. Universally being the real truth of sense certainty sometimes is being reformed directly and at once our own meaning in the cause of language usage (*Ibid*; 52). Since sense-certainty in its very nature proves the universal to be the truth of its objects; pure being then remains as the essential element for this sense-certainty. Pure being is the form of something in which the process of negation and mediation is essential.

From the ongoing analysis, certainty is now found to lie in the opposite element namely in knowledge, which formerly was the non-essential factor. And the object, which professed to be the essential reality, is now the non-essential element of sense-certainty. Sense-certainty is thus banished from the object. It is forced back into the subject (I). This means that the force of its truth lies in the subject. Thus sense-certainty goes through the dialectic process. "Both truths" according to Hegel, "have the same authenticity – the immediacy of seeing and the certainty and assurance both have as to the specific way of knowing but the one certainty disappears in the other" (*Ibid*; 154). In all, what does not disappear is the 'I', which is the universal. Sense certainty is discovered by experience. Its truth stand is as fast as a self-identical relation making no distinction of essential and non-essential. The processes of sense-certainty is dialectic, it has absolute validity and truth for consciousness. This is said to be a universal experience.

### **2.1,2 Perceptual Consciousness and Truth**

Immediate certainty does not make the truth its own, for its truth is something universal, whereas certainty wants to deal with this. Perception, on the other hand, takes what exists for it to be

universal. Universality being its principle in general, its moments immediately distinguished within it are also universal (Ibid; 163). This means that 'I' is a universal, and the object is a universal. The process of apprehension on perception is a logically necessitated process, unlike in sense-certainty. Sense-certainty is a process of pointing out and indicating, that is, the process of perceiving whole in perception, the object is perceived, that is the object is, in its essential nature, the same process. Whereas sense-certainty involves the unfolding and distinguishing of the elements involved, the object is these same elements taken and held together as a single totality. Going through the process, the universal, *qua* principle is the essence of perception. Both the moments distinguished-that which perceives and that which is perceived-are what is non-essential. As a matter of fact, both of them are essence or universal in themselves, therefore, both are essential, and related as opposites (Ibid; 163).

Perceiving, being a process, could be said to be the insubstantial, the inconstant factor, which can be as well as not be. It is the non-essential moment (Ibid; 163). The fact is that the wealth of sense-knowledge belongs to perception, not to immediate certainty. It is only perception that has negation, distinction, multiplicity in its nature. The object in perception shows it's self to be the thing with many properties. Canceling superseding brings out and lays bare its true two fold meaning, which we found contained in the negative to supersede (*aufheben*) is at once to negate and to preserve. The nothing being a negation of this, presences immediacy and is itself sensuous but a universal, by having in it mediation or negation when it brings this explicitly out as a factor in its immediacy, it is a specifically distinct determinate property. This simple, self-identical universality however, is itself again distinct and detached from these determinate characteristics it has the medium within all these characteristics exists is pure self-relation and simple unity. They interrelate without affecting one another by participating in this universality. They are different to each other, each by itself, a relation of mere differences. This also is the pure universal itself, the 'medium' the "*thinghood*" keeping them together. This character that is noticed and developed is positive universality.

In another way, if many determinate properties were utterly indifferent to each other and were entirely related to themselves alone, they would not be determinate, for they are so, merely in so

far as they are distinguished and related to others as their opposites. In view of this opposition, they cannot exist together in the bare and simple unity of their “medium”, which unity is just as essential to them as negation. Hegel says;

The process of distinguishing them, so far as it does not leave them indifferent, but effectually excludes negates one from another, thus falls outside this simple ‘medium’. It is not a unity indifferent to what is in it, but ‘one’ as well, an “excluding” repelling unity (Ibid; 165).

The ‘one’ is the moment of negation, relating itself to itself and excluding ‘an other’. More so, in the property of a thing the negation takes the form of a specific determinateness, which is directly one with the immediacy of its being, an immediacy, which by this unity with negation, is universality. From all these, the truth of perception, that it is;

- (1) A universality, passive and indifferent, the ‘also’, which forms the sole bond of connection between the qualities, or rather constituent elements “matters” exist together.
- (2) Negation, likewise in a simple form or the ‘one’ which consist in excluding properties of an opposite character,
- (3) The many properties themselves, the relation of the two first moments. That is the negation, its relation to that indifferent element, and in being so, expands into a manifold of differences. This is the focal point of particularity radiating forth into plurality within the “medium” of subsistence. And the aspects that belong to the negative unity and at the same time mutually exclude one another.

Consequently, the sensuous universality, the immediate unity of positive being and negative exclusion, is only a property, when oneness and pure universality are evolved from it and combines distinguished from one another. Only after this relation of the unity to those pure essentials moments is affected, is the “Thing” complete (Ibid; 166). This is the way the “Thing” in perception is constituted and consciousness is perceptual in character, so far as this “Thing” is its object. It has to “take” the object and assume the attitude of pure apprehension and what comes its way in so doing is truth (*das wahre*). If it did something when taking the given, it would by such supplementation or elimination, alter the truth. The object is the true and

universal, the self-same, while consciousness is the variable and non-essential. It may happen that consciousness apprehends the object wrongly and deceives itself. The percipient is aware of the possibility of deception. Probably the percipient is directly aware of otherness, the universality forming principle as null and naught or as what is superseded. The criterion of truth here is self-sameness and the procedure is that of apprehending what comes before him as self-same. Diversity, being a fact, procedure then is a way of relating the diverse moments of apprehension to one another.

One salient question is; what sort of experience consciousness forms in the course of its actual perception? This might be seen as the development of the contradictions that appear there. This means that in analyzing the process, the experience is already contained in the development of the object (Ibid; 167). The experience is bare relation of self to self and it remains sensuous existence in general. Since it no longer contains the character of negativity and the mode of consciousness, which is now aware of a being of sense is merely a way of “meaning” (*meinen*) or “intending”. That is, it has left the attitude of perception entirely and gone back into itself (Ibid; 168). Thus, sense existence and meaning pass over into perception. One can see that it is a dialectical process that is getting back to the beginning and once more dragged into the same circuit that supersedes itself in every moment and as a whole.

Consciousness has to go over this cycle (that is through the dialectic movement see chapter one page 42) again, not like the first occasion. Thus, the established fact regarding perception is that the truth and outcome of perception is its dissolution, its reflection out of and away from the truth into itself. In this way, consciousness becomes aware of how its perceptual process is essentially constituted. This ‘its’ apprehension is at the same time reflected out of the true content back into itself. By so doing, consciousness will thus get the true object bare and waked. This implies that consciousness is able to become aware of the untruth that comes out there and falls within it. Hegel says;

By knowing this, consciousness is able to cancel and supersede this untruth. It distinguishes its apprehension of the truth from the untruth of its perception, corrects this untruth, and so far as itself takes in hand to make this correction, the truth qua truth of perception, certainly falls within its own consciousness (Ibid; 169).

The procedure of consciousness is constituted that it no longer perceives but also conscious of its reflection into itself and keeps this apart from simple apprehension. In perception, various different properties turn up, which seem to be properties of the thing. The thing is one and we are aware in ourselves that this diversity, by which the thing ceases to be in unity, falls in us. For example, a thing may be white to the eyes, also tart to our tongues, and also cubical to our feelings, and so on. The entire diversity of these aspects comes not from the entire but from us and we find them falling apart thus from one another. Probably, the organs they affect are quite distinct. Thus;

We are consequently the universal medium where such elements get dissociated and exist each by itself... we regard the characteristics of being a universal medium as our reflection we preserve and maintain the self-sameness and truth of the thing, its being a “one” (Ibid; 170).

Things are determinate in and for themselves. They have properties by which they distinguish themselves from one another. This means that property is special and peculiar, that is, the proper property. The determinate properties are inherent in that thing itself. Thus, the thing is a true being. They are within “Thinghood”, which is self-contained, each in and for itself, and are indifferent to one another. In the words of Hegel, (Ibid; 171)

The thing is the “*alio*”, the general medium, wherein the many properties subsist externally to one another, without touching or affecting one another, and without canceling one another, and so taken, the thing is taken as what it truly is.

This moment is the unity of the thing with itself; a unity, which excludes distinction from itself. This is the unity consciousness has taken upon itself, for the thing as such is the subsistence of many different and independent properties. However, putting these properties into “one” is the sole duty of consciousness and thus consciousness has to avoid letting them coincide and be one. Consciousness makes “oneness”, can be called property, is represented as being “free matter” (*materia libera*). The “oneness” makes the thing a collection of component elements, thus these results to a mere enclosure, a circumscribing surface. From the analysis above, the thing manifests its self in this twofold manner. First, it exhibits itself in a determinate and specific manner to the consciousness apprehending it and at the same time, is reflected back into itself out of that manner of presenting itself to consciousness. By inference, the thing contains within it opposite aspects of truth, a truth whose elements are in antithesis to one another. The thing is

having a being of its own, as existing for itself, or as an absolute negation of all others. But this kind of negation is the canceling and superseding of itself. In other words, the thing has its essential reality in 'an other'. This bare self-existence could also be to embrace and contain diversity, but the non-essential, which has all the necessary, cancels its own meaning. This is same as negation of itself. In other words, the existence for itself is as much as unessential as that which alone was meant to be unessential through the relation to another. By this process, the object in its pure characteristics... which were to constitute its essential nature, is superseded, just as the object, in its sensible mode of existence, became transcended; thus, from being the sensible to being the universal in Hegel's view (Ibid; 175).

It should be noted however, that the universality is being conditioned by the sense, since it is derived from it. Universality breaks, for this reason, into singleness and universality of the 'one' the properties and also of the free constituents or matter. Since both essentially exist in a single unity, we have before us now *unconditional absolute universality*. It is here that consciousness first truly passes into the sphere of understanding and of intelligence. It could be observed that sensible singleness thus disappears in the dialectic process of immediate certainty and becomes sensuous universality. The stage of meaning vanished and perceiving took the object as it inherently is in itself (a universal).

The sophistry of perception seeks to save these moments from their contradiction. It tries to fix them by distinguishing between "aspects" by using terms like "also" and "so far as". More so, it tries to hold truth by distinguishing the unessential element from an essential nature opposed thereto. The real truth has, as its essential content, undifferentiated and indeterminate universality. Sound common sense (*menschenverstand*) is those empty abstractions of "singleness" and "non-essential" element, which is "necessary" and powers the interplay of which constitutes perceptual understanding. Hegel wrote thus;

The course of this process, a perpetual alternate determining of the truth and superseding of this determination, constitutes the constant everyday life and activity of perceptual intelligence, of the consciousness that thinks it lives and moves in the truth (Ibid).

This process (dialectic, see page 41) continues without halt, till the final result, which is “truth” is reached. Sound common sense carry understanding round in their whirling circle. Understanding tries to give truth either by taking their untruth upon itself or calls their deceptiveness a mere appearance due to the uncertainty and unreliability of things. It also separates the essential from an element, which is necessary for them, yet is to be unessential, holding the former to be their truth as against the latter. At this stage, understanding does not secure them their truth, but convicts itself of untruth. This leads understanding to start through the dialectic movement again.

### **2.1,3 Perpetual Consciousness and Scientific Understanding**

Consciousness, through sense-experience and perception, has established self-existence (*Fursichseyn*). This unconditioned element (self-existence) or universal is the true object of consciousness. Consciousness has not yet grasped its principle or notion, *qua* notion. Although self-existence, from its relation to ‘an other’ back into itself, has become inherently and implicitly (*ansich*) a notion. This object arises through the process of consciousness in such a way that consciousness is implicated and involved in the development of the object and the reflection is same on both sides. In this movement, consciousness has the object entity as its content not consciousness. The result has to be given an objective significance for consciousness.

On the other hand, understanding pursues its own nature by itself, so that consciousness has no share in its process of free realization but merely looks on and apprehends that realization as a naked fact. With the proper analysis, we step into its place and be the notion, which works up into shape what is contained in the result. With the complete formation of the object, which is presented to consciousness as a bare existence fact (*ein seyendes*), mere implicit awareness then becomes itself conceptual consciousness, consciousness comprehension. The result arrived at was the unconditional universal. It has both negative and positive significance. The negative and abstract is that consciousness neglected its one-sided notion and abstracted them. The positive significance is that it established the existence-for-self and existence-for-another. This could be inferred to mean that absolute opposites are immediately posited as one and same reality (Ibid; 181). This is universal content. As Hegel puts it;

...to be in general for-self and to stand in relation to something else constitutes the very nature and meaning of that whose truth lies in being unconditionally universal and the result is through and through universal (Ibid; 182).

The distinction of form and content makes its appearance within it. For content, the moments have aspects in which they are presented as being on one side of universal medium of many substantial elements. On the other, a unit reflected into itself, where their substantial independence is overthrown and done away with. The former dissolves the independence, consists in being something for something else. The latter, in its individual subsistence, is being something on its own account (*Für sich*). The independence of these constituent elements lies in the medium. The universal is simply and entirely the plurality of such diverse universal. Moreover, the universal is in undivided unity with its plurality. The manifold universality is equally independent. The fact is that they are absolutely pervious and porous, that is, they are cancelled and superseded. In other words;

The elements set up as independent pass directly over into their unity and their unity directly into its explicit diversity, and the latter back once again into the reduction to unity. This process is what is called force (Ibid; 183).

It is understanding to which the conception of force belongs. In another way, force is the unconditional universal, which is in itself just what it is for something else, which holds difference within itself. The difference is existence-for-an-other. As a matter of fact, for force to be what it truly is, it has to be completely set free from thought and put forward as the substantial reality of those differences. As such, force as driven back within itself, is in this way by itself an excluding unit. The unfolding of the elements or difference is another thing subsisting separately. Force is also the whole. The differences remain mere forms, superficial vanishing “moments”. Force is the universal medium for the subsistence of the moments as differentiated elements, which are evolved. Is force thrust back into itself? There are two forces present at the same time. The notion of both is no doubt the same notion, but it has passed out of its unity into duality. This is owing to the direction of two quite different forces. The two forces, that is, inciting and incited forces, turn also into one and the same reciprocal interchange of characteristics. The inciting force is set up as universal medium and the incited force as repressed. One is passive and the other active. The contents are distinct, as their form.



In the perception of the movement of force, consciousness becomes aware that their extremes are merely vanishing points. And an immediate transitions each into its opposites. In all, the distinction of content and form could be expressed as; on the side of the form, the active, inciting or independent factor was in its very nature the same as what, from the side of content, was presented as repressed force; force driven back to itself the passive, incited or related factor was from the side of the form the same as what, from the side of content, took shape as universal medium for the many constituent elements (*Ibid*; 188). These two notions of force exist as independent entities but their existence lies in a movement towards each other. Each has in reality to get its position purely through the other. Their being has purely the significance of disappearance. The notion of force maintains itself as the essence in its very actuality. Actual force exists wholly and only in its expression, which is a process of canceling itself. Force exists merely as object for understanding. To understand the time being of things, understanding and the inner of things is being mediated by the explicitly evolved being of force, which is now henceforth a vanishing process for understanding itself. Hence it is called Appearance (*Erscheinung*). Appearance is a totality of seeming (*Schein*). This totality as totality or universal is what makes up the inner world, the play of force in the sense of it reflection into itself (*Ibid*; 190). Within the inner truth, the absolute universal, which has got rid of the opposites between universal and particular and become the object of understanding is a supersensible world, which opens up as the true world, lying beyond the sensuous world, which is the world of appearance. Away from the changing vanishing present (*Diesseits*) lies the permanent beyond (*Jenseits*). This is an immanent inherent reality (*ein Ansch*) which is the first and imperfect manifestation of Reason. This is merely the pure element where the truth finds its abode and its essential being. Our object here has the form of a syllogistic inference (*schluss*), whose extremes are the inner being of things and understanding and its middle term the sphere of appearance.

Consciousness is bare and beyond when it looks at the inner world. This is because consciousness does not, as yet, find itself in it. It is empty but relies on the nothingness of appearance and positively the naked universal to know the inner being. This very case lies in the being beyond consciousness. Thus, getting bound up by this means of the world of appearance

means taking something for truth that is not true. This stops at the phenomenal world. The supersensible or inner world comes to us out of the sphere of appearance and the latter is its mediating agency. That is appearance is its essential nature and its' filling. According to Hegel (Ibid; 193), the supersensible is the established truth of the sensible and perpetual. The truth of the sensible and the perceptual lies in the being of the appearance. The supersensible is then appearance *qua* appearance.

This does not mean that the supersensible is the sensible world, or the world as it is for immediate sense-certainty and perception. Rather appearance is the world as superseded or established in truth as an inner world. That is appearance is thereby meant not appearance but the sensible world taken, as itself, real actuality. The relation of understanding to the inner world, through mediation, is however, its own process, by which the inner world will be found to receive fullness of content. The real truth of understanding is the inner world, while the play of force is what understanding has directly to do in a simple manner. Thus, inciting and incited force on their own, give accounts for an absolute process of permutation and transportation. What is found in this flat of thorough going change is merely difference as universal difference. This universal difference is what constitutes the ultimate simple element in that play of forces and is the resultant truth of that process. It is the Law of force.

Be that as it may, negation is an essential moment of the universal. Negation (or mediation) is what difference is universally. This difference is expressed in the law, which is the stable presentment or pressure of unstable appearances. The supersensible world is, in this way, a quiescent "Kingdom of Law", no doubt, beyond the world of perception. This exhibits the law only through incessant change but present in it, and its direct immovable comply or image. For understanding the truth is in law. The truth finds its content in the distinction, which lies in the law. At the same time, the kingdom of law is only the preliminary truth and does not give all the fullness of the world of appearance. The law has an ever-varying actual existence. When laws coincide, they lose their specific character. It becomes more abstract and superficial. Understanding has found the conception of law itself and it declares all reality to being its very nature conformed to law. The idea of universal attraction (Law) cancels the unthinking way of

representing reality; to which everything appear in the shape of accident and chance. This determinateness takes the form of sensuous independence.

There is need to differentiate between determinate laws from universal attraction or the bare conception of law. The determinate is a mere vanishing moment, which can no longer come forward here as an essential reality (*wesenheit*). The pure conception of law as universal attraction must be absolutely apprehended as simple and single to get its true significance. The distinctions, which are present in Law, again return themselves into the inner being, *qua* bare and simple unity. This unity is the inner “necessity” of Law. This necessity, which is verbal is a rehearsal of the moments, which makes up the cycle of necessity. The distinction is canceled and transcended. This process is called Explanation. Force has the same constitution as law. The distinctions are pure universal expression or Law and pure force. A distinction is certainly made but again superseded. What this shows is that what is self-same is self-repulsive.

The second supersensible world is the inverted world (*verkehrte*). The inner being is, in its character of appearance, completed. The first supersensible world was only the immediate raising of the world of perception into the element of universality. It has its necessary counterpart in this world of perception, which still retains, as its own, the principle of change and alternation. The first kingdom of laws dispenses with this principle but receives it in the form of an inverted world. Expressed in determinate moments, first sweet, the inner invented reality is sour. For example, black/white, north and south poles of magnetic field. This law of standing up against one who does not treat me as a substantial self, showing him that/am a substantial being, and even doing away with him as a reality is transmitted by the principle of the inverted world into the very opposite. This is the reinstatement of myself as the true reality. Through the removal of the alien, hostile being is turned into self-destruction. The punishment, which, by law of the former, disgraces a man, turns around in its inverted world into the pardoning grace, which preserves his being and brings him honour. What should be concerned is the world of perception from the idea of inversion, which constitutes the essential nature of the supersensible world, we must dissociate the sensuous. Idea of keeping distinction substantively fixed in a different

element that sustains them. This absolute notion of distinction must be set forth and apprehended purely as inner distinction, self-repulsion of the 'self – same' as 'self – same' and likeness of the unlike as unlike. This is just flux; opposition within itself. The supersensible world, which is the invented world, has in itself that other. It is to itself conscious of being inverted (*für sich verkehrte*). It is the inverted form of itself, that world itself and its opposite in a single unity. It is in the form of infinity. By means of infinity, law attains the form of inherent necessity so realizing its complete nature and all moments of the sphere of appearance are thereby taken up into the inner realm. It has its antithesis within then and is merely a unity. The absolute notion or the simple and bare infinity may be called the ultimate nature of life, the soul of the world, the universal life-blood, which courses everywhere, and whose flow is neither disturbed nor checked by any obstructing distinction;

...is itself every distinction that arises, as well as that into which all distinctions are dissolved, ever motionless, shaken to its depths, but still rest. It is self-identical, for the distinctions are tautological.... The distinction is merely one moment of the process of disruption. It is the abstraction of simplicity, which stands in contrast with distinction (Ibid; 108 – 209).

Infinitude comes out explicitly and definitely in the inner world, although it has been, from the start, the very soul of all. It is the world of appearance or the play of forces that shows its operation. It is through explanation that it comes openly. Since it is, at length, an object for consciousness and consciousness is aware of it as what it is, consciousness then is in this way self - consciousness (Ibid; 10). Understanding's function of explaining furnishes description of what self-consciousness is. How? By canceling the distinctions in law and putting them inside a single unity, force. Infinitude becomes object of understanding. Thus, consciousness is, for itself and on its own account, distinguishing of what is undistinguished, it is self-consciousness (*Ibid*; 211). This means that consciousness of 'an other', of an object in general, is indeed self-consciousness. Self-consciousness becomes the truth of those attitudes. And this has become as specific reality of its own account (*für sich*). It is not yet in the form of unity with consciousness. Then self –consciousness will have to pass through another sublation ( see page 41 ) to ascertain its truth and certainty.

## 2.2 Truth and the Certainty of Reason

Since individual consciousness is absolute reality, individuality, when completely developed as a concrete mode of consciousness, it turns its self-existence into an objective fact. In this process, it has become aware of its unity with the universal. Its truth lies in the synthesis of the extremes. That is the mediating term in the unity directly aware of both and relating them to one another. Then the consciousness of their unity, which it proclaims to consciousness and thereby to itself, is the certainty and assurance of being all truth. Hegel writes:

From the fact that self-consciousness is Reason, its.... negative attitudes towards otherness turns round into a positive attitude... with its independence and freedom, it has sought to save and keep itself for itself at the expense of the world or its own actuality.... it is certain of its reality, that all concert actuality is nothing else but it (Ibid; 272 – 73).

This means that thought itself is a concrete reality and attitude of reason is that of idealism. That is with the series of dialectics of consciousness, the loss of its truth, and the annihilation of its concrete actuality is done with, the individuality of consciousness is seen to be, in itself, absolute reality. It discovers the world as its own new and real world. It also possesses an interest for it. Thus the subsistence of the world is taken to mean the actual presence of its own truth. And Reason is the conscious certainty of being all reality.

This shows that Hegel's dialectic movement of meaning, perceiving and understanding, is the movement through the independence of consciousness in Lordship and servitude, through the idea of freedom, skeptical detachment and the struggle for absolute liberation on the part of the self-divided consciousness. *Otherness*, is then understood as subjectivity for self-consciousness, and at this stage of the dialectic movement would vanish and two aspects appears;

- (i) one where the essential reality or the truly real had for consciousness, the character of objective existence, and
  - (ii) the other where it had the character of only being (subjectively) for consciousness.
- Both were reduced to one single truth, that which is real and objective for consciousness.

This consciousness comes on the scene directly in the form of reason; this reason appears immediately before us as the certainty of that truth. It merely gives the assurance of being all reality..... This is the process of comprehending what is involved in this simple assertion it makes (Ibid; 274 – 75).

This means that reason appeals to the self-consciousness of each individual consciousness. It is only when reason comes forward as a reflexion from this opposite certainty does its assertion regarding itself appear in the form of only truth. This immediate and direct appearance is the abstract form of its actual presence and the essential nature and inherent reality of which is an absolute notion that is the process of its development. On the way consciousness relates to otherness, thus Hegel wrote; *Consciousness will determine its relation to otherness or its object in various ways, according as it is at one or other stage in the development of the world spirit into self - consciousness...* (Ibid). The first positive character, which self-consciousness is aware of being, is that *Reason is the certainty of being in all reality*, and through a universe, it is the pure abstraction of reality. Ego is the inner essence of existence. And Hegel says;

.....existence and self-consciousness are the same being, the same not as a matter of comparison, but really are truly in and for themselves it is only a one-sided, unsound idealism which lets this unity again appear on one side as consciousness, with a reality per-se over against it on the other (Ibid; 276).

From the arguments above, we have seen that for Hegel, the pure essential being of things, as well as their aspect of difference, belongs to reason. Consciousness as the essential reality, is the whole of this process of passing out of itself simple category into individuality and the object and of viewing this process in the object, canceling it as distinct, appropriating it as its own and declaring itself as this certainty of being all reality of being both itself and its object. Certainty of being in all reality is, to begin with, the pure category. Reason, knowing itself in this sense in its object, is what find expression in abstract empty idealism. It is only in *the unity of apperception is the real truth of knowledge*. This is the very principle of idealism. To discover truth about otherness, consciousness needs a close look and monitoring of ‘the other’. This is called observation. This in turn is one of the ways truth is discovered through reason.

### **2.2,1 Observation as a Process of Reason**

Consciousness takes up the attitude of meaning and perceiving. As we have seen earlier, meaning and perceiving, which formerly were superseded, are now superseded by consciousness in its own behalf. Reason now wants to know the truth, to find in the form of a notion what for

“meaning” and “perceiving”, is a “thing”. This means that it seeks in “thing hood” to have merely the consciousness of its own self. It seeks merely its own infinitude (Ibid; 281). Reason wants to find and to have itself in the form of existent object. That is to be in concrete sensuously-present form. Consciousness also wants to discover the inner being of things in things through observation. Reason takes its reality in the sense of immediacy of being and also takes the unity of ego with this objective existence in the sense of an immediate unity. This unity is such that reason unites the moments of being and ego. That is a unity, which reason has not yet come to understand when appearing as conscious observation; it transforms thought into an existent thought. Also it transforms being into a thought-constituted being. Furthermore, it asserts that things have truth merely as conception thus Hegel explains:

In this process, it is only what the things are that consciousness in observation becomes aware of. We (who are tracing the nature of this experience) become aware of what conscious observation itself is (Ibid; 283).

However, the outcome of this process is that consciousness becomes aware of being to itself what it is in itself and same as it is to us. Consciousness seeks to find itself as a definitely existing concrete actuality. It does this through the various moments of its activity. It takes up this attitude to Nature, Mind and relation of sense-experience. Now for a lucid understanding of idealism in Hegel’s idealism, we shall discuss observation as a tool of reason.

## **2.2,2      Observation of Nature**

Observation and experience could be seen as the fountain of the truth, because of its zeal to really and rationally determine for itself the object sensuously apprehended. Consciousness takes the movement of peculiar to the object to find what is universal in it. Since it is not the stage of understanding, it is the recollection of it. This recollection expresses in a universal way what, in actual fact, is present in a particular form. This superficial way of educating from particularity is called *describing*. When one object is being described, another must be taken in hand and ever sought, so as not to put a stop to the process of description. The demarcation of what is genius and spices pass through many stages into the endless particularization of the chaos of plants and

animals, kinds of rocks, of metals, forms of earth and so on. At this stage, there is an inexhaustible supply of material for observation and description to deal with. Yet, observation has the limitation of nature and its own operation to contend with. It is not about sense-perception. But the notion, the dispersion of sensibility and knowledge, which has to do with its own self as with things? The question arises, whether what is essential and necessary for knowledge is also so in the case of things? On the one hand the qualifying 'marks' serves the purpose of knowledge in distinguishing things while on the other, the features in virtue of which they themselves break away from the general continuity of being as a whole, separate themselves from others and stand by themselves (Ibid; 286). The essential relation of knowledge and essential characteristics of things must be contained in the distinguishing marks. Also, the system of marks device must conform to the system of nature itself and expresses this system. This follows from the very principle and meaning of reason. Where the distinguishing mark is incapable of distinguishing, it confuses knowledge and gives rise to the doubt as whether knowledge is to hold to the one side or the other since the thing has no self-consistency and these two falls aside within it.

In this case of self - sameness of knowledge and of things themselves, the qualifying mark in the general characteristics is the unity of opposite factors. That is of what is determinate and of what is universal. Observation finds the principles overlapping and dominating one another, sees confusion formed and transitions made from one to another. Then it is salient to note that the universality reached is reduced again to unreflective observation and description. Reason pass from the semblance of stability to observe it as it really is in truth. What could be referred to as essential marks are passive characteristics, which do not bring out what constitutes their real nature. This is the vanishing moments of its process of withdrawing and be taking itself into itself. Reason seeks after the Law and the notion of law. Later the aspect of law becomes moments or abstraction, so that the Law comes to light in the nature of the notion, which has destroyed, within itself, the indifference, subsistence of sensuous reality. The observing consciousness finds that the truth of the Law is given in "experience" while sense existence an object for consciousness. The universal in a rational universality is also universal in the sense implied in the notion. The notion set itself forth in the form of 'thinghood' and sensuous



existence. What is universally valid is also universally effective. The instinct of reason is entirely within its right when it stand firm on this point and refuse to be led astray. *For reason is just this certainty of having reality and what consciousness is not aware of a real self what does not appear is nothing for consciousness at all* (Ibid; 289). According to Hegel, when reason does not find necessity in law, it resorts to lowering the truth of the matter to the level of probability. Consciousness finds in experience the objective being of law but has it in the form of notion as well. Thus; *A Law therefore, is accepted as a law because it presents itself in the sphere of appearance and is, at the same time, in its very nature, a notion* (Ibid; 291).

The instinct of reason is to proceed to give Law and its moments a purely conceptual form, without knowing that it is putting law to the test of experiment. The inner purport of this investigation is to find pure conditions of law. It brings out the law in conceptual shape and detaches its moment entirely from determinate specific existences. Example in electricity, we have negative and positive electricity, north and south poles in magnetic field, their acid and bases. The power, which tears them apart, cannot prevent them from entering forthwith into a process. By the very fact of testing the Laws, Reason cancels the merely sensuous existence of the law. When it constructs the moments of the Law as forms of matter, their essential nature is taken to be something universal and specifically expressed as a non-sensuous element of sense an incorporeal, and yet objective existence. The only way nature can be observed is in relation to organic and Inorganic nature. Let us take a look at what Hegel said about organic nature.

### **2.2,3 Observation of Organic Nature**

For a thing to realize completeness of the moments of the motion, it is only along with another and gets lost when it enters the dialectic movement. In the case of organic matter, all determinate characteristic are held under the control of the simple organic unity. What is organic preserves itself in its very relation. But the loosely connected characteristics of organic and inorganic nature in relation to one another are the aspects of law on which instinct of reason directs its observation. This exhibits a degree of poverty, which does no justice to the manifold variety of

organic nature. Laws here cannot carry us further than what is implied. In speaking of the great influence of environment on the organism, such relations of organic beings to the elements they live in cannot be strictly called Laws at all. Hegel says;

The necessity, just because it cannot be conceived to be an inner necessity of the object, ceases also to have a foothold in sense and can no longer be observed in actual reality but has quitted the sphere of reality finding no place in the real object itself .....become a “teleological relation”. External to what is related....the very Reverse of a Law of its constitution (Ibid; 295).

This idea leaves the necessity of nature behind and is detached from the necessity of nature since this does not express its true being, the notion of purpose, contain it. The concept of purpose, which rational observation has reached while reason has apprehended it in consciousness is something actually real and an inner being. Its effect has another meaning that sense-reception finds. This is the way self - consciousness is constituted. The instinct of reason in its search merely finds reason itself. It is, at the same time, self-consciousness. It finds its self through purpose and this purpose in the shape of a thing. In this second place, the purpose here is objective. It is taken not to fall within intelligence. This character lies in the notion of the thing, that of being its purpose. What is organic shows itself when observed to be something self-preserving, returning and returned into itself. Observation makes a distinction between the concept of purpose, self-existence and self-preservation, as Hegel explains: *On this view the special function of the organic is the inner operating activity lying between its first and last stages. So far as this activity implies the character of singleness,.... And universality...* (Ibid; 299). This union of universality and activity is essential for the inner movement of what is organic and can be apprehended conceptually. Observation seeks the moments in the form of existence and duration.

For observing consciousness, an organism comes in two fixed and existing moment;

- (a) As a relation of elements in an opposition
- (b) As regards their content, they express the opposition of the organic concept of purpose and actual reality.

Because of the effaced notion, it takes place in an obscure and superficial way. That is thoughts sink to the level of mere ideal presentation. This gives rise to sense of inner and outer reality. Thus the expression, “the outer is the expression of the inner”. In asking what is the shape and embodiment for inner and outer substance assume in actual existence Hegel answers;

The organic substance qua inner is the soul, the pure notion of purpose or the universal... remains a universal fluent continuity... in its being appears as activity in the movement of vanishing reality... the outer opposed to inner, subsists in the passive being of the organic (Ibid; 302).

The law, as the relation of that inner to outer, expresses its concept by setting forth the realized essential nature or form and shape actually assumed. Those first simple organic properties are sensibility, irritability and reproduction. These moments are directly derived from the notion of self-purpose. Thus, sensibility expresses universal continuity of notion, irritability expresses the condition of being explicitly actualized (a realization) while reproduction is taken in the sense of self-preservation. The significance is that they are embodied in a given shape. That is, sensibility is embodied in the form of a nervous system, irritability of a muscular system, reproduction of an intestinal system for the preservation of the individual and the species.

Law peculiar to organic life concerns a relation of the organic moment with respect to their two fold significance. Thus, of being, in one respect, a part of definite organic formation or embodiment and in another respect, a continuous universal element of a determinate kind running through all those systems, observation is inadequate to perceive these laws because the thought of laws of this sort proves to have no truth. So the idea of law in the case of organic existences slips from our grasp. *This process is direct universality and opens but into different factors, whose relation is the process of law to express. The moments of the process take the form of being universal objects of this mode of consciousness, and the law runs, “the outer is an expression of the inner* (Ibid; 311).

The thoughts of law in this case are being grasped in the shape of a definite and specific content by understanding. Intelligence must take its stand on the fact that organic existence is the reflection into itself. Further, organic existence combines the endless superseding, absolute

negation of existence with inactive passive existence. Thus, the quantitative feature falls solely within the aspect of quantity, as we saw above that is the futile and indeterminate process of dealing with the oppositions of a higher and lower degree of sensibility and irritability as they increase and decrease relatively to one another (Ibid; 314). Strength and weakness is the notion here, more so, the content is made an element of a law. Through the elements of quality, and the principles of distinction, the essential nature retains the character of sense perception. This remains far removed from knowledge (*Erkennen*) when characterized in terms of strength or weakness of force or through immediate sense properties. The inorganic nature cannot constitute the aspect of law besides the organic being, since the organic exist absolutely for itself and assumes a universal and free relation to inorganic nature. Hegel noted that number is the middle term of the organic form, which links indeterminate life with actual concrete life (Ibid; 316). That is, it expresses kinds of life, colour and so on in general as the whole host of differences, which are developed as phenomena of life. Thus, Hegel noted that observation is not enough to know the organic nature. But it leaves the idea of a great influence of the immediate unity of the universe and clever remarks, which do not give knowledge of necessity about the rational.

### **2.3 Self-consciousness as a Social Dialectics**

As we have discussed earlier (see section 2.0, pg, 50), the observation of other minds influence self-consciousness on the way they are relation to each other. Observation of other minds as well, influences the forms of attitude towards consciousness and other consciousness. This imposes a form of social dialectic. The difference is in the first instance, a question of degree of self-assertion and self-maintenance. In such instance, one consciousness is definitively stronger, higher and more independent than the rest of other consciousnesses. This presupposes that the capability of the mind and or consciousness to assert the exposition of the notion of this spiritual unity in its duplication conceded before us with the process of recognition. In this instance, the one that is independent and its essential nature are to be for itself. Whereas the other is dependent and its essence is life or existence for another. This implies that the former is the Master or Lord, the latter is the Bondsman. As we have argued in section 2.0 that this background of Hegel's thought is the remarkable human phenomenon of the subordination of oneself to another, which we have in all forms of servitude, whether slavery, serfdom or voluntary service. Servitude is not

only a phase of human history; it is, in principle, a condition of the development and maintenance of the consciousness of self as a fact of experience. How does this come about? Hegel discussed this in two different ways; the dialectics of Recognition and the Supersession of Master - Slave Relation and the problem of the other, this is the next to discuss.

### **2.3,1 The dialectics of Recognition and the Supersession of Master - Slave Relation**

Hegel writes: The detailed exposition of the notion of this spiritual unity in its duplication will bring before us the process of Recognition (Ibid; 229). From the previous analysis of self-consciousness; *"self-consciousness has before it a self-conscious."* This however brings into limelight the fact that self-consciousness is acknowledged or recognized. This double meaning is in the nature of consciousness and has double significance. Thus, in the first place, it has lost its own self, since it finds itself as *'an other'* being. Second, it has thereby sublated that other, for it does not regard the other as essentially real, but sees its own self in the other (Ibid).

What manifested here are a - double dialectics, and a return of double sense into itself. That is, this process of self-consciousness in relation to self-consciousness has double significance of being at once its own action and the action of that other as well. Each sees the other as doing the same as itself. Action from one side is useless because what is to happen can only be brought about by means of both. Self-consciousness now is the middle term; it breaks up into two extremes. Each extreme is the interchange of its own determinateness, and complete transition into the opposite. It exists for itself and its self-externalization is for consciousness. Consciousness cancels itself as existing for itself and has self - existence of the other (see page 41 of this work). They recognize themselves as mutually recognizing one another. This means that the pure abstraction of existence for self. These two extremes are opposed to one another and of which one is merely recognized while the other only recognizes. They are independent individual forms, modes of consciousness that have not risen above the bare level of life. For the existent object here has been determined as life. The process of bringing all this out involves a two-fold action, that is, (a) action on the part of the other and (b) action on the part of itself. Each aims at the destruction and death of the other. It is self-activity and implies that the relations of

both '*self-consciousnesses*' are constituted in such a way that they prove themselves and each other through a life-and-death struggle. This struggle is necessary because they must bring out their certainty of being themselves to the level of objective truth and make this a fact, both in the case of the other and in their own case as well. This implies that it is solely by risking life that freedom is obtained, that is sheer absorption in the expanse of life. This recognition, Hegel articulated as social dialectics and put it as;

...self-consciousness is merely pure self-existence, being for self. The individual, who has not stated his life, may, no doubt, be recognized as a person. But he has not attained the truth of this recognition as an independent self-consciousness. ...must aim at the death of the other, as it risks its own life. The other reality is presented to the former as an external other...it must cancel externality....it must view its otherness as pure existence for itself or as absolute negation (Ibid; 233).

Hegel further maintains that just as life is the natural '*position*' of consciousness', independence without absolute negativity, so death is the nature of "negation" of consciousness, negation without independence thus remains without the requisite significance of actual recognition. Through this experience, self-consciousness becomes aware that life is as essential to as pure self-consciousness, and a consciousness which is not purely for itself, but for another. That is, as an existent consciousness; consciousness takes the form and shape of '*thinghood*'. They stand as two opposed forms or modes of consciousness. The one is independent and its essential nature is to be for itself, the other is dependent and its assistance is life or existence for another. The former is the master, or lord and then the latter is the Bondsman (Ibid; 234).

The master is the consciousness that exists for itself. Not only that, it is a consciousness existing on its own account, which is mediated with itself through '*an other*' consciousness. This implies that '*an other*' is bound up with an independent being or with '*thinghood*' in general, while the master brings himself into relation to both these moments and objects of desire and to the consciousness whose essential character is '*thinghood*' (Ibid; 236). The master is the notion of self-consciousness, an immediate relation of self, which is for itself only through the other. The master stands in relation immediately to both and mediates to each through '*an other*'. The bondsman is in chain because the master relates himself and to the bondsman immediately through independent existence, this keeps the bondsman in thrall. The bondsman cannot get

away in the struggle. For this reason, he proves himself to be dependent, and to have his independence in the shape of *thinghood*. Hegel explained;

The master is the power controlling this state of existence, for he has shown in the struggle that he is the power dominating existence. While this existence is the power controlling the other [the bondsman], the master holds this other in subordination (Ibid; 235).

The master gets the enjoyment which mere desire did not attain, because of the independence of the thing. The master interposed the bondsman between it and himself. He relates himself to the dependence of the thing and enjoys it without qualification and without reserve. The aspects of its independence he leaves to the bondsman, who labours upon it, and affirms itself as unessential and by being dependent on a determinate existence. The bondsman exists for unessential activity, for he is the negative power without qualification. The master gets his recognition through 'an other' consciousness. We have seen that *for recognition proper, there is needed the moment that what the master does to the other, he should also do to himself, and what the bondsman does to himself, he should do to the other also* (Ibid; 236).

On this account, a form of recognition has arisen that is one-sided and unequal. The truth of the independent consciousness is accordingly the consciousness of the bondsman. The master's achieved Lordship is a dependent consciousness. The master is not assured of self-existence. He finds that his truth is rather the unessential consciousness and the fortuitous unessential action of that consciousness.

Bondage is only in relation to Lordship. That is, the master is taken to be the essential reality for the state of bondage. Bondage contains within itself, this truth of pure negativity and self-existence because it has experienced this reality within it. Thus ...this complete perturbation of its entire substance and this absolute dissolution of all its stability into fluent continuity is however, the simple ultimate nature of self-consciousness. Absolute negativity pure self-referent existence, which consequently is involved in this type of consciousness... This bondsman's consciousness is not only this total dissolution in a general way, in serving and toiling, the bondsman actually carries this out. By serving, he cancels in every particular aspect his dependence on and attachment to natural existence and by his work, removes this existence away (Ibid; 237 – 238).

Consciousness is not therein aware of being self-existent. The feeling of absolute power realized in general and in form of service is only dissolution implicitly. Through work and labour,

consciousness of the bondsman comes to itself. Satisfaction here is only a state of evanescence, for it lacks objectivity or subsistence. The objective negative element is precisely the external reality although, it cancels it and sets itself up as a negative in the element of performance.

However, the bondsman feels self-existence to be something external, an objective fact. In fear, self-existence is present within himself... self-existence comes to be explicitly as his own proper being and he attains the consciousness that he himself exists in its own right and on its own account (au und öür sich)... his pure self-existence ....becomes truly realized (Ibid; 239).

### **2.3,2 Hegel and the Problem of the Other**

From the above analysis, object with what it presents; that is, being in sense-certainty, a concrete thing in perception, or force in the case of understanding; turns out, not to be the same in truth. That is the inherent nature (*Ansich*) proves to be a way in which it is for another. However, the abstract conception of the object gives way before the actual concrete object. This means that the first immediate idea is cancelled in the course of experience. That is certainty vanishes in the course of truth. The truth for consciousness is consciousness itself. Certainty is, to itself, its own object while consciousness is, to itself, the truth. Otherness exists also. Movement of knowledge here could be seen as conception while knowledge as simple unity or ego. But the object corresponds to the conception “in-itself” and being “for an other” is distinguished here. The inherent being is consciousness and it is for consciousness that the inherent nature (*Ansich*) of the object, and its “being for an-other” are one and the same. Ego is the content of the relation and it is the process of relating. Thus, it is the Ego itself, which is opposed to ‘an other’ and, at the same time, reaches out beyond this other, which other is all the same taken to be only itself (Ibid; 219).

Self - consciousness is reflection out of the bare being that belongs to the world of sense-perception and is essentially the return out of otherness. Self-consciousness is movement but when it distinguishes only itself as such from itself. Distinction is taken to be superseded in the sense of involving otherness. Distinction is not, and self-consciousness is only motionless tautology. Ego is Ego, I am I when for self-consciousness the distinction does not also have the



shape of being, it is not self-consciousness. For self-consciousness then, otherness is a fact. It does not exist as a distinct moment. The unity of itself with this difference is also a fact for self-consciousness and is a second distinct moment. With the first moment, self - consciousness occupies the position of consciousness and the whole expanse of the world of sense is conserved as its related object but at the same time, only as related to the second moment, the unity of self-consciousness itself. Self-consciousness regards sensible world as having a subsistence, which is only appearance and its truth finds its real essence only in the truth (the unity of self-consciousness with itself). The unity must become essential to self-consciousness. That is self-consciousness is the state of desire in general. Consciousness and self-consciousness have a twofold object;

- [a] The immediate object of self-certainty and perception (which is marked by negation).
- [b] Itself, this, is the time essence, and is found in opposition of the first object to it.

Self-consciousness presents itself as a process in which this opposition is removed and oneness or identity with itself established through reflection into self, on both sides, the object has become life. The object of immediate desire is something living. The inherent reality (*Ansich*) is the unity of what is distinguished unity as recoil from itself, could be seen from two perspectives (a) Self-consciousness (the unity for which the absolute unity of differences exists). (b) Life [is only this unity itself so that the unity is not, at the same time, for itself). This is the independence possessed by consciousness. This is the determination of the principle of life. The essential element (*wesen*) is infinitude as the suppression of all distinction.

Life in the universal fluid medium is silently shaping and molding and distributing the forms or passes into life *qua* process. This mere universal fluity is here the inherent being. The outer being the 'other', is the distinction of the forms assumed. But this flux, this fluent condition, becomes itself the other in virtue of this very distinction. This is because it now exists 'for' or in relation to that distinction, which is self-conditioned and self-contained (*an und für sich*) (Ibid; 223). Consequently is the endless, infinite movement by which that stable medium is consumed, is life

as living. The individuality is consumed as the essential reality since the essence of the individual for universal life, and the self-existent entity *per se* are simple substance, the essence, by putting the other within itself, cancels this its own simplicity or its own essence. This disruption of fluent undifferentiated continuity is just the setting up, the affirmation of individuality thus;

The simple substance of life therefore is the diremption of itself into shapes and forms, and at the same time, the dissolution of these substantial differences and the resolution of this diremption is just as much a process of diremption, of articulating. Thus, both sides of the entire movement collapse into one another (Ibid).

Consciousness as unity is genus and essential reality. Ego is its object. The simple ego is this genus or the bare universal. Self-consciousness is Desire. Convinced of nothingness of the other, it definitely affirms this nothingness to be for itself the truth of this 'other' negates the independent object and thereby acquires the certainty of its own self, as true certainty. In this case, it is a certainty which it has become aware of in the objective form. At this stage, it has experienced the independence of the object. The object conditioned the desire and certainty it obtained by itself. Since certainty exists through canceling, for canceling to occur, there must be this other. Self-consciousness is unable, by its negative relation to the object, to abolish it. Because of that relation it rather produces it again, as well as the desire. The object desired is something other than self-consciousness. The essence of desire, and through this experience, this truth has become realized (Ibid; 225). At this stage, self-consciousness is absolutely for itself, exists on its own account, it is the truth. Self-consciousness attains its satisfaction only in another self-consciousness. A self - consciousness has before it a self-consciousness. When a self-consciousness is the object, the object is just as much ego as object. With this, the notion of the *mind or spirit* is bared. This is how consciousness first finds in self-consciousness, the notion of the mind, which is its turning point, from the parti-coloured show of the sensuous immediate, passes from the dark void of the transcendent and remote super-sensuous and seeps into the spiritual, Self-consciousness and its relations to external reality (logical and psychological laws).

Observation can be directed upon self-consciousness towards the process of mind in two ways. First the mind's thinking in relation to reality. This gives rise to a number of laws, which it

frames. These laws are the “laws of thought” or connected to logical laws. Second, the mind is active and stands in biotic relation to reality. Thus we have laws of psychic events “psychological” laws. The laws of thought are the abstract movement of the negative, a movement entirely introverted into simplicity and the laws are outside reality. They are formal truth and laws of pure thought. According to Hegel;

*This absolute truth of fixed characteristics or of a plurality of different laws, contradicts the unity of self-consciousness, contradicts the unity of through and form in general. What is declared to be fixed and inherently constant law can be merely a moment of the self-referring, self-reflecting unity, can come on the scene merely as a vanishing element (Ibid; 330).*

Hegel pointed out that these laws have content but lack form which is their essential nature. They are not the truth of thought. But in their true nature as vanishing moments in the unity of thoughts, they would have to be taken in knowledge or as thinking process, but not the laws of thought and knowledge. Observation does not know knowledge itself. What it simply does is to convert its nature into the shape of an objective being, thus apprehends its negative character merely as laws of being. In active practical reality of consciousness, observation opened up a new field. Psychology contains the collection of laws in virtue of which the mind takes up different attitudes towards the different forms of its reality given and presented to it in a condition of otherness, with a view to knowing its own spontaneous activity in opposition to them. Then, it makes what is objective conform to itself. Thus observational psychology states *what observation finds regarding the general forms brought to its notice in the active consciousness, discovers all sorts of faculties, indignations and passions... the remembrance of the unity of self-consciousness is not suppressed... (Ibid; 332).*

Observation keeps to universal aspect is relating to various faculties. Thus the unity of these multifarious capacities is the opposite aspect of this universality, which is the actual concrete individuality. The essential nature of individuality lies in the universal element in mind. Circumstances, situations, customs and so on, which show themselves on one side as something given and on the other side as within this specific individuality, reveal merely indeterminate nature of individuality, which is not the point of consideration. Hegel opined that *if these circumstances, style of thought, customs, the whole state of the world, had not been,... the*

*individual would not have been what he is, for all the elements that find a place in this “state of the world” constitute this universal substance (Ibid; 354).* Thus Hegel concludes;

Individuality is what its world, in the sense of its world, is.... Is simply and solely a unity of what is given and what is constructed.... there is no necessity to be found between them; and no law of their relation to one another (Ibid; 336).

The world of individual should be understood from the individual himself and the influence of reality upon the individual. Hegel argued that in consequence of this, “psychological necessity” becomes an empty phrase, so empty that there is the absolute possibility that what is said to have this influence could equally well not have had it. Thus the necessity of reason becomes inevitable for human freedom, development and one’s self assertion.

## **2.4 Reason as Progress towards consciousness of Freedom**

### **2.4,1 Hegel on the Manifestation of Reason in History**

Hegel insists on the historical situatedness of each individual consciousness as a particular moment within the total progression of all history towards the final goal. The shifting fusion of these ideas provides the foundation for both the strengths and the problems of historicism. Historicism started from Herder’s account in attempting to do justice to objective history in its discontinuity and uniqueness. And Hegel work on history is an attempt to determine general patterns of historical change. One can see that historicism, can perhaps be best termed a Hegelian philosophy of history without an alien compassing notion of progress. Hegel’s analysis of history is to show how reason has manifested itself in the historical quest for freedom from stage to stage. Hegel believed that history is transcendental or a priori in the sense that it is reason, which determines historical progression. Hegel saw that to give history lucidity is by studying the three methods of writing history. The three methods are:

a. Original history according to Hegel explains authentic individuals that marked world history in one generation or the other, for example, Julius Caesar, Hitler, Gaddafi, Thucydides among others. These individuals are the actions, events and conditions, which history carries along. In other words, they are the heroes or legends that historical data records. These heroes have transformed perceptual material reality into mental. They have been observed as a more

solid foundation for history than the transience of myths, epics, and folk songs. These heroes are people who knew who they were and what they wanted. Once they have reached firm individuality such forms cease to be its historical essences (Hegel, 1953: 4). The original historian transforms the laws, events, actions and situations into thought, a mental reality. That is, the work of this historian is to illuminate history bringing his knowledge of the idea, the formal articulation of reason, to bear upon it, striving to elevate empirical contents to ranking truth. In the sense that these men expressed the maxims of their people, their personality the consciousness of their political situation, the principles of their moral and spiritual nature, their aims and actions (Ibid; 5).

The reflective history, as a second way of writing history, is more organized than the original history. The historian requires covering broader scopes and therefore the historian needs to transcend in imagination and comprehension in order to capture the past. Several kinds of reflective history include:

- i. Universal history
- ii. Pragmatic history
- iii. Critical history
- iv. Fragmentary history

Reflective universal history is the elaboration of the history of a particular nation or people. Its purpose is to give the totality of the history of a people or nation. For example the history of Igbo people, the history of Nigeria. Hegel says “universal history achieves this with his spirit (which is different from the spirit of the material (Ibid; 6). Hegel cites Livy on Diodorus of Sicilly and Muller’s history of Switzerland as examples of good works on world history. The writer presents the history with his own principles and perspectives, which is different from the time he is writing. In Hegel’s words;

The spirit that speaks out of the writer is quite different from that of the time he describes... (Ibid; 6) A history of this kind...must give up the individual presentation of reality and abridge itself by means of abstraction, not only in the sense of learning out events and actions, but also in

the sense of making thought itself the mightiest epitomist... (Ibid; 7). When history is about universal idea, moral reflection, moral enlightenment, lesson learnt is pragmatic. This means that the old history has been superseded or overcome by the present in order to bring out the enlightenment spirit, impress moral virtues, the destiny of peoples and nations, their interest conditions and complicated affairs. This pragmatic reflective history offers raw materials (Ibid; 9). The critical reflective history Hegel describes as; ... not history itself..., but rather history of historiography: evaluation of historical narratives and examination of their truth and trustworthiness. The outstanding feature... consists in the acuteness of the author who wrests result from narration rather than from events (Ibid; 9).

Critical history is needed to purge history of unhistorical monstrosities of pure imagination. It also helps us to gain accuracy and actuality from history thus, presenting history with the most definite facts. However, fragmentary history being the last kind of reflective history forms the transition to philosophical world history. Here, the people's history in other branches of reflective history appears as purely accidental peculiarities of people (Ibid; 9). This brings us to the third type of history which is the philosophical. Hegel saw philosophy of history as the thoughtful contemplation of history (Ibid; 10). Thinking serves as guide to historians, but is subordinate to the idea of reality in history. Hegel moves to clarify the concept of philosophical history, its nature, substance and scope since it brings out the transcendental and metaphysical account of history to explain this with the idea of reason.

#### **2.4,2 Reason as the Basis of Freedom**

Hegel saw reason as the guide to all human actions. Every human action such as sensation, cognition, intellection, in our instincts and violation provided we are human, are there is an element of thinking. Hegel insists that "the sole thought, which philosophy brings to the treatment of history is the simple concept of reason: that reason is the law of the world, and that, therefore in world history, things have come about rationally" (Ibid; 11). History is not by chance but there is reason for history, the world of intelligence and self-consciousness manifests itself in the light of rational idea. Hegel believed that only the study of world history itself can

show that it has proceeded rationally, meaning that rationality is the necessary course of the world spirit, and history is the result obtained, though it proceeds historically and empirically.

To understand the fact that reason has ruled in world history, and not intelligence nor a spirit, Hegel cites two examples. The first was the Greek; especially Anaxagoras who saw that reason rules the world, although did not apply it. The nature is ruled by principles and universal unchangeable laws. The second example is the historical connection that reason ruled the world with another form of it, well known to us, that of religious truth: that the world is not abandoned to chance and external accident but controlled by providence. For Hegel, the divine providence that proceeds over the events of the world corresponds to our principle, the divine providence is wisdom endowed with infinite power, which realizes its own aims, that is the absolute, rational, final purpose of the world. Reason is thought determining itself in absolute freedom (Ibid; 15). The passions of men, their genius and their active power are explained by history. Therefore 'the rich product of creative reason is world history'. What is needed is an adequate definition of reason.

### **2.4,3 The Phenomenology of Freedom**

Freedom is an internal idea that works with external phenomena, which in history presents themselves directly before our eyes. The main efficient cause of history includes needs, passions, interests, character (expresses uniqueness of will and intelligence talents, private aims and the overall satisfaction of selfish desires). All these spring out the actions of men. We feel their impact and actions when they live above the limitations, which self-restraint, law and morality impose on the human will. These events above might not be pleasurable and gloomy emotionally but are the only way, for realizing the essential destiny, the absolute and the final purpose or the true result of world history. That means that history might not be a happy experience but Hegel describes history as the slaughter-bench at which the happiness of peoples, the wisdom of states and the virtue of individuals have been sacrificed ... (Ibid; 27).

There are elements of historical investigation. They are (i) the idea (the warp) and (ii) the complex of human passions (the woof of the vast tape of world history). The idea of freedom is the essence of the spirit. And man is supposed to have passions (which might be more or less evil). But the contact and concrete union of the two constitutes moral liberty of the state.

The complex of human passions is the historian embodiment of an aim. World history begins its general aim (to realize the idea of spirit) only in an implicit form, as nature as an innermost unconscious instinct. This shows that the vast congeries of volition, interest, and return constitute the tools and means of the world spirit for attaining its purpose, bringing it to consciousness and realizing it. By this, Hegel put forth his hypothesis namely;

That reason governs the world and has consequently governed its history, .. Reason ...is universal in and for itself, all else is subordinate, subservient, and the means for its actualization... reason is imminent in historical existence and reaches its perfection in and through this existence (Ibid; 31).

However, the dialectics of freedom (interest contained in men violation) and necessity (immanent development of the spirit) bring about history. It could be explained that the universal must be actualized in the particular. The human actions in history produce above results beyond their immediate purpose and attainment; beyond their immediate desire and knowledge. The passions of men satisfy themselves, they develop themselves and their purposes in accordance with their natural destination and produce the edifice of human society (Ibid; 35).

This shows that their purposes are interwoven with general and essential consideration of law, the good, and duty and so on. The position of an individual in history is important. The individual(s) tries to preserve the ethical life of the people. The state is declined when the national spirit is broken and exhausted itself. This becomes historical fact; they involve a universal order different from that upon which depends the permanence of a people or a state. The individual(s) involved, Hegel says, the historical men, world-historical individuals, are those who grasp such as higher universal, make it their own purpose, and realize this purpose in accordance with the higher law of the spirit (Ibid; 39) are called *heroes*(Ibid; 40). The heroes are fortunate in being the agents of a purpose, which constitutes a step in the proper of universal spirit. Their laws are practical and political men are opposed by the valent (environ, enemies).

More so, in the course of the realization of the spirit, some individual(s) in their purpose, and gratification and happiness were abandoned and scarified as a result of the *cunning of reason*.



They became the object history. These individuals (particular) exhaust themselves in the struggle, and part of which is destroyed. Thus, the individual in history fall under four categories, the hero, master or person, the citizen and the victim. The master represents the sage, the philosopher or the religious messiah who brings about change through a non-violent means; he leaves a lasting impression on a collective psyche of the people. The citizen is from the earth. The victims are the down-trodden of history.

Furthermore, the state is the realization of the idea, the state as the essential being is the union of the subject with the rational will. In the words of Hegel...*it is that actuality in which the individual has and enjoys his freedom but only as knowing believing and willing the universal.* (Ibid; 49) The state is the moral whole and the justification and meant of hews who have founded states no matter how crude. In world history only those that come from state are recognized. The universal idea manifests itself in the state. The state is the definite object of world history but freedom achieves its objectivity in law. It is only in the constitution that the abstract entity of the state assumes life and reality. The constitution is an internal development of history. It is important because of the internal development of the rational.

Rationality brings religion, morality and ethics to play in world history. Isolated individual or misfortune cannot be the essential elements in the rational order of the universal. With more reasons than passion, happiness and the like and pretensions under struggle of passions and subjective interest, reason validates under absolute ends (as in a fight for justice, liberty, reason). Hegel in Theodicy, saw philosophy as a lead to the truly good, the universal divine reason and the power capable of actualizing itself. "Reason, in its most concrete representation, is God. God governs the world" (Ibid; 47). Philosophy tries to comprehend God's plan and government in the history of the world.

#### **2.4,4 Freedom as the Course of World History**

For Hegel, it is only change in the spirit that creates something novel. The change in nature shows only a cycle of constant repetition. However, historical change is a progress towards perfection. The principle of development is the presupposed potentiality (an inner principle) which brings itself into existence. Its formal determination is essentially the spirit whose scene, property and sphere of realization is world's history. It is absolutely determined and firm. Hegel wrote;

...with spirit, the transmission of its potentiality into actuality is mediated through consciousness and will. These are themselves first immersed in their immediate organic life, their first object and purpose is this natural existence..., later, through it animation by spirit becomes itself, infinitely demanding, rich and strong. Thus, spirit is at war with itself. It must overcome itself as its own enemy and formidable obstacle. Development... is in spirit and hand, infinite struggle against itself. What spirit wants is to attain its own concept (Ibid; 69, also Hegel, 1956:78).

Therefore, historical development is a product of a determined content. It is then the spirit in its essences, the concept of freedom. This is the fundamental object and the leading principle of development. World history represents the phases in the development of the principle whose content is the consciousness of freedom. Hegel spells out the three fundamental principles of the universal process. First is the immersion of spirit in natural life (incomplete and partial). Second is its stepping out into the consciousness of freedom. Third is the rising out of this still particular form of freedom into pure universality of freedom (Ibid; 70-71). Thus the history of the spirit is understood in terms of concept of freedom.

World history has its origin in the knowledge of God (biblical) (Hegel, 1984: 368-69) and or in scientific notions especially the astronomical knowledge from the Hindu. Hegel's opinion is that, from these beginnings, history had been perverted and degenerated, although they are subjective, arbitrary assumption which cannot have any historical justification in the light of true concept of history. Therefore, investigations from philosophy can or ought to take the study of history where reasons begin to assume worldly existence, where consciousness, will and action appear (Ibid; 74).

History combines in our language the objective as well as the subjective sides. History includes both events and narration of events. Where such records are lacking, they never could have

existed, not because they have accidentally disappeared during those long ages. For example the *Mnemosyne*, which was seen by Indians as a condition of the formation of history, yet it has no history. Hegel explains the periods without history as:

The periods, whether we suppose them to be centuries or millennia, which people have passed before the writing of history, may have been filled with revolutions, Migration the widest transformation. Yet they are without objective history, because they lack subjective history, records of history. Such records are lacking... because they never could have existed (Ibid; 76).

Hegel recognized the state as the only center with consciousness of law, clear action are enough to make record keeping possible and desired. Whereby there was no history in spite of the presence of a highly elaborate language spoken, it means that historical existence has not been attained. They do not partake in the true element of history. Hegel saw languages as the work of theoretical intelligence. In the true sense, it is historical external expression (Ibid; 78). The growth of language allows the progress and dispersion of nations. This is significant and of interest, for concrete reason, in the information of autonomous state. The principle of a people and the dialectic of the national principles bring about development. The principle of a people is a particular national spirit expressing concretely all the aspects of its will and consciousness, its whole reality. The principle defines the common feature of its politics, religion, morality, and its system of law, its mores, even its scenery, art and technical skill. World history is the development of the spirit in time just as nature is the development of the idea in space (Hegel, 1956: 19 – 20).

## **2.5 Freedom as the Truth of Spirit and the Engine of History**

History goes within the realm of the spirit. The spirit and the course of its development is the substance of history. Nature cannot be understood as rational system in itself except in relation to the spirit. The point where spirit and nature unite is the human nature. The essence of spirit is freedom. In speculative philosophy, freedom is the sole truth of spirit. According to Hegel, “spirit is that which has it centres in itself... it found its unity in itself and with itself... spirit is being within itself (self-contained existence). This is freedom... This self -contained existence of spirit is self-consciousness, consciousness of self” (Ibid; 23). An abstract explanation of the spirit

could be seen in consciousness, first that I know, and second what I know. To be self-conscious means the collusion of the two. Therefore, world history is the exhibition of spirit striving to attain knowledge of its own nature.

Freedom of the spirit is the very essence of man's nature. This realization Hegel notes is first aware in religion, but to introduce it to the secular world was a further task, which could only be solved and fulfilled by a long effort of civilization. (Ibid; 24) World history is the progress of the consciousness of freedom. The spirit is conscious of its freedom, but the actualization of this freedom as the final purpose of the world is what Hegel has set to investigate. Freedom is itself its own object of attainment and the sole purpose of spirit. It is the ultimate purpose toward which all world history has continually aimed. "Freedom" in Hegel's words "alone is the purpose which realizes and fulfills itself, the only enduring pole in the change of events and conditions, the only truly efficient principle that pervades the whole". This final aim is God's purpose with the world..."

## **2.6 The State, Ethical Consciousness and the Question of Freedom**

Hegel, having considered action as a fundamental principle of distinction between individuals, feels it is also the way they contribute to social life. It is also the way by which the continual of social life is constantly broken and reconstituted. Action is also considered with reference to the concepts of social order as contained in divine and human law. Nature assigns one sex to one law and the other to another law. The ethical consciousness includes character, because it consists of this immediate directness of decision. Hegel finds only the human law (man) involved in government. The divine law (woman) is to be with its sphere. Hegel says that which belongs to divine law dictates mere arbitrary fortuitous human violence, while obstinacy and disobedience of subjective self-sufficiency belongs to human law. It is easy to say that Hegel is influenced by the idea of the Greek city state, by going through his account of the state. He left the idea of the state only to the realm of human life (man). He even considers the universality of the ethical order to be in the same sex while leaving the other subjected to maintain the divine law. In his words;

The commands of government have a universal sense and meaning open to the light of day,... the will of the other law is the inner concealed meaning of the realm of darkness... in contradicting the first is malicious offence.

What is called the hidden divine law in the realm of ethical life has to come out of concealment to the light of actuality. That is, the individual has now a significance of a person, when he leaves divine law to human law. Hegel notes that these powers are forms of the ethical destiny. He says destiny is nothing else than the Ego of self-consciousness. Personality is another important aspect of ethical substance. "It is the condition in which the independence of consciousness has actual concrete reality" (Ibid; 502). That is, personality becomes the outgrowth of the immediate life of spirit, which is the universal controlling will of all, as well as their dutiful obedience and submissive service. Stoicism becomes the explicit concrete world. Hegel says;

Stoicism is the mode of consciousness, which reduces to its abstract form principle of legal status, the principle of the sphere of right, and independence devoid of the qualities of spirit (*geistlos*) (Ibid; 502).

The 'right' of a 'person' is nothing else but unit of its abstract reality (self-consciousness in general). To describe an individual as a person is to use an expression of contempt, since they are alien and devoid of the life of spirit. The process by which the free and unchecked power possessed by the content takes determinate shape in this way; dialectically, he is the person, but the solitary single person who has taken his stand confronting all these constitutes and establishes the triumphant universality of the one person, for the single being as such. The inherent substantial reality is the universal power and absolute actuality. This "Lord and master of the world" takes himself in this way to be the absolute person, comprising, at the same time, all existence within himself, for whom? There exists no higher type of spirit" (Ibid; 504). This explains why a single and solitary self is powerless and unreal self when cut off from this plurality. It is the consciousness of the content, which is antithetically opposed to that universal personality. Hegel says this master and Lord of the world, aware of his being the sum and substance of all actual power, is the titanic self-consciousness, which takes itself to be the living God.

The Lord of the world realizes what he is through the universal might of actuality by the power of destruction, which he exercises against the contrasted selfhood of his subjects. He destroys this very personality itself. Judicial personality funds itself without any substance of its own. On the other hand, the passion for destroying and turning over everything on this unreal field gains for itself the consciousness of its complete supremacy. This is the constitution of how self-consciousness and absolute being is actualized. The fact that this universally accepted objectivity of self-consciousness is reality estranged from it. The objectivity is the universal actuality of self; also it is directly the perversion of the self, (Loss of its essential being).

As the commands of government have universal sense and meaning, conflict exists between conscious (what is known) and unconscious (what is not known). The absolute right of ethical self-consciousness comes into conflict with the divine right of the essential reality. Whereas self-consciousness and consciousness takes objective actuality, its absolute right when it acts in accordance with ethical law is to find the fulfillment and performance of this law itself, the deed should manifest nothing but ethical action. The ethical is absolute essence and absolute power. Individuality is a pure form of the substance, which is the content and action consists in transition from thought over into reality. According to Hegel (Ibid; 486), “The absolute right of ethical consciousness is therefore that the deed, the mode and form of its realization should be nothing else than it knows”.

Ethical action have a right of double form that is the right of essential reality and self-consciousness is through the act of self-consciousness (that is self to itself), it gives up the character of ethical life, which is being pure and simple certainty of immediate truth. It sets up the division of itself into self as active and reality over and against it, and for it, therefore negative. Hegel says:

By giving up the character of ethical life, thus becomes Guilt. For the deed is itself doing, and doing is its inner most nature. And the guilt acquires also the meaning of crime... turned away from the other and thus, violates the latter by its deed.... Innocence is an attribute of the want of action, a state like the mere being of a stone, and one which is not even true of a child (Ibid; 438).

In ethical life, guilt, crime, deed and action are parts of it, but its contents the laws and customs. This is how ethical consciousness is manifested in the human law. For the divine law, the complete deed is the removal of the opposition between the knowing self and the reality over against it. Ethical consciousness cannot disclaim the crime and its guilt. Ethical consciousness is purer, if it knows beforehand the power and the law it is opposed to, and takes them to be sheer violence and wrong. Antigone, Hegel says, commits the crime. Antigone's performance expresses that what is ethical is actual. The realization of purpose is the very purpose of acting (Ibid; 491). And Hegel sees acting as follows:

Acting expresses precisely the unity of reality and the substance. It expresses the fact that actuality is not an accident for the essential element but that union with that element, it is given to no right, which is not true right. On account of this actuality and on account of the deed ethical consciousness must acknowledge its opposite as its own actuality; it must acknowledge its guilt. This means the return to the ethical frame of mind, which knows that nothing counts but right. His being belongs to the ethical law, and his substance in acknowledging the opposite law. Instead of reality, this has become an unreality a mere sentiment, a frame of mind.

This opposition of ethical powers to one another and the process of the individualities setting up these powers in life and action have reached their time end only in so far as both sides undergo the same destruction. This is, just the struggle between divine and human law. The youth goes forth from the unconscious life of the family and becomes the individuality of the community (Ruler). That is the ethical life of the community is enticed. He can participate and rule in the state. Also the realization of the principle of coherent sociality is reached when the individual is invested with the universality of the social order by definite enactments of controlling the agency of the social whole. The form this takes is the differentiation of the social substance into a totality of persons, each and all invested with express universal or legally acknowledged significance. This is the sphere of legal personality or of individuality constituted by a system of rights. It is a supreme achievement of social existence and the highest attainment of coherent social experience. The unity of each individual falls back into the community. That is the power of and forms of the ethical world sinks in the bare necessity of mere destiny. This is the power of the ethical world that turns substance back to itself into its ultimate and simple nature. This power or destiny Hegel identifies as Ego of self-consciousness (Ibid; 501).

This is absolutely real, as the ultimate self-contained reality. Although it is abstract universality because its content is this rigid self, not the self dissolved in the substance. Out of this self and activities of the ethical substance, personality has arisen. Personality is the condition in which the independence of consciousness has actual concrete validity. Hegel writes that *Personality is the outgrowth of the immediate life of spirit which is the universal controlling will of all, as well as their dutiful obedience and submissive service* (Ibid; 502). In the same way, Hegel linked the “right” of a “person” to abstract reality. Thus; *the formalism of “right” is by its very conception, without special content, it finds at its hand the fact of “possession”, a fact subsisting in multiplicity, and imprints thereon the abstract universality, by which it is called property...* (Ibid; 503).

Right has a positive significance, for the fact that it consists in its being mine in the categorical sense and as something whose validity is admitted, recognized and actual. The content is limited to a particular specific power, which is different from the formal universal. It is personalized, by chance and caprice. Consciousness of right in Hegel’s perspective in the very process of making its claim good, experiences the loss of its own reality, discovers its complete lack of inherent substantiality. This means that to describe an individual as a person is to use an expression of contempt. Hegel noted that the absolute plurality of dispersed atomic personalities is, by the nature of this characteristic feature, gathered at the same time into a single center, alien to them just as devoid of the life of spirit (*geistles*). This plurality takes its self to be the Lord and master of the universe, thus *“the absolute person comprising at the same time all existence within himself, for whom there exists no higher type of spirit...”* (Ibid; 504)....*But this Lord and master of the world is aware of his being, the sum and substance of all actual powers is the titanic self-consciousness, which takes itself to be the living God* (Ibid; 505). The Lord of the world is the universal might of actuality. He has the power to destroy and exercises it against the contrasted selfhood of his subjects. It abolishes what they take to be their very essences. He destroys this very personality itself, even judicial personality. This power for destroying and turning over everything on these unreal fields gains for itself the consciousness of its complete supremacy. This is the self-consciousness of the absolute.



## **2.7 The Significance of Hegel's Idealism**

Hegel's (1801: 908) early writings proclaimed the advent of a master mind of uncommon speculative ability. But then, there was little then to indicate the constructive originality or to suggest the direction in which his mind was to evolve. His lectures to his students disclose the beginnings of a systematic scheme of thought. The study of history and of the history of philosophy in particular transformed the whole conception of the problem of philosophy, as hitherto understood by himself and his contemporaries. Why he is one of the greatest philosophers lies in the fact that he saw the necessity for establishing his own philosophical position, not by the reputation of the philosophical theories of the past, but by incorporating them within his own system. He sought to do so by giving logical continuity to what, in appearance, was mere historical sequence, and by showing that his own distinctive principle of synthesis was at once the presupposition, the outcome and the completion of the theories of his predecessors (Hegel, 1956: 22). Hegel was convinced as no one else, that in order to vindicate his principle completely, it must necessarily contain, within its sway, every fundamental type of experience in which mind has been historically realized. The principle would thus connect together, interpret and explain and would itself be the final result of all experience as historically known.

Hegel's work is unique in the history of philosophy, especially in its plan, its purpose, its method and its manner of execution. The subject in front of the author's mind throughout the argument may be said to be the whole range of human experience as historically realized in different forms and at different stages, more particularly in Western Europe. Movements of human history, which have marked epochs in the development of human race, are treated as typical or permanent embodiments of attitudes of mind or principles in operation in the spirit of man and are discussed in shadowy form through which the historical reality implied is only dimly visible (Ibid; 149 - 213). Traces of experiences, which have each formed, from time to time, the subject of separate analysis by different thinkers are here, regarded by Hegel as fragments of a single system (Ibid; 215 – 267). Types and processes of science lose their self-contentedness and are reduced to phases of the necessary movements of human intelligence (Ibid; 209 – 327). For Hegel, the importance of religion in human experience should not be allowed to obscure the fact that religion is but one necessary act in the drama of human experience (Ibid; 681 – 785). Hegel assigned to philosophy its appointed relative place, thus “but all philosophies are taken to be

aspects of a single mood of mind and the array of philosophical theories constituting the history of philosophy are abbreviated into the central principles, which together involve a single comprehensive truth controlling the minds of individual philosophers even though unknown to themselves” (Ibid; 739 – 808).

The greatest of Hegel’s philosophy lies in the exhaustive nature of an analysis of the life-history of human spirit, so sustained an effort to reduce its varied and involved forms of expression to their simple leading principles and to express these controlling ideas in an orderly, connected system had certainly never before been compressed within the compass of a single treatise. The courage, which made such an effort possible was, no doubt, in large measure due to the state of the intellectual atmosphere at the time when the book was written. Hegel was influenced by the confident aspirations of his contemporaries, yet he saw the necessity for chaining speculative imagination to the solid ground of tried and verifiable experiences. He maintained that the wealth of familiar and accessible truth in science, history and ordinary experience must be at our disposal before philosophy can take, with assurance, the high road of comprehensive systematic knowledge. In this sense, the work is, in large measure, a reaction against the ingenious manipulation of principles in *abstracts*, which characterized the theories of his immediate predecessors before the appearance of the phenomenology in 1807. Hegel differs from other philosophers in nothing more than the care, which he bestowed on the consideration of the place of philosophy in the plan of human experience. In this sense, he reminds us of Plato and Aristotle, rather than any of the modern thinkers. In essence, one might say that his conception of philosophy contains a kind of epitome of his whole system. It is therefore, a little surprise that, though the appearance of the book was hailed with great expectations, the work was received with coldness and dissatisfaction by those who had, up to this point, been Hegel’s teachers and friends.

However, lots of criticisms have been done on the works of Hegel from the first to last. It is apparent that the author was limited by the information available at his time, especially the scientific views prevalent during his day. It could also be that his own selective interest in the materials presented before him intended to lay claim to omniscience. His knowledge of history and more especially the history of philosophy influenced him, that he sufficiently and adequately

reduces this limitations to smaller dimensions. It could be said that the material was regarded as primary and typical of movements of the human spirit. So that errors of facts or details are, for the purpose of the argument, insignificant.

It could be seen that his selection of such materials is governed by his interest in phenomenology, his personal predilections and perhaps the philosophical principles he adopted. One can argue that a selection under such conditions imposes restrictions on the character of the argument of the treatise. This kind of limitation is most times unavoidable, but gives us more help to explain many of the peculiarities, the omissions and the defects of the work. Some have argued that the subjects in this book are treated with fullness and even diffuseness of analysis, which is ultimately out of proportion to the value of what is discussed. The omissions from the treatise are as remarkable as the exaggerated attention devoted to some aspects of experience relative to others. In a work ostensibly dealing with the whole range of human experience, it seems surprising to find no specific discussion of our knowledge of space or of number or of sphere of fact dealt with by chemistry or again, to take another domain of experience remote from these, there is no mention at all of important fine arts, like music or painting. Such omissions are the entire move striking when we bear in mind Hegel's keen appreciation of the value of both pure science and fine art and when we remember that, in his later works, a full and elaborate treatment is given to the subjects just mentioned.

Considering the plan of the treatise as a whole and the method of treatment assigned to the forms of experience brought under reviews an impartial critic is bound to admit that the scheme of work is unbalanced. The discussion of some parts is foreshortened while in other cases; subjects are treated with an elaborateness of details in which the main idea is overborne by the sheer mass of the material used to elucidate it. At times, the writer seems to have become so absorbed with the particular subject in hand that, for the time being, he seems to have lost perspective. In such cases, the author's description of his work as his "voyage of discovery" is rather an explanation than a defense of his procedure. Hegel (1996: 80) himself felt that in many parts, the argument had been over weighted. More so, the last part of the work in particular seems hurried and condensed.

Furthermore, the discussion of religion and absolute knowledge of which Hegel was interested in but could not devote the greatest elaboration. This is because, it is natural to see that the main object of his task is to explain and justify the place of philosophical knowledge in the plan of human experience. Yet, the analysis of “Religion” seems fragmentary and inadequate to the theme while the statement of “Absolute knowledge” is brief and elliptical to the verge of obscurity. This is in striking contrast to the long and carefully wrought argument dealing with the sphere of moral and social experience, which immediately precedes the section on religion. The defect certainly demands some explanation and this seems to be found in the circumstances under which this last part of the treatise was written. In a letter to Schillings, in which Hegel promises to send him a copy of the book, (Audi, 1987: 313, also Hegel, 1996: 27 – 29), Hegel asks indulgence for the unsatisfactory character of the last parts of the work and says by way of explanation that “the composition of the book was concluded at midnight before the battle of Jena”. Be that as it may, these defects, avoidable and unavoidable, to which reference has been made, do not seriously impair the monumental greatness of the work. No man can escape from the limitations of his own individuality and we cannot expect that this work, as we shall see is so closely to concern with history, should be unaffected by the conditions under which historical phenomena exist.

Furthermore, concerning Hegel’s notion of history, we must acknowledge that Hegel himself made a substantial contribution to philosophy of history and historical studies in general. He was one of the first to write history of philosophy and his work had a powerful influence on his successors. Moreover, Hegel maintained throughout his writings, a sense of impatience of the past for the understanding of the present. In Hegel’s writing, philosophy and history met. He was an outstanding philosopher of history as well as a historian of philosophy. Hegel decisively changed history. Ernest Cassirer remarks, “*No other philosophical system has exerted such a strong and enduring influence upon political life as the metaphysics of Hegel... There has resisted its influence*” (Cassirer, 1946; 248). The influences of Hegel is seen on all recent ideologies.

Hegel presented his philosophical ideas as an expression of the absolute and how the absolute entered into human history. He placed his intellectual idea above the historical struggle of man. This idea has remained untouched by struggles of human passions, which actualize it. This means that it contains a nucleus of truth. Hegel played a decisive role, which includes the triumph of romanticism in philosophy and politics and that of intellectualism. It is possible to agree with the editor, Tantomian that:

The influence of his philosophy confirms his thesis that universal reason, through men, shapes history. The fate his philosophy bears witness to its dialectic form. To most rational and religious philosophers, Hegel unchanged the most irrational and irreligious movements, fascism and communism (Ibid; xi).

The power of Hegel's philosophy is in its form rather than its content. Its method, dialectics, drove Hegel forward and gave the contents of his philosophy an encyclopedic width. Hegel elaborated his dialectic method and applied it to the totality of the world. Some thinkers accepted the content of his philosophy and opposed its form. They were the conservatives and became the Hegelians of the right. Other thinkers accepted the form of his philosophy and opposed its content. They became revolutionaries and Hegelians of the left. Marx was greatly influenced by Hegel. So many Anglo-American thinkers found Hegel so fascinating and worthy of careful study. Dewey (1960), Peirce, William James was also influenced by Hegel's philosophy. James claims that Hegel was "*a naively observant man, who plains himself in the empirical flux of things and gets the impression of what happens* (James: 1971, 123). He extols Hegel for his keen awareness of the quality of the world as alive and involving a dialectic movement in things. More so, Michel Foucault (1971) wrote:

Truly to escape Hegel involves an exact appreciation of the price we have to pay to detach ourselves from him. It assumes that we are aware of the extent to which Hegel, in studiously perhaps, is close to us, it implies knowledge, in that which permits us to think against Hegel, of that which remains Hegelian. We have to determine the extent to which our anti Hegelianism is possibly one of his tricks directed against us, at the end of which he stands, motionless, waiting for us.

Many French philosophers such as David Carroll observe that for Jean-Francois Lyotard, the central problem is still as it has been since at least Nietzsche, is how to escape from or exceed the recuperating powers of the dialectics. Carroll notes that there is critical philosophy in France in the last twenty years; this is especially true of Foucault, Deleuze, Derrida, as well as Lyotard. The political implications of all their works could be argued to be directly rooted in their critique

of the Hegelian and Marxist dialectics. Whether we are Neo-Hegelians, Anti-Hegel, Post-Hegel, Hegelians of left or right, the fact remains that we cannot escape from Hegel.

What has Hegel written on the subject of philosophy of history? Did Hegel make history intelligible as he aimed? To judge from the professional historians, the proper answer to this question is “no”. For them, Hegel’s philosophy of history and other kinds of speculative philosophies of history are of little or no interest. It may look as an imprudent attempt to impose a preconceived pattern on the actual course of history or events. The intelligibility, which they themselves hope to find in history, is not the sort of intelligibility these theories profess to others; this notwithstanding, Unah (2004:31) and Okoro saw Hegel as a deliberate philosopher of History (Okoro, 2008: 209).

Hegel himself distinguished his own undertaking in constructing a philosophy of history from those of everyday historians in establishing facts about the past, and would have expressed no surprise on being told that his aims made little appeal to them. Hegel would be repudiating the charge of seeking; maintaining that in his theory, both *a priori* and empirical facts were in place and that neither could supersede the other. Hegel may be successful in this defense of the moral and metaphysical aspect of historical process. Even though, Hegel was concerned to divine realm, (God) and his theodicy as his metaphysics.

One would say that in asking for the intelligibility of history, its contemplation should leave us morally satisfied or dissatisfied. This perhaps might be an aim quite foreign to the everyday historian, does not concern him. Everyday historians might feel that there is something fundamentally wrong about Hegel’s work, something alien to them apart from its moral and metaphysical twist. They might feel that speculative philosophers of Hegel were trying to find a certain rhythm, which they were not able to discover. They might also see it as fraudulent or trick with recourse to consideration of abstract logic, which might not be relevant to history itself. One would suggest that the only thought, which philosophy brings with it to the contemplation of history is the simple thought of reason rules the world and consequently that world history too is a rational process

What is meant by a rational process in this connection? If the rational process is a process which reason could explain or render intelligible, the question, “what is it to explain or render

intelligible in history? The process will be explained when the historian thinks himself in a position to construct what is called a significant narrative of events in question. When Hegel speaks of world history being a rational process, he is, without doubt, implying that it would be possible to construct a significant narrative, even though he might be implying something more probably than the grounds of history.

In other words, to understand history in the proper sense, we needed to get beyond the empirical standpoint altogether and approach it in quite another way. Hegel penetrated behind the surface of historical phenomena to the reality, which he has no doubt underlined. This is philosophical way of deepening insights into facts. Hegel chose the alternative procedure of deducing details of history, its outline plot from purely philosophical premises. Hegel knew, for instance, the course history must take before he knows any historical facts at all. Also that history must be a gradual realization of freedom and Hegel knows that the completion of this is in four stages Hegel might respond to this criticism as an ill-concern.

It assumes the standpoint of the understanding and facts to allow for special nature of philosophical reason, a faculty, which is barely discursive, but has intuitive powers too. Then where and how are these intuitive powers supposed to be exercised? Is it possible for the philosopher to scrutinize empirical facts intelligently? If it is, then the question arises why working historians cannot discern the pattern too. And if the reply is that they lack acquaintance with the Hegelian logic, our comment must be that logic appears on this showing to be very much the *deus ex machine* its critics allege it to be.

Hegel professes to tell us the plot in world history; he deems that his account of the matter is speculative in the bad sense of the term. But since history is an uncompleted process, how can its overall plot be empirically discovered? With Kant, that experience so far as it is available, confirms the interpretation of history, which pure reason suggests. Even the lectures that “America is the land of the future, wherein the ages lie before us, the burden of the world’s history will reveal itself” (Hegel, 1953: 90), but how these ages are to be fitted into his scheme is not obvious.

What is it that Hegel’s supposed philosophy can contribute towards understanding of history? The fact is that philosophy assures historians that if they try long and hard enough and are lucky

enough to find the appropriate evidence, they will, in the end, make sense of any historical event. Second is that if we look at the facts of history, we shall see that they conform to a pattern which pure reason can work out independently of all experience. This is a suggestion, which no genuine historian will not believe. Hegel makes no third alternative. The truth could be seen that speculations did indirectly have a salutary effect on historical studies. More so, by emphasizing the need to present historical fact as a coherent and intelligible whole, they provoked dissatisfaction with the chronicles and empty moralizing, which still largely passed for history at the end of eighteenth century and contributed substantially to the immense development of the subject during the nineteenth century, when the complex and critical study we know as history today finally took shape. Hegel, among others, showed a deep insight which later historians turned to for good account. For example, the notions of “national spirit” in the study of the history of a given people. Unah explicitly explains;

... No one dabbles into any regional ontology such as History without bringing his orientation of being to bear the materials he seeks to present... our illustration with the various method of writing history shows only too well that it is foolish pretense for anyone to think that history can be presented purely objectively without a taint whatsoever from the presenter's subjective disposition (Unah, 2004: 31).

The connecting link between phenomena previously thought to be wholly separate, has proved a fertile source of empirical hypothesis and may thus be said to have thrown real light on some dark places in history. Hegel's illustration of the three methods of writing shows that there is no objective history.

## **Highlights**

This chapter provides an explicit explanation of Hegel's idealism especially from his three major books; *phenomenology of Spirit*, *Philosophy of History* and *Reason in History*. This chapter not only explains what Hegel's idealism means, but also it illustrated how Hegel's methodology, *Dialectics*, is used as a tool, preferable logic, to show how knowledge arrived at the highest level of truth, reason and self-consciousness. This means that Hegel's idealism was built on an intricate structure of dialectics such that dialectics must be understood before the idealism is laid bare. This chapter also explained the process by which truth about the knowledge of things and other minds are known through the logic of dialectics. We saw that for truth of things and other



minds to be attained, knowledge have to pass through appearance (sense experience) to sense-perception to understanding. When understanding gets to know the true appearance through sense-certainty and consciousness, it reveals itself and gets bound up to the suprasensible world. When Consciousness has realized itself as a divided and distinguished reality, it becomes self-consciousness. Self-consciousness through experience and observation arrives at reason. It is this reason that brings about self-assertion and self-maintenance. When self-consciousness meets (another) self-consciousness we have a problem of recognition. This is a social factor that affects every area of human endeavor. The problem of recognition brings about ethnicity, tribalism, class and gender. There are issues such as whose consciousness is suppressed or recognized? Whose history is myth and truth? Who is free and who is not? Within Hegel's idealism, consciousness of freedom is the historical struggle for freedom. When we laze Hegel's dialectics on Human relationship (between the genders); we will observe as well this historical struggle and its manifestation throughout the various human historical epochs. We shall discuss this next in details.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN HEGEL'S IDEALISM: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

In this chapter, we are going to discuss the status of women in Hegel's idealism. We shall also discuss the status of women before Hegel. This means that discussion on women status date back before Hegel. More so, we shall discuss the polarity in Hegel's idealism albeit from a postmodernist phenomenologico – ontological perspective. We shall also discuss Hegel idealism in relation with the works of feminist philosophers especially Simeon de Beauvoir. We shall also argue that reason is the basis for resolution of the polarity in Hegel's idealism as well as women's self – emancipation.

#### **3.1 The Status of Women in History of Idealism**

In order to articulate the status of women in classical western philosophy, our discussion shall proceed as follows; traditional societies, ancient, medieval, and modern periods in philosophy.

##### **3.1.1 The Status of Women in Traditional Societies**

The structure of the Greco-Roman world was such that women were kept in isolation, while men do the thinking and the structuring of the Polis. In Athens, women in the Hellenic age were badly treated. They possessed virtually no rights. Their place was like furniture in the home. Their sensibilities were, for the most part, ignored and their education scantied (Seltman, 1947: 5). In the early Republic Roman, women had fewer rights beyond those of women in Greece. They were esteemed as matrons and mothers, but marriage law gave them little in the way of legal prerogatives. Roman women obtained many legal rights in the family, even the right to possess property, but their freedom was largely hypothetical. (Ludwig, 1908: 228-67). The women were given education differently from men (Ibid; 237). They were largely regarded as housekeepers, child bearers, sex objects and the like. Even in Rome, with increased independence but without meaningful employment, women all too often became remarkable for their flirtations and adulteries (Ibid; 240). This means that women in classical Greece were seen as mistresses and are kept for the sake of pleasure, perhaps concubines, for the daily care of men's households

because they bore legitimate children to their husbands. It is clear here that women were kept as child-bearing slaves.

In contrast, in Babylon, the code of Hammurabi, the king of Babylon granted married women a great deal of financial and personal freedom (Cayne, 1976: 103). The bride price paid by the bridegroom which may include real estate, was settled for her and remained her property. Marriage was monogamous but if a wife decides to return to her father, or was divorced by her husband, she took her dowry with her. Under that code, a woman could divorce her husband on grounds of cruelty or adultery. The children remained in the custody of their mother, who must usually be given adequate means to support them.

More so, women could trade on their own account, independent of their husbands and could be judges, elders, witnesses, and scribes (Ibid; 103). However, in ancient Egypt, women's status was higher than what obtained in Babylon under the *Code of Hammurabi*. Egyptian women owned properties, worked in many sectors of the economy, took active part in public life and mixed freely with men (Ibid; 104). It has been asserted that in ancient Egypt, women were the dominant sex and the social roles of men and women were reversed. It is certain and a well-known fact of history that many Queens ruled Egypt. One of such Queens was Cleopatra. This is the description of the status of women in Babylon and Egypt about the 13<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. Around that time also lived the famous Queens of Sheba (Ibid).

In traditional India, the status of women was such that lacked legal right. The eldest male is the head of the family. The males are, by law, the owners of the property, while the women have only the right to maintenance (Ibid). In China, another oriental civilization, Confucianism for more than two thousand years, stereotyped a social system revolving around a father-son axis and held in theological equilibrium by family worship of ancestral male, within its socio-judicial system is found polygamy, unilateral divorce for the male, and the relegation of women along secondary role (Ibid; 105). Women are without the right to immovable property and are not entitled to formal education since their activities are confined to the home.

On the contrary, Sparta presented a different picture. There, women had a voice in politics and public affairs and were remarkably free from modesty, whereas in Ancient Israel, there was no partnership between husband and wife. Repeatedly the phrase was used, 'women, children and slaves' Women are definitely inferior in status. The male's Morning Prayer was "Blessed are thou who hast not made me a woman, a slave, or hast not made me a woman, a slave, a gentile". The female's was "Lord thou knowest why thou made me a woman" Just like what was obtained in England after the Norman conquest one reads of the exploits of Queen Amina, but it is not easy to access how much of these is history and legend. Sexual intercourse with a woman was actually regarded as a source of moral danger, an incitement to depravity and lust. There was an almost complete lack of healthy, simple companionship between the sexes. Women's highest ambition is nothing but marriage, as they were not wanted and were regarded as minors or chattel.

Nigeria being a large nation has many tribes and these tribes have different ways of treating their women. In the old northern Nigerian scenario, the treatment of women did not in any way come near their liberation in Babylon or their enfranchisement in ancient Egypt or even the physical and mental emancipation in ancient Sparta. Their status resembles closely to what was obtainable in Rome and other traditional civilizations. Women were regarded as Chattel and Child production industry. Like in India, in northern Nigeria women of old were under the complete domination of their fathers and male relatives, who freely arrange marriages for them and who sell them in circumstances of dire necessity (Njoku, 1974: 123). In ancient northern Nigerian communities, women have no legal personality, correspondingly had no legal land. If they were engaged in trade, they did so as mere agents on their father and husband, to whom the proceeds of the trade rightly belong.

However, in eastern Nigeria, which is predominately the Igbo tribe, the social status of women varies among them, probably because of their varying cultural practices. Within the Igbos of eastern Nigeria, there are three major ways the society was patterned as follows;

- (a) The Matrilineal
- (b) The patriarchal
- (c) The intermediate (mixed)

In Patriarchal settings, the social status of the women depends on how fruitful she was as a mother and on her economic contribution to her family. Every of her property or wealth is owned by her husband despite his lousiness to discharge his role in his family. As an individual she was not recognized, but as groups, associations, they were recognized and have access to social and political affairs (Ibid; 126). Traditional Igbo society believes that ‘the dignity of a woman lies in her husband’. And this remains a psychological trauma passed from one generation to the other. This notwithstanding, the woman who lived in marriage till old age, is sometimes assumed as being male in wisdom and life experiences. She is as well consulted during decision making. One could see in the Igbo scenario that there is complementarity of roles. The woman is appreciated for who she is, same as the man. The woman will not assume the role of man for her to be recognized, nor does she seek to conquer men, emulate the male standard and become like them to be seen. There is equi-primodality between the sexes. Even though this is at the cultural level, there is need for a philosophical and metaphysical development of this concept. This shall be analyzed from a postmodernist perspective in chapter five.

### **3.1,2 Some Ancient Greek Philosophers’ Views on Women**

Plato, (c 428 – 348 BC), in his *Dialogue* (1953), agreed that at the very outset of founding the commonwealth, everyone should do the one work for which nature fits him. He believed that there is no great difference in the nature of man and woman (Plato, 1953: 150). If there is a natural difference, it implies a corresponding difference in the work to be given to each. In other words, no nature is higher than the other. Thus Plato argues:

But only because we never meant any and every sort of sameness or a difference in nature, but the sort that was relevant to the occupation in question. We meant for instance that a man and a woman have the same nature and both have a talent in medicine, whereas two men have different natures if one is a born physician, the other a born carpenter ( Ibid; 151).

Plato confirms that if either male set or the female is specially qualified for any particular form of occupation, then that occupation, we shall say, ought to be assigned to one sex or the other. But if their only difference appears to be that the male begets and the female brings forth, we shall conclude that there is no difference between the man and the woman and no relevant difference has been produced for our purpose. Plato concluded that natural gifts and talents are to be found in both male and female (Ibid; 152). Although one sex may excel better in one occupation than the other, both the male and the female are specially qualified for any particular form of occupation. In Plato's words,

There is no occupation concerned with the management of social affairs which belongs either to woman or a man, as such, natural gifts are to be ground here and there in both creatures alike, and every occupation is open to both, so far as either natures are concerned (Ibid).

Plato further advocates for same education for both sexes. No occupation should be restricted to one sex. Women who are qualified to belong to the Guardian as to watch over the common wealth should not be left out and should be given same training like male, as this will help to produce fit women who are qualified to be Guardians.

In conclusion, Plato did not see sex as a barrier for women; rather women and men are same and equal, especially at every social affair. He suggested that even in the military, they should be given similar training; this is to make sure that a fit woman is being trained to join the Guardian group.

Aristotle, women are inferior to men. He pointed this out in his politics, thus he said: 'As between male and female, the former is by nature superior and ruler, the latter inferior and subject' (Aristotle, 1962: 62). For Aristotle, the distinguishing mark of human beings lies in their power of reasoning, which is related to the faculty of speech, to which women and slaves were confined. There are, according to Aristotle, certain classes of human beings who were excluded from the full exercise of human reason, namely slaves and women. The life of a woman is functional, because the wife of a male citizen was needed to produce heirs and like slaves, to play a part in providing the necessities of life. Aristotle also expressed this by saying that the

family or household existed for the sake of the politics (Ibid; 94). More so, Aristotle argued that the type of knowledge possessed by slaves and women was a special type. Aristotle says:

The fully rational part of the soul, the “deliberative faculty,” was not present at all in slaves, and was ineffective in the female. In his biology, Aristotle believed that the female supplied the menstrual fluid. The male, on the other hand, supplied the “form” or “soul” via the semen (Ibid).

He feels that females were inferior because of their inability to concoct semen.

The whole of Aristotle’s political philosophy is based on the assumption that one class of human beings namely free males should lead a life that he sees as self-justifying or as lived for its own sake and those others should live a life that is merely a means to this. Aristotle consistently regards women as defective, inferior beings; almost as a degenerate form of human life. This comes out very clearly in his biology. Aristotle therefore sees women as inferior and deficient.

Lucius Annaeus Seneca (c. 4 B. C – A. D. 65) a stoic, had a number of uncommon and significant observations to make about the women, and many of his utterances strike a predominantly modern note (Seneca, *Die Benf* 3. 16, 2-3). In Athens, women were badly treated, they possessed virtually no rights. Seneca was fully opposed with the way people react to the women’s increasing Laxity and Lusciousness. Decadent vices in women are virtually a theme in Seneca’s writings and we find him often condemning feminine luxury and feminine lust (Lydia, 1993: 7). He believed that; Women are supposed to be enduring, since they were naturally created to be pacific and receptive, not active, not vehement and not aggressive. Such a conception would seem to mark Seneca as old fashioned. Thus, Seneca seems to view women as lesser mortals, weaker and fragile creatures in the system in nature. And it is, to some extent, true for Seneca does remark upon occasion, women’s proneness to credulity and agitation, her lack of control, her weakness of mind (Ibid; 7).

There is need to discover here, that Seneca celebrated older Patriarchal code of honour and decorum. Thus for instance when praising Helvia’s, his mother’s virtues, he remarks that she was trained in a traditional strict home and it might appear that Seneca is hide-bound and reactionary. Seneca sought to deal with women intelligently. He exhorts both men and women to nurture self-reliance, self-determination, self-control, which yields one of the greatest pleasures. Unlike most males in almost every society, Seneca does not condone the tradition of ‘double standard’ that

permits husbands to dally engage in extramarital affairs, and that yet enjoins wives to remain chastely at home. Seneca's message that transcends a mere social or economic egalitarianism is: all of mankind, regardless of sex, must seek the same knowledge and improvement. Seneca upheld models of womanly courage and heroism. Thus he writes:

But who said nature has dealt spitefully with women's talent and narrowly confirmed their virtue? Believe me, should they wish it, they have an equal amount of vigor, an equal capacity for the performance of good deeds, they endure grief and suffering equally with men, if they have been trained to do it (Ibid; 7).

Seneca is willing to grant women equal opportunity at the banquet table, equal place at the feast of human endeavor. The woman is for Seneca, everyone's equal in capacity, and if she exercises virtue, everyone's superior. That kind of liberation is a real achievement.

### **3.1,3 Women as seen by Medieval Philosophers**

We shall discuss women in this section in two views. First the Islamic philosophers on women and second the Christian philosophers on women.

From the Islamic perspective, the position of women according to Abu Hamid Muhammed Al-Ghazali (1058-1111) a medieval Muslim philosopher, in his book, *The Proper Role of Women* remarked that a woman should be pious, a good helpmate, and obedient to her husband. Al-Ghazali also sympathized with women where he wrote that men must be merciful to their wives, since 'they are prisoners in hands of the men' and at the same time, that many of the evils in the world are caused by women' (cited in Preshey, 2000: 252). Al-Ghazali characterized the role of women within the Islamic social order. He did these through Islamic several major claims in sets of anecdotes and aphorisms.

He further stated that the best and most blessed of women are those who are most prolific in child-bearing, fairest in countenance, and least costly in dowry. Abu, on the other hand, discussed women just as wife, showing that without marriage, a woman's place cannot be ascertained. For him, the qualities of women are best seen as wives such as:

... For a pious (wife) is the best and most beautiful....a good helpmate will do (you) good in this world's and the next world's affairs alike.



Three things sound reach to the throne of God on high... (iii) The sound of spinning by virtuous women.

... if you want women to like you, satisfy them sexually and treat them tenderly (Ibid; 171).

Al-Ghazali did not see women as persons, but only as wives, who were under men. The good woman is a pious, veiled woman and is a blessing from God (Ibid; 170) and must be virgins (Ibid; 173). He believed that all the trials, misfortunes and woes which befall men come from women, and that few men get in the end what they long and hope for from them. Abu saw women as having scant intelligence. In his words “They are deficient in (their) intellects and (their) religion. Moreover no man ought to act upon (women’s) plans if he does he will lose (Ibid; 173). He advocated for the total control, and veiling of women to avoid distraction on men’s side.

Another Islamic perspective is Fatima Mernissi, (Ibid; 257), who argued that there are two theories concerning women in Islam; First is an explicit theory that sees women as aggressive and women as passive, second, an implicit theory but sees women’s power in sexuality. By sexuality, it means that there is power, which lies in women’s sexual ability to attract men and weaken their will thus distracting men from their higher spiritual and intellectual pursuit. Because of the novelty of the family structure in Muhammad’s revolutionary social order, he had to codify its regulations in details. Sex is one of the instincts whose satisfaction was regulated at length by religious law during the first years of Islam.

The link in the Muslim mind between sexuality and the *Sharia* has shaped the legal and ideological history of the Muslim family structure, (Schact, 1964:161, also Mernissi 1987:18), and consequently of relationship between both sexes. One important characteristics of this history is that the family structure is assumed to be unchangeable, since it is considered divine.

Fatima’s aim in her book, *Beyond the Veil* was to demonstrate that there are fundamental contradictions between Islam, as interpreted in official policy, and equality between the two sexes. Islamic law has it that heterosexual love is dangerous to Allah’s order (Ibid; 20). This makes Muslim marriage to be based on male dominance. According to Fatima, the desegregation of the sexes violates Islam’s ideology on women’s position in the social order. Not only that,

women should be under the authority of fathers, brothers or husbands. Since women are considered by Allah to be a destructive element, they are to be spatially confined and excluded from matters other than those of the family (Ibid; 18). Female access to non-domestic space is put under the control of males. This means that Islam affirms the potential inequality between the sexes, but the existing inequality does not rest on ideological or biological theory of women's inferiority, but in Fatima's words "it is the outcome of specific social institutions designed to restrain her power, namely segregation and legal subordination in the family structure"( Ibid; 20). Islam does not believe in women inferiority, rather the entire system is based on the assumption that women are powerful and dangerous beings. All the sexual institution (Al-Ghazali, Ibid; 28) can be seen as a strategy for containing their power. By sexual institution, we mean such institution like polygamy, repudiation, sexual segregation and lots of others.

On the functions of instincts, in the Muslim order, it is not necessary for individuals to eradicate their instincts or to control them for the sake of control but he must use them accordingly to the demands of religious law. For example, aggression and sexual desire, harnessed in the right direction, serve the purpose of the Muslim order. If suppressed or used wrongly, can destroy that very order. God, according to Islam, created two sexes, each equipped with a specific anatomic configuration, which allows them to complement each other in the realization of God's design, marry and multiply, serving God on earth (Al Ghazali, 27). Sexual desire also serves God design in heaven (Ibid; 32). It could be seen that women must be controlled to prevent men from being distracted from their religious and social duties. That the society can survive only by creating institutions that foster male dominances through sexual segregation and polygamy for believers.

According to Al Ghazali, the most precious gift God gave human is reason. It is best used in the search for knowledge to know the human environment, to know the earth and the galaxies, and to know God. Knowledge (science) is the best prayer for a Muslim believer. To be able to devote his energies to knowledge, man has to reduce the tensions within and without his body, avoid being distracted by external elements and avoid indulging in earthly pleasure. Women have specific purpose of providing the Muslim nation with offspring and quenching the tensions of the sexual instinct. But in no way should women be an object of emotional investment or the focus

of attention, which should be devoted to Allah alone in the form of knowledge seeking and meditation (Ibid; 30).

Going through Muslim teaching, it is illuminating especially the works of Ghazali and Aquad. In spite of its beauty, it considers humanity to be constituted only by males; women are considered to be not only outside of humanity but a threat to it as well. Muslim wariness of heterosexual involvement is embodied in sexual segregation and its corollaries, arranged marriage, the important role of the mother in the son's life and the fragility of the marital bond was revealed by the institutions of repudiation and polygamy. The entire Muslim social structure can be seen as attack on, and a defense against, the disruptive power of female sexuality.

However, among the medieval Christian philosophers was St. Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274), who considered the production of women as misbegotten or defective (Aquinas, *ST*, 1, q 92, art1, obj. 1). He considered the individual nature of female as misbegotten and defective for the fact that the active power in the male seed tends to the production of a perfect likeness according to the masculine sex, while the production of women comes from the defect in the active power or from some material in wind, which is moist as he agreed with Aristotle (Aristotle, *Anim*, iv 2766, b. 33). Although Aquinas wrote from a religious perspective, he agreed with Gregory and St. Augustine that where there is no sin, there is no inequality (Ibid, *De Genesi*, ad litt xii i6.).

In all Aquinas, saw women as naturally of less strength and dignity than men. Aquinas' argument hedged on the scriptural saying that the woman is helper to the man, not indeed as a helpmate (Aquinas, *Ibid*, art1, corps). He saw women as lesser beings only meant for reproduction or child bearing. He relegated women to the background and considered them incapable of human interactions. By this thinking Aquinas tended to gloss over the fact that the woman is a human being before she is a woman and that they could only be differentiated by biological means. Aquinas insisted that the role of the woman is to be the helper of the man especially in the work of generation. That even among perfect animals, the active power of generation belongs to the male sex, and the passive power to the female (*Ibid*, art 2 corps). However, Aquinas undermine the major power of generation, the labour, the pains, the

increasing obligation and power to bring to life belong to the female, this is from the view of modern biology. Aquinas could be flawed here because of his belief that the major pre-occupation of woman is in child-bearing. Aquinas could be biased that he could not see reason of active power of generation in female.

Going through Aquinas works, his further subjection of women is of two-fold. One according to him is servile, by virtue of which a superior makes her a subject for his own benefit and this kind of subjection began after sin (*Ibid, rep. 2*). The other subjection Aquinas called economic or civic whereby the supervisor makes use of his subjection existed even before sin (*Ibid, rep 3*). He believed that the good of human order would have been wanting in the human family, if some were not governed by others wiser than they were. So by such a kind of subjection, the woman is naturally subjected to man, because in man, the discernment of reason pre-dominates.

Furthermore, Aquinas' opinion on whether the woman should have been made from man, he said it is clear from the foregoing that the woman should not have been made from man, since sex belongs to man and animals. Though he accepted that the woman was not produced from man or by natural generation but by the divine power alone (*Ibid*). He argued that when all things were just made, it was more suitable for women to be formed from man than for this to happen in other animals. In order to give the first man a certain dignity consisting in this that is God is the principle of the whole universe, so the first man, in likeness to God, was the principle of the whole human race (*Holy Bible Act 4:26*). God made the whole human race from one man (*Genesis 11:23-24*). Secondly, that man might love woman all the more and cleave to her more closely, knowing her to be fashioned from him. She was taken out of man wherefore man shall leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife (*Genesis 2:23-4*).

Aquinas felt this most necessary in the human species in which male and female live together for life, which is not the case with other animals. Aquinas also accepted Aristotle's opinion that the human male and female are united, not only for generation, as with other animals, but also for the purpose of domestic life in which each has his or her particular duty and in which man is the head of the woman (Aristotle, *Ethics*, vii, 2, 1162, a 19). Aquinas also accepted the that woman

was made from a rib of man. This according to him, signifies social union of man and woman for the woman should neither use authority over man and so she was not made from his head, nor was it right for her to be subject to man's contempt as his slave and so she was not made from his feet.

We have to point out here that Aquinas established the authority of man over woman. The bible says both shall live together and became one. Aquinas indirectly established the headship of man over woman in a relationship. As regards women being formed immediately by God, Aquinas agreed with St. Augustine that God alone, to whom all nature owns its existence, could form or fashion woman from man's rib (Augustine, *de genesis*, ad litt ix, 15). Aquinas saw that the natural generation of every species is from some determinate matter. Now the matter whence man is naturally begotten is the human semen of a man or woman. Therefore, an individual of the human species cannot be generated naturally from any other matter. This Thomas Aquinas concludes:

God alone, the Author of nature, can bring an effect into being outside the ordinary course of nature. Therefore God alone could produce either man from the slime of the earth, or woman from the rib of man (Aquinas, *Ibid*, corps).

Well from Aquinas' work, two issues could be seen; first he is representing a particular religious group, whose scope he is defending. This means that Aquinas' view on women is being conditioned by his religious inclinations. Second, Aquinas' biological explanation of the production of men and women is an out-dated fact that has been overcome by this day's discovery. No doubt, Aquinas was also influenced by his culture and Aristotle on the place of women in the society. We shall now see how the modern philosophers viewed the women in the society.

### **3.1.4 Women as seen by Modern Philosophers**

So many philosophers in the modern period had a lot to say about women; Kant in his book entitled: *Of Distinction between the Sublime and the Beautiful* differentiated sharply between male and female characteristics and abilities. Kant ascribed the following characteristics and capacities to the sublime as noble, deep, sublime, surmounting, learning, profundity, abstract

speculation, fundamental understanding, reason, and universal rules, capable of principles. For the women, he wrote; delicate, beautiful, modest, sympathy, compassion, fair, charming, finer, feeling, study of humankind (especially man), pleasant diversions, sense, sensitivity, feelings, benevolence, complaisance, particular judgment, incapable of principles (Kant, 1960: 233). There are a number of things, which are unclear about Kant's account of women in this work. First it is not clear if he is saying that women are unable to reason or if he is saying that they should not. Sometimes Kant says that he does not believe the 'fair sex' to be capable of principles. At other time he writes as if he believes that women are capable of intellectual pursuits but must not distort or prevent their femininity by pursuing them.

As far as Kant is concerned, what women are naturally capable of, and should indeed be their pre-occupation, is how to make themselves pleasing to men. As Kant put it "the content of women's great science rather is humankind among humanity, men" (Ibid) while within her philosophy, she is not meant to reason but rather to use her senses, and to this effect, Kant implies that to be called a fool is to be a woman.

Furthermore, Kant felt women could perform moral actions occasionally since moral qualities may sometimes be found in amiable and beautiful actions, even though such actions can, at best, be regarded as noble but not moral or virtuous. They simply cannot pass moral test, as they do not spring from an autonomous will' (Kant, 1948: 63-4). By Kant's reckoning, given her moral disability and vacuousness, women are simply unfit for the public realm or belong to the commonwealth. This implies that if women are incapable of principles, then they are incapable of the highest form of virtue, and therefore inferior to men.

Arthur Schopenhauer (1788 – 1864) in his article on women criticized the female from the way nature built them. To Schopenhauer "One needs only to see the way she is built to realize that woman is not intended for great mental or for great physical labour"(Schopenhauer, 1925:434). He attributed the experiences of women from the pay back to her life and removed women from the world of humanity, in his words:

...the sufferings of women such as pains of childbirth, caring for the child, subjection to man, to whom she should be patient and cheering companion as the way she expiates the guilt of life. Great suffering, joy, are not for her, her life should flow by more quietly, trivially gently than the man's without being essentially happier or unhappier (Ibid; 435).

Furthermore, Schopenhauer did not find the place of women elsewhere but in the domestic sphere. This implies that the woman is a 'domestic human being', incapable of reason and could find balance only within the sphere of domestic and family life. In fact he chose the word "big children", and saw womanhood as an intermediate stage between the child and the men (Ibid; 435). In his view, monogamous marriage is to halve one's right and double one's duties. Schopenhauer argued that when the law conceded women with equal rights with men, it should, at the same time, have endowed them with masculine reasoning powers (Ibid; 444). He sees polygamy as real benefit for the whole female (Ibid; 439). Schopenhauer did not see women as persons, but objects or things. His view on woman was to dehumanize them. For Schopenhauer;

Women are incapable of taking a purely objective interest in anything (Ibid; 441) ... that women have no rank, should be adopted as the right stand point in determining their position in the society (Ibid; 442) ... the number two of human race... they ought to mind home ... but not mixed in the society (443 - 444).

He also deprived them the opportunity of inheritance and acquiring property. He pointed out that the property, which has cost men long years of toil and effort and been with so much differently, should afterwards, come into the hands of women who then, in their lack of reason, squander it in a short time or otherwise fool it away, is a grievance and as serious as women should be prevented by limiting the right of women to inheritance. And if there is any case where they are meant to inherit, they should be under a guardian and never be given the free control of their own children, whenever it can be avoided (Ibid; 447).

Contrary to Schopenhauer, is the idea of John Stuart Mill (1806 – 1873) *The Subjection of Women* (1988). He was one of the philosophers who contended against the principle, which regulates the existing social relations between the two sexes over the other and sees it as wrong in itself. And that now it is one of the chief hindrances to human improvement and that it ought

to be replaced by a principle to perfect equality admitting no power or privilege on the one side or disability on the other. In Mills (1988: 1) words;

That the principle which regulates the existing social relations between the two sexes – the legal subjugation of one sex to the other – is wrong in itself, and now one of the chief hindrances to human development; and that it ought to be replaced by a principle of perfect equality, admitting no power or privileges on the one side, nor disability on the other side.

For Mill, the authority of men over women was the arrangement most conducive to the happiness of and the wellbeing of both. And the adoption of this system of inequality never was the result of deliberation, or force thought, or mere social ideas, or any notion whatever of what conduced to the benefit of humanity, or the good of society. It arises according to Mill, from the fact that from the very earliest twilight of human society, every woman, owing to the value attached to her by man, combined with her inferiority in muscular strength, was found in a state of bondage to some men (Mill, 1977:12). Mill opines that the subjection of women to men being a universal custom appears unnatural if any departure occurs. For him, there was little doubt that Spartan experience suggested to Plato, among many others of his doctrine that of social and political equality of both sexes (Ibid).

Mills (1988: 17) more so argued that the course of human history, and the tendencies of progressive human society afford not only no presumption in favour of this system of inequality of rights, but a strong one against it; and that, so far the whole course of human improvement up to this time, the whole streams of modern tendencies, warrant any inference on the subject, it is that this relic of the past is discordant with the future and must necessarily disappear. Mill argued that there should be a difference between the past and modern world in terms of institution, social ideas, modern life itself. This means that the freedom that modern world brings should as well be extended to all irrespective of gender. The fact that the modern world came with varying social places and position unlike the customary world where one is in a fixed social position, should as well help us to employ our faculties and achieve the most desirable principles of life.



The difference between the human society of old and the modern world is that of principle of inequality. The old human society was characterized classes and fixed human position, for instances, freemen and citizens, born slaves, born patricians, born feudal nobles and born black or white, born girl or boy and so on. Mills distinguished between the male and female position in the society. According to Mill (1993: 677); All other dignities', royalty and social advantages are open to the whole male sex... no male human being is under any legal ban: neither law nor opinion super-add artificial obstacles to the natural ones ... no full-grown citizen of the male sex is legally excluded. Whereas the disabilities of women are subject from the simple fact of their birth, are the solitary examples of the kind in modern legislation? This social subordination of women stands out in this modern social institution. By being female at birth suggest a fundamental law, a relic, a thought, and practice that suggest unequal social status.

Mill (Ibid) further argued that for humankind to attain the degree of improvement and prosperity, it must come with steps of elevating the social position of women. He argued that what is now called the nature of women is an eminently artificial thing, a result false repression in some direction, unnatural simulating in others (Ibid: 678). More so, men do not want solely the obedience of women, they want their sentiments. All men, Mills remarks, except the brutish, desire to have in the woman mostly nearly connected to them, not a force slave, but a willing one, not a slave merely but a favourite (Ibid). Mills further attributed the suppression of women as *a hot house and stove cultivation*, which have always changed their orientations, capacities, and repressed their nature to the benefits and pleasure of their masters. These pressures Mill (Ibid) noted heaped around the women often resulted in stunted growth mentally, suppression of capacities and reduced their ego. Customs ought not to create any prejudices in favour of the system of inequality of rights, but a strong one against it, and protect women against its abuses. But to suppose legal equality would be to show equal ignorance of human nature, since the generality of the male sex cannot yet tolerate the idea of living with an equal, the disabilities of women elsewhere are only clung to in order to maintain their subordination in domestic life.

Mill attributed inferiority of women to men apart from bodily strength to lack of production in philosophy, science, the arts, without supposing that women are naturally incapable of producing

them. This shows on the part of men the inability to recognize their own work which distinguishes the unanalytic mind. The common inferiority is originality. The fact is that of all difficulties that affects the progress of thought and the formation of well-grounded opinions on life and social arrangement, the greatest is the unspeakable ignorance and inattention of mankind in respect to the influences which form human character. There are other problems in the historical account of women in philosophy. Now let us look at Hegel's account of women.

### **3.2 The status of women in Hegel's Idealism**

#### **3. 2, 1 Hegel's phenomenology of the Woman**

Hegel perceives the feminine element in the form of sister, mother and wife. The feminine in Hegel's (1931; 478) words are:

In the form of a sister, premonizes and fore shadows most completely the nature of ethical life. She does not become conscious of it, and does not actualize it, because the law of the family is her inherent implicit inward nature...remains inner feeling and the divine element exempt from actuality.

That is, the feminine life is attached to household divinities. The woman only sees her world (both universally and particularity) in 'householdness'. An honest effort in addressing Hegel's perspective over the concept of family and women cannot avoid mentioning how the philosophical dominant paradigm in western history has influenced academia. As one of the major influences in the world of philosophy, it is not possible to deny that Hegel was strongly influenced by the beliefs and social expectations of his time. Hegel stopped women from entering the society. Which means the human law is not for the woman, what she participates in is the divine law. Hegel differentiates the ethical life of the woman from the man as her role to her husband and child thus;

...that it has always a directly universal significance for her, and is quite alien to the impulsive condition of mere particular desire. On the other hand, in the husband, these two aspects get separated,...as a citizen he possesses the self-conscious power belonging to the universal life; the life of the social whole, he acquires thereby the rights of desire and keeps himself, at the same time, in detachment from it... (Ibid; 476 – 77).

Hegel feels that it is only at the cost of natural emotion and ethical resignation that the woman can come to individual existence of which she is capable. The relationships of mother and wife,

he conceives them as something natural. Hegel was of the view that her ethical life is not purely ethical, “even if it is ethical, the particularity is a matter of indifference, and the wife is without the moment of knowing herself as this particular self in and through another” (Ibid; 477). The only way the woman is ethically significant is by becoming director of the home and the preserver of the divine law, while *the husband is sent forth by the spirit of the family into the life of the community, and find there his self-conscious reality* (Ibid; 478). This means that Hegel inherited the belief that women are mostly for bearing children. He meant this in his relationship between the family and the community. According to Hegel;

Just as the family finds in the community its universal substance and subsistence, conversely the community finds in the family the formal elements of its own realization, and in the divine law, its power and confirmation. Neither of the two is alone self-complete (Ibid).

This shows that the human law, which is seen as living and active principle in Hegel’s perspective, proceeds from the divine law. The universal actuality of ethical life is the nation and the family. They get their natural self and operative individuality in men and women. The individual who seeks pleasure of enjoying his particular individuality finds it in the family life, and the necessity in which the pleasure passes away in his own self-consciousness as a citizen of his nation. In Hegel’s words; *...the one extreme universal spirit conscious of itself, becomes, through the individuality of man, untied together with its other extreme, its force, and its element, with unconscious spirit* (Ibid; 481 – 82). That is, the divine law is individualized; the unconscious spirit of the particular individual finds its existence in woman.

On the union of man and woman, Hegel says “it constitutes the operative mediating agency for the whole: which separates into the extremes of divine and human law”. This is at the same time their immediate union. This union is a twofold opposite movement, one from reality to unreality (man), from human law to danger and trial of death, in the other from unreality to reality (woman), the upward movement of the nether world to the daylight of conscious existence. They are four sequential figures of women in the phenomenology of the spirit (a) *Antigonē*, the virgin that does not represent the erotic female other (b) the sexually seductive woman (the erotic other is seen as necessary for procreation yet understood as disruptive and destructive (c) the serving girl (*Das Mäd chen*) and (d) Mary, the Virgin Mother of Christianity who is seen as a non-erotic

woman. It is interesting to note that at least for two of the female figures in Hegel's philosophy, the lack of erotic desire in the figure of the women is the main element that provides either the ethical consciousness (as in the case of *Antigone*) or the servitude capacity of *das mädchen* to serve men because her erotic force is dormant. It seems also interesting the in conclusion in which the feminine *Eros* is seen as difficulty for man, if not to say, to male philosophers.

Hegel claims that the community gets an existence through its interference with the happiness of the family and by dissolving self-consciousness into the universal. It creates for itself what is suppressed and what is at the same time essential to it as an internal enemy. Hegel explains that the community can only maintain itself by suppressing the spirit of individualism and because it is an essential moment, all the same it creates it as a hostile principle (Ibid; 476). It seems pathetic that in Hegel's philosophical context, women as are not allowed to enter into the civil society (supposedly reserved for men). They are seen as not self-conscious beings. The spirit of the family sends the husband into the community in which he finds his self – conscious being and to maintain constituency in his style, Hegel points out when making an interpretation of Sophocles tragedy *Antigone*, that that the conflict *Antigone* suffers makes her aware of her self-consciousness and this conflict is not between human and divine law but rather to sets of obligation, two notions of justice. This means that the human law, in its universal mode of existence, is the community but in its effective operation in general Hegel says 'is the manhood of the community, in its actual efficient operation, is the government. Hegel's men are the government, community and law for the womankind is to be suppressed. Hegel (Ibid; 498) describes the womankind as:

The everlasting irony in the life of the community, changes by intrigue the universal purpose of government into a private end, transforms its universal activity into a work of this or that specific individual and perverts the universal property of the state into a possession and ornament for the family.

Hegel (Ibid) continues;

Women, in this way, turns to ridicule the grave wisdom of maturity, which, being dead to all particular aims, to private pleasure, personal satisfaction and actual activity as well, thinks of, and is concerned for, merely what is universal. She makes this wisdom the laughing-stock of raw and wanton youth an object of derisions and scorn, unworthy of their enthusiasm.

Hegel (Ibid; 498 – 99) further states that;

She asserts that it is everywhere the force of youth that really counts, she upholds this as a primary significance, extols a son as one who is the lord and master of the mother who has borne him; a brother as one in which the sister finds-man on a level with herself, a youth as one through whom the daughter, freed from her dependence (on the family unity), acquires the satisfaction and the dignity of wifehood.

Hegel instructs that the community takes up the attitude to suppress individualism (womanhood) as a necessary hostile principle. The negative side of the community suppressing the isolation of individuals within its own bounds but originating activity directed beyond these bounds, finds the weapons of its warfare in individuals. This is how Hegel justifies this: War is the spirit and form in which the essential moment of the ethical substance the absolute freedom of ethical self-consciousness from all and every kind of existence, is manifestly confirmed and realized (Ibid).

Although Hegel placed youth in the same level as women, Hegel encourages war, which is the engine of negation and destruction as that which preserves the full state in terms security. When this chance is given to woman, and the brave youth, the only way to get the ethical life and spiritual necessity in place is by use of physical strength. This seems like a chance of fortune. The ethical form of and embodiment of the life of spirit has passed away and another mode appears in its place.

### **3.2,2 Hegel on the place of women in Family and the State**

The central concept in Hegel's ethical is the concept of "ethics life" (*sittlichkeit*) meaning customs, laws or norms provided by the general consciousness of a particular community. The first step is the analysis of spirit as a realized actual social order immediately given as a historical fact. According to Hegel, spirit, in its ultimate truth, is consciousness and breaks as under its

moments from one another (through the logic of dialectic, see page 41 in chapter one) (*Ibid*; 462). This shows that self-consciousness is the mediating term in the dialectics of spiritual substance and consciousness. Self-consciousness, through this action, brings together the unity of itself and the substance thus; the unity of its work and concrete existence is realized. The substance now is an 'ethical being' split upon into distinct elemental forms; 'human and divine law'. This is because consciousness has distinguished its own content within itself and this manifested in a world articulated into sphere, continuity, its dialectics when self-consciousness ignorantly breaks up over against the substance assigned to itself in virtue of inner nature, Hegel says:

It learns through its own act at once the contradictory nature of those powers into which the inner substance divides itself and their mutual overthrow, contradiction between its knowledge of the ethical character of its act and what is truly and essentially ethical (*Ibid*; 463).

This shows that the ethical substance, through this process, has become "actual self - conscious". That is the particular is now self - sufficient and self-dependent (*Anund fürsichse*). This action has destroyed and overthrown the ethical order. The plurality of ethical moments is reduced to, and assumes, a twofold form, that of a law of individuality and a law of universality. The ethical substance in this determination of actual concrete substance is Absolute spirit. This is realized in the plurality of distinct consciousness definitely existing. "This spirit is the community, which we entered at the stage of practical embodiment of reason in general and came before us and the absolute and ultimate reality and which has come objectively before itself in its true nature as a conscious ethical reality and as the essential reality for that mode of consciousness we are now dealing with" (*Ibid* 466 – 67). This notion of ethical substance is seen here as spirit, which maintains itself by being reflected in the minds of component individuals. Hegel says it is a substance, and it preserves the individual within itself, He calls it "The spirit of a nation (*volk*)". This means that this spirit exists and makes itself felt. Hegel calls this spirit the *Human Law* He describes this (*enben*) spirit as:

...the law known to everyone, familiar, recognized...is the everyday customary convention (*sitte*)... the concrete certainty of itself in any and every individual, and the certainty of itself as a single individuality is that spirit in the form of government. Its truth and complete nature is seen in its authoritative validity, openly and unmistakably manifested... (*Ibid*; 40).

Against the human laws is the divine law. It could be seen as actual concrete universality. It is also a force exerted against the independence of the individual. It is essentially the power of the state. Hegel was of the view that the ethical substance existing in opposite ways contains the substance in its entirety, and contains all moments of its contents. Hegel tried to distinguish the moments of existence of the ethical substance as:

...the community is that substance in the form of self-consciously realized action; the other side has the form of immediate or directly existent substance... The latter is a universal possibility of the ethical order, and the former is the moment of self-consciousness. ... This moment which expresses the ethical order in this element of being (immediacy or consciousness of self) in an “other” is a natural ethical community – this is the family (Ibid; 468).

This shows that the family, as a principle of sociality, operates in an unconscious way. The family is opposed to the universal spirit. Thus the family is opposed to the ethical order, which shapes and preserves itself by working for universal ends. The family is an ethical entity. It also has the character of immediacy. It is a relation established by nature, and essentially spiritual.

The family is characterized by a non-sentimental relationship of love between the members of the family. The ethical element here could be seen in the relation of the individual member of the family to the entire family as a real substance. Actions within the family are solely for the family life. Individual member's conscious purpose dominates the action of the whole. Hegel saw the procuring and maintaining of wealth on basis of needs and want as a matter of desire. The community acts negatively on the family by drawing the individual towards virtue, and towards living in and for the universal. The individual is the positive purpose peculiar to the family. Hegel characterized family as follows:

Inner indwelling principle of sociality operating in an unconscious way, stands opposed to its actuality when explicitly conscious; as the basis of the actuality of a nation, it stands in contrast to the nation itself; as the immediate ethical existence, it stands against the ethical order which shapes and preserves itself by work for universal ends. The place of the family stand is in contrast to the universal spirit (Ibid; 468).

Hegel maintained that the content of ethical life must be substantial in character, entire and universal. The individual belonging to the family is seen as unreal insubstantial shadow. When

they are seen as citizens, they are real and substantial. The community tries to set the individual outside the family by subduing his mere natural existence, particularity, and drawing him towards virtue. That is towards living in and for the universal. The individual is the positive purpose belonging to the family. There is no relationship between blood relation and citizenship. By being a citizen, the individual is now taken as a universal being, divested of his sensuous or particular reality. Hegel says this concerns the dead not the living. Hegel defines the dead as:

One who has passed through the long sequence of his broken and diversified existence and gathered up his being into its one completed embodiment, who has lifted himself out of the unrest of a life of chance and change into the peace of simple universality (Ibid; 470).

This universality is death, which the individual has to reach. Hegel argued that it is the immediate issue of the process of nature. It is not the action of the mind. It is the duty of the individual to take note of it. This is because, in truth, the peace and universality of a self-conscious being does not belong to nature. The apparent claim, which nature has made to act in this way may be given up and the truth reinstated. The process of becoming universal is manifested as the movement of an existent. This takes place within the ethical community. Hegel says:

Death is the fulfillment and highest task which the individual as such undertakes on its behalf... it is accidental that his death was connected directly with his labour for the universal while... it is the natural course of the negativity of the individual existence, in which consciousness does not return into itself and become self-consciousness (Ibid; 471).

If we understand Hegel and his dialectics; Death, is the process whereby the existent consists in becoming cancelled and transcending and attaining the stage of independent self-existence. Death is the aspect of disruption where the self-existence, which is obtained, is something other than that being, which entered on the process. Hegel, having conceived the ethical order as spirit in its immediate truth, the individual particularly passes over into this abstract negativity, which, being in itself without consolation or reconciliation, must receive them essentially through a concrete and external act. Blood-relationship supplements the abstract natural process by adding to it the process of consciousness by interrupting the work of nature, and rescuing the blood-relations from diremption. Hegel (Ibid) describes the dead as;



The dead individual, by having detached and liberated his being from his action or his negative unity, does an empty particular merely exist passively for some other, at the mercy of every lower irrational organic agency and the (chemical and physical) forces... The family keeps away from him... weds the relative to the bosom of the earth... Thereby the family makes the dead the member of a community (earth).

Death as the last duty, accomplishes the complete divine law (positive ethical act towards the given individual). Every other law that is not at the level of love, though ethical, belongs to human law. Human law has differences and stages. The elements of consciousness involved constitute their distinctions and peculiar process of their life. These differences bring out the ways of the operations and self-consciousness of the universal essential principles of the ethical world. It also brings out their connexion and transition into one another. The validity of the community or human law is made a concrete reality in government. Government is an individual whole. In Hegel's words:

Government is concrete actual spirit reflected into itself, the self-pure and simple of the entire ethical substance. This simple force allows the community to unfold and expand into its component members, and to give each part subsistence and self-existence of its own. (*Fürsichseyn*). Spirit finds in this way its realization or objective existence and the family is the medium in which the realization takes effect (Ibid; 473).

Seeing the government as the whole, the spirit is the force of the whole and the life of the community lies on the whole. This is threatening. The community organizes its self into the systems of property and of personal independence, of personal right and right in things. It also articulates the various ways of working for their independence. Hegel argues that the spirit of association and assemblage is the single and simple principle and factor essentially (negatively) at work in the segregation and isolation of these systems (Ibid; 474). The government tries to carry every one along by violating their right of independence and imposed threat on them. Hegel was of the view that "by breaking up the form of fixed stability, spirit guards the ethical order from sinking into merely natural existence, preserves the self of which it is conscious and raises that self to the level of freedom and its own powers". However, the divine law is where the community finds its true and corroboration of its powers.

From the arguments above, we find that the family holds a crucial position in Hegel's philosophy. Hegel saw the natural law and application of divine law in the family. He identified three relationships, which make up the living processes of the realization of divine law. They are (a) of husband and wife, (b) parents and children (c) brothers and sisters. Hegel understood the relationship between husband and wife as a representation and typical of the life of spirit. It is not spirit itself actually realized. This relationship is in the primary and immediate form in which one consciousness recognizes itself in another and in which each other knows that relationship. This is to say, this relation is natural considering the fact that the self-knowledge and knowledge of the self is in the basis of nature. This relationship is natural relation with feeling, though it is not self-complete, because it realizes itself in a child. Hegel comprehends this husband and wife relation as follows;

Figurative representation ...has its reality in 'an other' than it is. This relationship finds itself realized not in itself as such, but in the child – 'an other', in whose coming into being that relationship consists, and with which it passes away. And this change from one generation onwards to another is permanent in and as the life of a nation (Ibid; 474 – 75).

The second relation between parents and children and vice-versa, Hegel says, is with emotions, that they consciously realized in what is external to them. This makes the independent existence on the part of children a foreign reality. Also the devotion of children towards their parents is affected by their coming into being from what is external to themselves (through their parents) and passes away. Hegel writes "and by their attaining independent existence and a self-consciousness of their own solely through separation from the source whence they came, a separation in which the spring gets exhausted". Hegel concludes that these relationships are constituted by a hold within the transience and the dissimilarity of the two sides, which are assigned to them.

The relationship between brother and sister are the same blood, which is a condition of stable equilibrium. They are free individuals with respect for each other that are an unmixed intransitive form of relationship. The sister sees the brother as a being who is unperturbed by

desire. Her recognition in him is pure and unmixed with any sexual relation. What goes on in this relationship is like moments of individual selfhoods, recognizing and being recognized and assertion of rights. More so, there is balance and equilibrium resulting from the same blood. Hegel was of the opinion that the loss of a brother is thus irreparable to the sister and her duty towards him is the highest (Ibid; 471). This relationship is the limit, which the family life is broken and passes beyond itself. Hegel wrote;

The brother is the member of the family in whom its spirit becomes individualized and by this, he is enabled thereby to turn towards the sphere..... And passing over into consciousness of universality, the brother leaves this immediate, rudimentary... negative ethical life of the family, in order to acquire the produce of the concrete ethical order which is consciousness of itself (Ibid).

For the sister, Hegel writes; “...remains director of the home and the preserver of the divine Law (Ibid; 478). Hegel believed that the men pass from divine law to human law. The universal actuality of a nation and the family are the universal elements of the ethical life, while they get their natural self and their operative individual in man and woman.

### **3.3 An Analysis of the Status of Women in the History of Idealism**

Having discussed the status of women in pre-Socratic period to modern period (section 3.2, 1), there are views that see women as equals to men, whereas others see women as inferior to men. This affected their writings. Plato (section 3.2, 1) advocated for equality of sexes which includes equal educational opportunity and same military training. He advised that they should be given same opportunity to every social and state function so as to bring out their latent potentials, while some philosophers like Thomas Aquinas, who thought that women came out of their production in men, misunderstood women. Basically the later philosophers see women mainly as a body that is from biological perspective. Even philosophers like Rousseau, who were not discussed, advocated for the education of women while Emile and that of Sophie were on another angle. In fact, some philosophers like Aristotle especially his hylomorphism and Schopenhauer's work on women, were all out-dated ideas. They wrote out of context, and according to the society they found themselves. Kant was inconsistent and so many contradictions were in his works, because

he wanted to intrinsically establish a Patriarchal system through his philosophy. Although we still refer to them in writings, since newer philosopher do not succeed the older.

This has a lot to say about the place of women in classical Western idealism. These philosophers have propagated the orientation that sexual inequality is based on the belief in women's biological as inferior to that of men. This explains why some aspects of Western women's liberation movements are always led by women. Their effects are often very superficial and they have not yet succeeded in significantly changing the male-female dynamics in that culture. Contrary to traditional Islam, which does not recognize equality of potentials, the democratic glorification of the human individuals, regardless of sex, race, or status, is the kernel of the Muslim message. This is not difficult for the male-initiated and male-led feminist. This belief in women's potency is likely to give the evolution of the relationship between men and women in the Muslim setting a pattern different from the Western world.

However, if there would be any changes in these status and religions, they will tend to be more radical than in the West and will necessarily, generate more tension, more conflict, more anxiety and more aggression. Western women liberation movement focuses on women and their claim on equality with men. In Muslim countries, it tends to focus on the mode of relatedness between the two sexes and would probably be led by men or women alike. One fact in the Muslim society is the perception of men and women as enemies. This ideology tries to separate the two and empowers men with institutionalized means to oppress women.

According to George Murdock, society falls into two groups with respect to the manner in which they regulate the sexual instincts. One group enforces respect of sexual rules by a strong internalization process while "the other enforces that respect by external precautionary safeguards such as avoidance rules" because these societies fail to internalize sexual prohibitions to their members (Murdock, 1965:273). According to Murdock, western society belongs to the first group while a society where veiling exists belongs to the second.

Our own society clearly belongs to the former category so thoroughly do we instill our sex moves in the conscience of individuals that we feel quite safe in trusting our internalized sanctions...we accord women a maximum of personal freedom, knowing that the internalized ethic of premarital chastity and post-marital fidelity will ordinarily suffice to prevent abuse of their liberty through fornication or adultery whenever a favourable opportunity presents itself. Societies of the other type ...attempt to preserve premarital chastity by secluding their unmarried girls or providing them with *duennas* or other such external devices as veiling, seclusion in havens or constant surveillance (Ibid).

One could think that, in some cases, female sexuality is active, while in other places it is not. It is rather passive. The Muslim feminist, Qasim Amin, in an attempt to grasp the logic of the seclusion and veiling of women and the basis of sexual segregation, came to the conclusion that women are better able to control their sexual impulses than men and that consequently, sexual segregation is a device to protect men, not women. Observing that women do not appreciate seclusion very much and conform to it only because they are compelled to, he concluded that what is feared is *Fitna* (Al-‘Amal, 1964:34) in order or chaos. He then asked who is protected by seclusion.

If what men fear is that women might succumb to their masculine attraction, why did they not institute veils for themselves? And men think that their ability to fight temptation was weaker than women's? Are men considered less able than women to control themselves and resist their sexual impulse? ... Preventing women from showing themselves unveiled expressed men's' fear of losing control over their minds, falling prey to *fitna* whenever they are confronted with a non-veiled woman. The implications of such an institution lead us to think that women are believed to be better equipped in this respect than men (Ibid; 65).

Though Amin stopped his inquiring here and thought that his findings were absurd and concluded jokingly that if men are the weaker sex, they are the ones who need protection and therefore the ones who should veil themselves, why does Islam fear *fitna*? Why does Islam fear the power of female sexual attraction over men? Does Islam assume that the male cannot cope sexually with an uncontrolled female? Does Islam assume that women's sexual capacity is greater than men's?

One can see that Muslim society is characterized by a contradiction between what can be called 'an implicit theory' and 'an explicit theory' of female sexuality, and therefore a double theory of sexual dynamics. The explicit theory is the prevailing contemporary belief that men are aggressive in their interaction with women and women are passive. The implicit theory sees civilization as struggling to contain women's destructive, all –absorbing power. The implicit

theory of female sexuality, as seen in Imam Al Ghazali's interpretation of the Koran, casts the woman as the hunter and the man as the passive victim. The two theories have one component in common, the woman's quad power "the power to deceive and defect men not by force, but by cunning and intrigue. Aquinas linked the female quad power to her weak constitution, the symbol of her divinely decreed inferiority; Imam Ghazali sees her power as the most destructive element in the Muslim social order, in which the feminine is regarded as synonymous with the satanic. In the whole Muslim organization, social order then appears as an attempt to subject her power and neutralize its disruptive effects. This contributed to the historical conditioning of women in the Muslim socio- political order and the society at large.

Consequently, the metaphysics of the history of philosophy shows that the way philosophers' notions are used are gendered; this has affected the societal rationale. From Aristotle to Hume, from Plato to Sartre, reason is associated with maleness. Therefore, the notion of reason that we inherited, whether we are empiricists or existentialists, atheists or theists, requires critical scrutiny. It is also a radical move because it will lead to uncovering of a history of women philosophers. It has destroyed the alienating myth that philosophy was, and by implication is and ought to be a male preserve.

### **3.4 The Maleness of philosophy and the Absence and Devaluation of Women in the Canon of Philosophy**

The argument here is that the canon of classical western history of philosophy is very small when compared to literature and it is rigidly fixed. Furthermore, the traditional application of philosophy is tied to a set of values, methods, and self - definitions, which have excluded women. Because philosophical works attributed to women had been devalued and therefore not included in recognized works, it has led to the upholding of the view that the traditional or western history of philosophy is the history of men's ideas. Perhaps, this very presentation of history is a distortion of the past, which serves to justify the status quo. More so, women philosophers are challenging mainstream philosophy to cease evaluating itself according to the standard set by men. There are great questions that ought to be answered such as: are there

continental philosophical concepts unbiased and objective from the issues of gender? Why is the content of philosophy and the main subject of history been male? Who are those that canonize philosophers, their works thus philosophy? Would it not be better to include a special, new and different woman's perspective in philosophy's world history, and hence a new philosophical perspective?

However, it is not difficult at all to find evidence of the ways in which philosophers, historians of philosophy and the historical cannon of philosophy, have devalued women and their works, spoken of them contemptuously and relegated them to inferior and subordinate status. It is however, extremely difficult to find much in the way of discussion or recognition of this fact in mainstream philosophy. Put differently, the standard philosophical and intellectual histories failed to give credit to the works of such outstanding women of classical times as Aspasia, Diotima, Hypatia and others as well as the feminists of the more recent past, among them were Mary Aster, Mary Wollstonecraft and Elizabeth Stanton. The unbiased study and appraisal of their works is a major task facing historians of philosophy. There is a long history, some of which have sometimes been obscured by the tendency on the writings of women to be marginalized or consigned to invisibility or oblivion. The consequences have been that those feminist writers whose works are relatively well known sometimes appear as isolated voices. Going through the philosophical literature, feminist philosophers are faced with a tradition that believes that there are no women philosophers and if there are any, they are not important. This negative characterization of women, implicitly or explicitly, is the major reason behind the exclusion of everything that is feminine or associated with women. The philosophers issue is that these historical records are not complete because they omit women and their philosophies. This apart, they are biased since they are a tool meant to devalue women philosophers. In addition, feminist philosophers have agreed that the philosophical tradition is flawed because of the way that its fundamental norms like reason and objectivity have been malenized (Witt, 2000, also Llyold: 1993: 7).

One is left to assume that in the mind of most classical western philosophers, the genders of the philosophers are as important or relevant as their work. In other words, the idea of gender has

been used as the basis to determine which philosophy is canonical great or not. This is a thought that runs counter to the self-image of philosophy. For example, Hegel wrote:

Women are capable of education but they are not made for activities, which demand a universal faculty such as the more advanced sciences, philosophy and certain forms of artistic production ... woman regulate their actions not by the demands of universality, but by arbitrary inclinations and opinion (Hegel. 1973:263).

Some of the statements are explicit statements of misogyny in philosophical texts, as we have discussed in the works of Aristotle, Kant, Schopenhauer, lots of them, and also in the works of Hegel. Another problem is the gendered interpretations of philosophical concepts. Considering Aristotle's theory ofhylomorphism, we find a connection between form as being male and matter as being female. Furthermore in Aristotle's metaphysics, the matter and form are not equal partners; form is better than matter. And since hylomorphism is the conceptual framework that underlines the entirety of Aristotele's philosophy, it looks as if his negative characterization of women tarnishes his philosophy. One question is inevitable; is Aristotle's philosophy intrinsically gendered and sexist, so that gender cannot be removed without altering his entire philosophy? Several feminist philosophers have shared various perspectives to this thesis. For instance, Lynda Lange argues that Aristotle's theory of sex difference is implicated in every piece of Aristotle's metaphysical jargon. She concludes that; "it is not all that clear if Aristotle's theory of sex difference can simply be cut away without any reflection on the status of the rest of his philosophy" (Harding et al, 1983:2). Elizabeth Spellman on her part has argued that Aristotle's politicized metaphysics is reflected in his theory of soul, which in turn, is used to justify the subordination of women in politics (Spelman, 1983:47). Susan Okin reinteracts this by arguing that Aristotle's functionalist theory of form was devised by Aristotle in order to legitimise the political status quo in Athens, including slavery and the inequality of women (Okin, 1979: ch. 4). However, it could be seen that Aristotelian theories are intrinsically biased against women. One could doubt if they have value for feminists beyond the project of learning considering the way in which philosophical tradition has devalued women. Aristotle is discussed here as an example, other philosophies like Thomas Aquinas, Kant, and Hegel, as we have also been severely criticized by feminist philosophers.



Consequently, the most radical feminist critics, however, have argued that the Canons central to philosophical norms and values like reasons, objectivity, are gendered notion.(Llyoid Ibid, Bordo, 1987) And that philosophy's self-image as being universal and objective, rather than particular and biased, is mistaken. Feminists like Bordo have argued that Cartesian rationalism and the norms of modern science mark a decisive break with a philosophical and cultural tradition that was more accommodating of female characteristics and powers. Another radical stance towards the maleness of the history of philosophy was taken by Luce Irigaray (1985), who indicated what is suppressed and hidden in the tradition. Irigaray uses highly unconventional methods of interpreting canonical philosophy texts in order to uncover the ways in which the feminine or sexual difference is repressed in them. For example, she uses humor and parody rather than straight forward exegesis. And she points to instabilities and contradictions in philosophical texts as symptoms of Patriarchal thinking. According to Irigaray, Patriarchal thinking attempts to achieve universality by repressing sexual difference. Moreover, the presence of contradiction or instabilities in philosophical texts is symptomatic of the failure of Patriarchal thinking, to contain sexual differences.

Even though feminist philosophers cannot jettison the traditional concepts of philosophical notions, their works have been valuable in two respects; first it has established that gender is associated with the central norms of philosophy; a conclusion that warrants attention from anyone attempting to understand the philosophical tradition. More so, the historical studies raise question about reason and objectivity that are valuable areas of inquiry for contemporary philosophers.

### **3.5 Gender and the Philosophical Assessment of the History of Philosophy**

The impetus for this section came from two sources. The first was an increasing awareness of the way in which so many philosophers seemed either to ignore women as inferior to men, and a belief that it is important to take seriously what philosophers have said about women. The second was an increasing awareness of an interest in what seems to me to be some central tension in

feminist thinking and in relationship between these tensions and political theories and traditions. However, the natural question is inevitable; why the history of philosophy has importance for feminist philosophers. By this question, it is assumed that the history of philosophy is of importance to feminists because of the sheer volume of recent feminist writing on the canon. It also explores the different ways that feminist philosophers are interacting with western philosophical tradition.

Be that as it may, feminist philosophers engaged in a project of re-reading and reforming the philosophical canon, have noticed the significant areas of concern. The problem of the historical exclusion is the first. Feminist philosophers are faced with a tradition that believes that there are no women philosophers, and if there are any, they are absent from the history of philosophy and that brings us to the second challenge we face. Canonical philosophers have had plenty to say about women and what we are like. This, our tradition tells us either impolitely through images and metaphors or explicitly in so many words, than philosophy itself and its norms of reason and objectivity, exclude everything that is feminine or associated with women. However, feminist historians of philosophy have argued that the historical record is incomplete because it omits women philosophers and it is biased because it devalues any woman philosopher it forgot to omit. In addition feminist philosophers have argued that the philosophical tradition is conceptually flawed because of the way that its fundamental norms, like reason and objectivity, are gendered male (Grimshaw, 1986, 37 - 8). By means of these criticisms, feminist philosophers are enlarging the philosophical canon and re-evaluating its norms in order to include women in the philosophical "us". To explore that same way of describing and explaining this maleness of philosophy, four major ways are employed for lucidity sake. We shall attempt the sketch an explanation of these four ways; we leave the details for further discussions. They are;

#### [1] Criticism of Philosophical canon as misogynist

When engaged in the historical study of the views of male philosophers about women, it is already one of misogyny, which is easy to document. There are three kinds;

[a] Reading that record the explicit statements of misogyny implement texts: For instance, Aristotle's wrote in the *Politics* as between male and female the former is by nature superior and ruler, the later inferior and subject. Also Kant's writings contain both overt statements of sexism and racism and a theoretical framework that can be interpreted along gender lines.

[b] Gendered interpretations of philosophical concepts

Such things before Aristotle's theory ofhylomorphism we find a connection between form and being male, and matter and being female. More so Hegel's interpretation of human laws and divine laws, we find that human law as men, and divine laws as females. Both Aristotle's and Hegel's intrinsically are gendered and sexist. Lynda Lange argues that Aristotle's theory of sex difference is implicated in every piece of Aristotle's metaphysical jargon. She concluded that "it is not at all clear that Aristotle's theory of sex difference can simply be cut away without any reflection on the status of the rest of the philosophy (Harding & Hintika, 1973: 2). Scholars have argued that Aristotle's theories are all intrinsically biased about women.

[ c] Synoptic interpretation of the philosophical Canon

Radical feminist artists, however, have argued that the Canons central to philosophical norms and values, like reason and objectivity are gendered norms. The synoptic approach considers the Western philosophical tradition as a whole and argues that its core concepts are gendered male. Moreover, philosophy's self-image as universal and objective, rather than particular and biased, is mistaken. Feminist synoptic interpretation of the Canon takes several forms. Genevieve Lloyd's *Man of Reason* (1993) argues that reason and objectivity in the history of philosophy is gendered male. The way that reason and objectivity is gendered male varies as philosophical theory and historical period varies, but the fact that they are gendered is constant. From Aristotle to Hume, from Plato to Sartre, reason is associated with maleness. Therefore, the notion of reason that we have inherited, whether we are empiricist or existentialist, requires critical scrutiny: Others like Bordo (1987) saw the maleness of Cartesian reason as both a social meaning and a psychological content. First, the social meaning of maleness; in the seventeenth century it (the feminine orientation toward the world) was decisively purged from the dominant

intellectual culture through the Cartesian “rebirthing and restricting of knowledge and the world as masculine”. This social meaning is paired with a psychological consequence. “The great Cartesian anxiety” although manifestly expressed in epistemological terms, disclosed itself as anxiety over separation from organic female universe (Ibid; 5). Cartesian anxiety is separation anxiety from the Mother Nature; the rational norms of clarity and distinctiveness are read as symptoms of this anxiety.

Luce Irigaray saw this maleness as patriarchal thinking to contain sexual differences. Patriarchal thinking attempts to achieve universality by repressing sexual differences. For Irigaray, the presence of contradictions or instabilities in a philosophical text is symptomatic of the failure of patriarchal thinking to contain sexual difference (Irigaray, 1985; 214 -9). Whatever views each hold, the fact is that each of their views about the history of philosophy delivers the same moral. This, more so, diagnoses where philosophy as whole went deeply wrong and in so doing, it instructs a negative canon of philosophy. The negative canon exposes the way in which the views of canonical philosophers throughout history of philosophy are implicitly or explicitly misogynist or sexist.

## [2] Feminist Revision of the History of Philosophy

This is a radical project because by uncovering a history of women philosophers it has destroyed the alienating myth that philosophy was, and by implication, is or ought to be, a male pursuit. This is a distinctive project because there is no comparable activity undertaken by other contemporary philosophical movements for whom canon creation has been largely a process of selection from an already established list of male philosophy.

However, in *A History of Women Philosophers* Mary Ellen Waithe (1991) has documented at least 16 women philosophers in the classical world, 17 women philosophers from 500 – 1,600 and over 30 from 1,600 -1,900. Waithe noted that these women are not women on the fringes of philosophy but philosophers on the fringes of history.

In recent feminist series re-reading the canon, three out of fourteen canonical philosophers are women. Mary Wollstonecraft, Hannah Arendt, and Simone de Beauvoir. However, it is

important to note that none of this three is canonical-if by that you mean included in the history of as it is told in philosophy department curricula in histories of philosophy and in scholarly writing.

More so, the Encyclopedia of Philosophy published in 1967, which contains articles on over 900 philosophers, does not include an entry for any of them. If the index is to be believed de Beauvoir, Wollstonecraft are not mentioned at all in any article, and Hannah Arendt merits a single mention in an article on “Authority” These women are not read even in a survey of existentialism or political philosophy. Hannah Arendt should have become a proactive subject for feminist is startling; this is because of Arendt’s criticism on feminism. While Wollstonecraft and de Beauvoir were both feminists, they did not share a common philosophical voice or common philosophical principle. In the *Vindication of the Right of Women*, Wollstonecraft argued for the education of women using enlightenment principles, while Beauvoir’s *Second Sex* reflects her Marxist and existential roots.

Further clarification shows that there is an overlap among three groups, women philosophers, feminine philosophers and feminist philosophers. Most of the newly discovered philosophers were neither feminist thinker nor did they write philosophy in a feminine voice, different from their male counterparts. In her introduction to *A History of Women’s Philosophers*, Waithe comment, “if we accept the Pythagorean women, we find little differences in the ways men and women did philosophy. Both have been concerned with ethics, metaphysics, cosmology, epistemology and other areas of philosophic inquiry” (Waithe ,1991: xxi). Warnock comments that “in the end, I have not found any clear voice, shared by women philosophers” (Warnock, 1996: xi, vii). The recovery, re-evaluation and inclusion of female philosophers in philosophical canons have challenged the myth that there are no women in the history of philosophy. More so, the interest is in correcting the effects of discrimination against women philosophers who were written out of history unfairly, because of their gender not their philosophical ideas. This helps to raise new questions in history of philosophy.

[3 ] Feminist Appropriation of Canonical Philosophers

History of philosophy has experienced changes made by feminist philosophers by appropriating its ideas for feminist purposes. From perspective of negative canon formation, the history of philosophy is a resource only in so far as it describes the theories and thinkers that were mostly deeply mistaken about women. For other feminist historians of philosophy, they have found important resources for feminism in canonical philosophers. Other feminists have argued the reconsideration of the view of canonical figures like Hume and Dewey, who have played a minor role in negative feminist canon.

Interestingly, the same philosophers who were cased as villain of the negative canon were also mined by feminist theorists for useful ideas. Although feminist philosophers have reached different and sometimes incomparable interpretation of the history of philosophy, one can easily say that the multiple and contrary reading of the philosophical canon by feminists reflect the contested nature of contemporary feminism.

#### [4] Feminist Methodological Reflection on the History of Philosophy

One has to reflect on this inspiring question; can feminists use the history of philosophy as a resource in the same way that other philosophical movements have done? Disagreement over the value of the history of philosophy for feminist theory has stimulated discussion concerning the methods and presuppositions of the study of the history of philosophy itself.

Several reading strategies other than the standard have been advocated. Some feminists criticize the idea that feminists can mine the history of philosophy for useful ideas or facts as other philosophical movements and perspectives have done. Freeland (2000:46) criticizes the view of the feminist inheritance approach to the history of philosophy for an ideology. She defines ideology as a theory or view point that is politically oppressed and epistemically flawed. The epistemic flaw in that appropriation approach is overly reverential of the tradition and might therefore be insufficiently critical of it. There is no need to follow this line of thought as other philosophical movements and perspectives have done (Ibid). Following out this line of thought it turns out that all standard historians of philosophy might be guilty of this epistemic defeat. Some feminists advocated a radical departure from the norms of textual interpretation by focusing and drawing out of the “unthought-of” of a text, its images and metaphors, its omissions and paradoxes (Duetscher, 1993). Others suggest the importance of questioning the line demarcating a text from its cultural, psychological or material context (Schott, 1997). Yet others advocated

for an actual philosophical engagement with a text rather than the background looking activity of trying to determine the exact meaning of a historical text. These reading strategies raise questions concerning the limits of the history of philosophy and the criteria for adequate interpretation.

### **3.6 The Problem and Limitation of Western classical Philosophy**

Since philosophy is supposed to be an inter-subjective discourse, when some subjects are left in isolation, ignored and biased at, one cannot avoid this most important question: is the history of philosophy, philosophy? Going through the classics of philosophy, one discovers that omission of works, philosophers, major contributions, concepts; original ideals were either eliminated or assimilated about the history of philosophy and its problems. Based on the claim of feminist philosophers, one may question the need to study the history of philosophy, which does not include the need for women, their works and contributions. Husserl in his essay *The Origin of Geometry* has raised precisely that question. In the paradigmatic case of Geometry, which provides a model for all spiritual structures that are to be unconditionally, and generally capable of being handed down (Husserl, 1970:377). Husserl claims that one cannot attain full scientific knowledge while leaving its historical origin. Of course in philosophy, the new never destroys that old unlike science. Even when it appears to absorb the past, it leaves its integrity intact.

A new philosophy never simply surpasses an older one. What actually happens is that it may abandon certain of its problems probably because it finds that poorly articulated or that they are no longer areas of interest. However, this shift never entirely replaces the older philosophy. For example the great philosophers, who gave new impetus to methodic thought, did not replace Plato's and Aristotle's methods and fundamental insights remain to a point where ever their formulations have survived in our philosophical language.

The distance that separates their writings from our time appears to have had no decisive impact upon their message. There are and probably always will be Neo-Platonists, Neo-Thomist, Neo-

Hegelians and so on. This means that the link between older and new philosophy often proves so light that one cannot be understood without substantial knowledge of the other in its own right. No matter how much a philosophical system may be time-bound, it cannot deny them its claims of definitiveness without betraying the nature of the enterprise itself. There is a dialectical relation between all major philosophers and the concern of their ages, which they express while surpassing their historical limitations in the very act of expressing them. More so Collingwood perceived this in his expression:

In part, the problems of philosophy are unchanging; in part they vary from age to age, according to the specific characteristics of human life and thought at the time, and in the best philosophers of every age. These two parts are so interwoven that the permanent problems appear *sub specie saeculi* and the special problems of the age *sub specie aeternitatis*. Whenever human thought has been dominated by some special interest, the most fruitful philosophy of the age has reflected that domination, not passively, by mere submission to its influence, but actively, by making a special attempt to understand it and placing it in the focus of philosophical inquiry (Collingwood, 1946:231).

It is obvious that we think from within our own time, no matter our attitude to it. We can now generalize that philosophical thought always stays in tune with the culture that surrounds it. This means that out of Limited Situations, the philosophers presents universal claims of truth. Surprisingly, he does so while being fully aware of, and frequently appealing to, older theories that present equally permanent yet conflicting claims. For example Socrates was said to be the founder of cynical and skeptical schools as well as Plato and indirectly Aristotle. All these and other schools have, in some ways, survived without merging with one another. In the nineteenth century, strong historical consciousness emerged two attitudes of philosophy. The practice of philosophy now has to consist in the history of philosophy. This means that the historical elements play no decisive role a positivist, analytic or phenomenological approach and would enable philosophy to become scientific and finally liberate itself from centuries of irreconcilable metaphysical squabbles. Though recently, this universally accepted pluralism rarely spawned relativism.

One big problem of translation emerged since this simplification and matters of existential concern were not dealt with. One finds the emergences of severely truncated versions of history of philosophy leaping from selected writing of Plato and Aristotle, directly to Locke and Hume



in order to come to rest in Kant. These developments of course leave of us with series of questions. Is past philosophy necessary for understanding of philosophy? Can philosophy afford to devote even part of its own enterprise to the knowledge of past reflection without sacrificing its most basic claim of definitiveness? Will the history of philosophy not be relegated to a shady realm of history of ideas if it is devoid of its intrinsic philosophical significances? Will the philosopher feels free to borrow from his predecessors any idea he finds useful without much concern to their historical context? How possible is it for a definitive claim to truth to tolerate historical alternatives? Considering the different answers to ultimate questions, would it not imply that all previous questioning itself had failed? What is the relation between philosophy and time? And why should the reflection on a particular historical relation to being attain a permanent definitive significance?

Another issue is to consider the relationship between philosophy and experience. Most philosophers in the past and many in the present have held that while experiences are irreducibly multiple, philosophical thoughts transcends the social and cultural context, which conditions it and aims at a permanent universality. It could also be seen that all past systems of thought either have been refuted by present ones or are in principles harmonizable in some philosophical super-system. At last philosophical truth through whatever historical contingencies it may have been developed, in essence, ahistorical, one thing is certain, philosophy comprehends all history, but it admits its own historical character only to the extent that it knows its efforts to remain incomplete. In its ideal self-understanding, history plays no part. The fact is that philosophical conceptualization retains for all times a permanent truth, though follows a different dynamism, while reflecting upon transient experience with a permanent ideal quality. More so, we need to consider the innate philosophical legitimacy to historical differences in philosophy, without altering the definitive quality of the ideal meaning disclosed through these historical expressions. That is historical experience upon which a particular philosophical reflection passes. One thing is certain, the philosophical conceptualizations retain for all times a permanent truth and how does it go about it.

Philosophy can be seen as a reflection of itself that is being anchored on temporality that is with past and future playing distinct, yet equally, in dispersible parts. This means that it conveys to the temporal event a permanent meaning. We can see that historicity remains restricted to the order of appearance, which includes the actual emergence of thought. Reflection neither accepts it as an intrinsic part of itself nor having a lasting significance. But when philosophy is allowed to participate in historical process, then idea, novelty, even concerning ultimate question, enduring and meaningfulness will emerge.

It could be that an intrinsic historicity of thought is more than the social and cultural circumstances, which condition philosophical reflection. Ideas however develop within a social-economic context. This context is important because it usually has a decisive impact upon their development. Example, the gradual destruction of the Roman Empire by the invading barbarians may itself have little philosophical significance yet it brought a particular mode of thinking to a halt. Similarly, the acceptance of Christian faith, another non-philosophic fact, initiated a wholly new development in ideal philosophy. Neither one of these factors, however, can claim the kind of intrinsic necessity that would allow us to deduce them from equally ideal premise for most civilizations have been able to dispense with the sort of systematic or analytic thought that we can altogether call philosophy. This implies that each philosophical achievement shows a purely contingent quality and its existence has depended on external elements, which clearly lack the ideal necessary characteristics of philosophical reflection. Similar restrictions surround its alleged universality.

In another way, the universal claim of Western philosophy finds it difficult to enter into dialogue with Eastern wisdom. Even philosophical systems developed in one cultural province of Europe show only a remote resemblance to those elaborated in another. The difference between French and British philosophy includes far more than a different mode of expression. And yet the efforts of French existentialist as well as those of British analysts' aims at establishing a truth that

presumes to be intrinsically independent of the cultural circumstances in which one was conceived, and to improve itself by argument rather than by cultural affiliations. Ancient cultures are gone, yet the philosophers they produced, even more than their works of art, survived their demise. They continue to compel our reflection and often our assent.

The culture and historical experiences are the flux that conditions philosophy. Culture and history condition philosophical systems and present it with lasting qualitative arguments. The historical nature of philosophy is noted in the condition of the human person. Going by the fact that the human person is the one being for which truth exists, cultural-historical conditions do not separate an eternal content (truth value) from the temporal form of its discovery. The historical nature is far deeper than order inventions. Most philosophers accepted the presence of both permanent and transient elements in their predecessor, though, few have directly confronted the historical character of truth itself and even flower the historical quality of what is ultimately real. To do so requires overcoming any cosmic representation of being as if it consisted of mere substantiality. The changing symbols of culture determine not only consciousness; they affect the manifestation of reflection on them. It belongs to the essential task of the metaphysician to reflect on them. Such a reflection presupposes the remembrance of history. In order to possess the world of culture, we must conquer it by historical recollection.(Cassier, 1944: 185) On this ground, Hegel introduced his mature philosophy with a phenomenology of culture and consistently maintained a historical perspective even in the ontology of his systems.

Today, there is an underdeveloped genuine philosophy of cultural change (although cultural anthropology has indeed examined the structures by which men shaped their lives, but *a priori* equally prohibited of fundamental questioning has accompanied the new awareness of difference) probably because of the absence of the need to question it and the very condition of reflection. Today's attitude unquestioningly takes difference for granted. The present "presumption of difference" neglects to pose beyond the mere existence of historical distinction. Although the act of conveying meaning through cultural structures possess an ontological significances that survives those structures themselves. Even after we have ceased to accept

particular model,(For example, the Renaissance Macrocosm – microcosm relation) they continue to illuminate existence in its permanence as well as in its transiency.

In the introduction of his philosophy of history, Hegel has shown how the two meanings of the term “history” – “happening” and “narrative” are intrinsically related. “The narrative of history and historical deeds and events appear at the same time, a common inner principle brings them both together (Hegel, 1953: 75). For Hegel, history becomes a distinct order of reality only through a new stage of reflection. Those who live before the writing of history remain “without objective history, because they lack subjective history”. Raymond Aron translates this in the modern language:

Man has in fact no past unless he is conscious of having one, for only such consciousness makes dialogue and choice possible. Without it, individuals and societies merely embody a past of which they are ignorant and to which they are passively subject; they merely afford to the outside observer a series of transformations compared to those of animal species, which can be set out in a temporal series (Aron, cited in Chambers Encyclopedia, vol. 7, 14).

For historical consciousness to arise there must be a developed sense of freedom, which unites consciousness to reality. The story of ancient Israel strikingly illustrates the connection between objective history and the development of a historical consciousness. An amalgamation of rather disparate tribes acquired a real identity as a people by attributing to the group a common past with a unique destiny in history. This is an example of a narrative form that shaped objective history. The historical books of the Bible achieved what they reported, namely the genesis of a people is its gradual separation from an undistinguished multitude. Israel’s case may be better documented than others, but all historiography influences the course of history. A people behaves in accordance with and fulfillment of a vision of its past, however distorted or unsupported their understanding of it may be (Voegelin, 1956:124). Voegelin defines the significance of Israel as a mankind striving for its order of existence within the world while attuning itself with the truth of being beyond world (Ibid; 129). Hitler’s fantasy of a millennial empire has its roots in a particular interpretation of Germany’s past. Such an interpretation never reaches completion: historiography itself constantly revives its own, symbolically articulated reading of events and processes. The critique of the earlier text transforms the impact of the text themselves.

All these support Hegel's thesis about the Link between objective history and historical consciousness yet we should avoid equating historical consciousness with historiographical concerns. Heidegger rightly distinguishes periods marked by a genuine awareness of new possibilities of being from others that are mainly pre-occupied with the method and problems of history-writing. Behind all historical consciousness lies an awareness of a past that, through its affinity with the present, opens up new possibilities for the future. The historical consciousness is itself rooted in an acute awareness of a tension between the transient and the permanent moments of being. It recognizes certain experiences of reality as no longer present yet still continuing to affect existence in the present.

This implies that philosophy as ultimate reflection upon existence becomes itself subject to dialectic of transitoriness and permanence. Since an awareness of the historical quality of human existence has always had some impact upon philosophical reflection, meaning consists essentially in the development of meaning; "If history is the disclosure of being, then truth is present at each stage yet never completed but always in movement" (Karl, 1955: 233). At its beginning, the awareness of a temporal dimension turned philosophy towards the past. Plato described the access to the ultimately real as a process of anamnesis (a remembering of the past). By so doing, he has been the first to grant time a metaphysical dimension. Parmenides regarded all becoming as illusory, a position that Hindu and Buddhist philosophers appear also to have consistently held. For Plato, it is only through the essentially temporal process of recollection that the soul regains its natural habitat. This is the realm of eternal ideas but the goal of this process, the absolute past, is itself a temporal. Hence all succession ceases and Being regains its pristine permanence. Implying that, the genuine reality of philosophical contemplation lies beyond time. Moreover reality is considered to be essentially complete and knowledge consists in remembrance.

Be that as it may, Christian thinkers granted time a more decisive role. Heirs of the Hebrew sacred history attributed a lasting significance indeed, an ontological quality, to events in time.

They see the eternal as permanently incarnated in time and the full meaning of existence consist in representing the past. The event of the incarnation belongs to the past and bears no repetition. In faith, the believer becomes contemporary with this past, and endows it with transhistorical permanence. Moreover, Christianity, with its event of incarnation definitively separated the new time (A.D) from the old (B.C). The Hebrew concept of salvation in time and the messianic expectation of the future conveyed an ontological, richer, two-dimensional quality to history. Reality had received its definitive interpretation in the scriptural interpretation. The inexhaustible richness of symbolic meaning, both in nature and in scripture, called for a never-ending commentary. This influenced the medieval culture, which concentrated mostly on an exegesis of what had been “given, in the two books of revelation and nature. This gave rise to the possibility of innovation and gave theology new formulations to cope with ever re-emerging controversies. Although most Christians considered the Old Testament as the traditional close in the past, but I believe this past-oriental view of history has continued to determine speculative thought up to the present.

Why do all philosophical reflections begin by looking backwards? The Book of Genesis initiates its explanation of why reality is as it is with the word [in the beginning...” This means that principles are origins. This means that all disciplines have something to do with the past. And philosophy essentially needs this reflection of the past for self-justification. To understand a philosophical problem requires a serious acquaintance with its origin and developments. As Jonathan Bennett writes, “we study philosophy’s past because it may lead us straight to philosophical truth”(Bennett, 1900:437). Exactly, yet such a reflection upon past reflection requires more than a textbook summary of the positions any one philosopher or school of philosophy has held. One thing is certain, the complex characteristic of philosophical thought cannot be grasped in a survey, no matter how balanced, accurate or completed it might be.

Be that as it may, the ultimate task of the historian of philosophy is to a constant return to the original text. Moreover, to command philosophical recognition, the historian of philosophy must

investigate the underlying assumptions, the basic, yet rarely acknowledged intuitions of the theories it presents. Only such 'archeological' work will enable him to detect the signs of genuine novelty. Without it, he will fail to recognize new ideas under traditional concepts or when the new at last fully reveals its face (as it did in Descartes for instance), it will remain as mysterious as the fully armed Minerva heaping out of Jupiter's head.

The philosophical recognition of genuine novelty presupposes that we grant the future an ontological dimension. This condition remained unfulfilled as long as philosophy continued to consider the past the only dimension that gives access to what truly is. For most of its life, philosophy has indeed claimed to reflect only upon actual experience. Outsiders have always suspected it of being a cradle of novelty a hot bed of revolutions, that is, theoretical as well as social. Nevertheless, most philosophers, until the eighteenth century, and many after that, persist in justifying their thought on the basis of the past.

Is it not possible to reabsorb history into the frozen ideality of thought of which we rely on the past. For what determines the past as locus of truth was precisely its permanent character. Although reality in its past has ceased to move and seems to regain, at least, the form of eternity, which philosophers have traditionally claimed to pursue. However to make it a success, we have to circumvent the unpalatable admission that the real is not immobile and that history constitutes an essential dimension of the real. Not until the eighteenth century that there had been an increased awareness that man can control his own destiny. This is a shift from the emphasis on the past to the present and the future. Only at the point could the ideas of unprecedented novelty gain full enhancement. It would, of course, be hazardous to accent this idea at free value. More confident of its originality than its achievements support, eighteenth century culture introduced relatively few theories that were truly new, except the idea of novelty itself. But its importance must not be underestimated, for through it the part acquires a function wholly different from the one it had fulfilled before. We still have to agree with the traditional cultures, believed they had given meaning to present. This means that the future or project must decide which elements of the past remain unstable and which should be descended.

The historians of philosophy treat the philosophers of past as if they were simply minds and intellectuals, instead of seeing them as human beings with desires, passions and personal interests, which have influenced their philosophical writings. These influences include the economic, social and political conditions. There is also religion, science, and psychology factors that helps in the conditioning of one's philosophy.

The historians of philosophy attempt to provide a general account of man's social, political and intellectual life without acknowledging the restrictions placed by extra-philosophical factors. This however minimizes the required understanding of the readers. This is found in the case of Nietzsche and Kierkegaard where there was mixture of amateur psycho-analysis. Apart from the psychological approach to history of philosophy, one can get impression that questions about truth or falsity of theories about the validity or invalidity of argument can be settled by mentioning psychological factors, which are believed to have influenced a philosophical thought. There is need to avoid it. The influence of economic life on the development of philosophy should be moderated by historians of philosophy who value well-documental exegesis, which could be seen as mistrustful of it.

Yet philosophy does not exist in a vacuum that is why the influence of extra-philosophical factors needs to be looked at. The influence of religion on philosophical thought could be seen prominently in philosophies such as Indian, Islam and Chinese. Other instances are seen in the ancient (Greek) philosophy.

The Greco-Roman world is actually a political state. The philosophers here concern themselves with political theories. This led to the political thought of Plato and Aristotle. The Greek/Ancient philosophy is the case of Plato, Aristotle, and the Greek polis. The medieval political theorists thought in terms of the relations between the federal states and the church. While Hegel writes



about the dialectics of national spirit, Karl Marx took up the analysis of a contemporary industrial society. This shows that philosophy can be influenced to move towards a certain direction because of the presence or absence of a certain factor, as seen above.

Another instance is the religious presuppositions of medieval thought. The medieval people looked to the Christian faith for guidance in life, for enlightenment, fulfillment than to philosophy. Religious faith and experiences were embraced rather than philosophy as expounded in the universities. This deprived philosophy its role as a guide to life and turning it to an academic discipline. This shows that philosophic thoughts were strongly influenced by religion thus philosophy was transformed into critical analysis and sophisticated logical studies independent of theology. Thus, philosophy in the medieval was made remote for life because the truths, which were commonly regarded as being of supreme importance to human life were derived from another source.

The growth of empirical science and modern philosophy in the modern age was a shift from theology to science. The growth of empirical science suggests science as a source of positive knowledge. The growth of science and modern physics in the modern age, for example, influenced Kant's phenomenological-metaphysics, Henri-Bergson's Philosophy of Evolution, even the idea of Philosophy of Science. The growth of scientific knowledge had an influence on the conceptions of the nature, function and scope of philosophy. More especially, the growth of scientific method substituted the philosophical speculation and *a priori* in reasoning as the appropriate means of attaining picture knowledge of reality. This brought about the existence of positivism and the both of Vienna circle, trying to construct a common language for as in sciences within philosophy tradition, though narrow. But this age paved way to the view of philosophy as a second-order discipline capable of being applied to a variety of first-order discipline and activities, for instance, philosophy of history, philosophy of science, philosophy of social sciences, etc. Philosophy can be seen as a response to the needs arising in a particular historic situation.

## Highlights

This chapter has discussed the status of women in philosophical idealism. The views about women in traditional societies were examined. More so, a survey of the place of women in ancient and modern epochs of philosophy was done. The traditional civilizations were more accommodating than the modern and medieval ages. For instance we saw in section 3.1,1 how the traditional societies harmonize the role of the gender in such a way that there is balance in the society, as such complementarity of roles. The medieval era was more of religious philosophers, and it emphasizes the doctrine of the second sex of who should not be seen or heard in their religion. We see this in the philosophers of Al-Ghazali and Thomas Aquinas; the teachings of Aquinas when one compares with that of Aristotle, one can see that their teachings are essentially based on the polarization of the sexes. Apart from Plato who advocated for equality of sexes, no other philosopher has this open-mindedness, not the polarize them. The modern philosophers were still on the same line of thought, especially in their modes of differentiation. These philosophers did not differentiate the sexes in terms of their biology rather they said that it has a rational basis. Hegel explicitly made this differentiation as well as Schopenhauer, Kant, Rousseau. Upon analysis of these philosophers in different of in philosophical history, we observed that philosophy has been gendered male by its practitioners. Not only that its concepts like reason, objectivity, transcendence and history were all seen as the activities which belong to the male gender. All we need is a deconstruction of reason as well as philosopher and its concepts such as objectivity, transcendence, from the traps of Hegel's idealism as well as from absolute philosophical principles. This will be done through a postmodernist phenomenologico-ontological analysis in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### TOWARDS A POSTMODERNIST PHENOMENOLOGICO – ONTOLOGICAL DECONSTRUCTION OF HEGEL’S IDEALISM

#### Introduction

Basically this chapter undertakes an appraisal of Hegel’s idea on the status of women from the Postmodernist perspective. Hegel’s idealism is discussed from the perspectives of other philosophers. The polarity in Hegel’s thought is as well examined in the light of an alternative philosophical system. The works of philosophers like Simeon De Beauvoir, Lucy Irigaray and some postmodernist philosophers (Michael Foucault) is discussed in line with Hegel’s thought. We use the theory of Inter-subjectivity especially that of Michael Foucault as our frame. This stems from the fact that Michael Foucault’s deconstruction of modern human subjectivity brought to limelight the recognition of the primacy of Inter-subjectivity. Postmodernist orientation of inter-subjectivity especially that of Michael Foucault, can help to build a platform for the disagreement and agreement between genders such that, it will result in zero-sum game.

#### 4.1 Postmodernist Notion of Reality

Postmodernism view of reality is different from that of Hegel. Hegel presented reality from the idealist perspective (see chapter 2, see also chapter three, section 3), and when reality is presented from an idealist perspective, it is in a way being imposed on the mind of the knower. Postmodernism is simply new perspective that proves direction against how we gain knowledge of the real past or present. It advocates for change and contemporary criteria under which knowledge claims are accepted. Postmodernism is not a new perspective especially if we consider the words that constitute it, *post* and *modern*. It suggests a transmutation of modernism. This means that as a transmuted modernism, it suggests the coming of new pre-requisite or criteria for knowing. This infers as well a re-evaluation of modernism.

This means that postmodernism challenges the traditional or structuralist paradigm of their doctrines, postulations (such as idealism, materialism, Linguistic turn) in philosophy. Thus, postmodernism do not believe that language faithfully represent reality (Lemon, 2003: 359). And

on further explanation on the idea that our opaque languages constitutes and represents rather than transparently corresponding to reality; this however infers that our concept of reality is not objective, rather fallacious (Ibid, 360). This shows that there can be no (single) truth about the world, but that our knowledge of ‘reality’ is always a construct, mediated by multifarious contexts we inhabit (race, gender, economy, culture, and so on). “Truth” for instance, about justice beauty, morality, progress, events, are therefore radically relative, and there is no ‘essential’ or ‘universal’ meaning to things which the subject called god-like, object of knowledge,” in term of making them a universal concept.

The Algerian French post-structuralist Philosopher and social critique, Jacques Derrida, coined the term *deconstruction* to challenge the fundamental tenet of Anglo-American and European Philosophy and Reconstructionist history. According Derrida (1973:129-160), “there is a stable knowable reality ‘out there’ that we can access accurately. It is upon such a belief that the basic polarities of real–unreal, fact-fiction, truth-untruth, subject-object and mind-knowledge were established in our culture.” The emphasis here is that there is no objective or certain meaning in language based texts because there are other socially constructed texts as encountered. The fact that we can deal with the real world through language means that we cannot achieve a direct representation of reality, and the correspondence theory of knowledge collapse. In other words, recognition of the relativism of meaning, determined by where one stands and the dissolution of source denied certainty in historical representation is a postmodernist stand point. If postmodernism is correct, and history is knowledge – as a text – then there can be no reality shorn of presupposition, nor the interpretative shaping of historians (Stanford 1994: 128-128-129 and Melah, 1993:5).

This however is a way of showing that thought can apprehend the ‘real’ or ‘truthful’ through the acceptance of the ‘varieties of realities’ or even recognize history’s ultimately meaningless and therefore open nature. This brings out the characteristics of postmodern theorist, such that there cannot be any no singular philosophy, political message, nor social prescription can be identified with them.

The central concern of Jacques Derrida has been to show that language has infinity of free-flowing signifiers that have no knowledge, no concrete point of origination and consequently no certain end. He employed the concept of *differance*. Differance leads to signification whereas meaning is continuous. The challenge we have now is the problem of the foundation of the correspondence or referential theory of meaning.

Considering the fact that, the central aim of the postmodernist is to deconstruct the already imposed system, such as idealism, materialism, rationalist and many others. Jean-Francois Lyotard (born 1924) came to reject Marxism because he saw it as just another version of the attempt to impose a universalistic set of ideas and values upon the world. Lyotard refers to the attitude of imposing universalistic ideas and values upon the world as “metanarrative”. The essence of his postmodernism is to expose and challenge them (metanarrative). The state of affairs is mirrored throughout postmodern society at large, however, for now we are confronted by a multiplicity of different contexts and identities, such that we are now confronted by a variety of different contexts and identities, each sustained through their own terms of reference or language games’ and whose Legitimation cannot be subsumed under some (old) “meta narrative” (Lemon, 2003:366).

Lyotard opined the recognition of differences (for instance gender, sexual orientation, work styles, family structures, and ethnic practices and valued. These differences have to be legitimated through the ‘regimes of discourse’ in which they are expressed respectively. Not only that, the ‘knowledge’ which come out these contexts should not be reconciled under some overarching, universal motion of the ‘proper’ norms for learning. Instead, they ought to be expressed as the plurality of ways of living, none should be acknowledged as better as or more right than others. With this, Lyotard pointed out that the characteristic of the postmodern world is ‘*Dissensus*’ not consensus. He acknowledges that this might generate conflicting ideas but the gulf between them is such that there is no common ground.

This is the emergence of the ‘different’, whose unknowability must be repressed rather than some consensus being imposed on them, and one or more of the parties being silenced. The exploration of the ‘*differend*’ will open up the more sublime aspect of life which will have been

repressed by the universalizing instrumentality – oriented ‘knowledge’ of modernity (Ibid:366). The metanarratives is characteristic of (especially western) experiences, expressive of the multiplicity of identities and prates into and out of which we toss, as corks in a vast ocean.

The boarder of the postmodern is a sure tool in the deconstruction of Hegel’s monistic idealism. This stems from the fact that his system works as an instrumental knowledge for ordering the world, and impose itself as a universalistic set of ideas and values around world.

The work of an ontological postmodernist is to expose and challenge them. In this instance, the we have recognized reality from a pluralistic or multiplicity of perspective. We have to recognize the multiplicity of identities and praxes into which live in the world. No one identity should be seen as better as or more superior than the others. Going through our definition of terms, we mentioned that metaphysics is the study of reality and transcendences, in this context it is the radical thought, contemplation of gender reality.

When we look at Hegel’s (See chapter 2, section 3) contemplation of gender reality, we discover his imposed ideas on the state of women in his idealism. Our role here is to purge Hegel’s idealism of his domineering, universalistic sets if ideas and values on the gender reality, in this instance, the women. There is need not to regard one gender as more superior than the other. At the same, there is need to listen to the women, what are they saying, their stand and their ideas, rather than judging them as inferior and less rational indeed, exploration of the women world, their lived experience may generate new insights into as yet unknowable modes of experiencing the world. It is more so, open up the more sublime aspects of life which have been repressed by the universalizing, and in this instance, the instrumentality – oriented knowledge of modernity.

By accepting all sexes as equal, none is more inferior or less rational than the other, it will help us to discover produce, transmit and accept knowledge that is required to develop the human world. This will help us to redress the errors of existing strident systems, on femininity, gender, woman, and bring out the originality in us. In this regard, Joan W. Scott, in invoking the thinking of Michel Foucault has argues that:

Not what happen, not what ‘truth’ there is ‘out there’ to be discovered and transmitted but what we know about the past, what the rules and conventions are that govern the production and

acceptance of the knowledge we design as history (in this instance, philosophy and or history of philosophy) (Scott, 1989:680 – 692).

This will make us think of that there is an ‘other’ side of the world, which have not be explored, such that human history is not purely referential but rather constructed by historians. Issues like Linguistic turn and the exploration of gender, standards of inclusion and exclusion, measures of importance, and rules of evaluation are not objective criteria but politically produced conventions. Scott (Ibid) challenged the attempts of who she referred to as the “guardians of or orthodoxy” or the canonizers of discipline / knowledge, to maintain unquestionable predominance for their point of view by insisting that they represent “truth” or “Science”, “objectivity” or “tradition”, or “history-as-it-has-always-been-written. If we accept that emancipatory directions is tending toward pluralistic and simply manifestation of different praxes, it means that we are accepting the multiplicity of identity, recognition of differences (especially gender and sexual orientations, as they are our major concerns in this study) and *dissensus* or better still disagreement as the characteristics, feature for human development. This means that we have accepted the postmodern condition and hence we are not bound to the doctrines of idealism especially Hegel. In the light of this postmodernist condition, we shall examine the schism in the idealism of Hegel’s thought

#### **4.2 Hegel in the Eyes of Postmodern Thinkers**

Hegel was from the beginning concerned with how to bring order and historical perspective to the tangled problems of their time. Art, Philosophy and religion are for Hegel the contents of the absolute spirit. Hegel differentiated the sphere of absolute spirit with objective spirit which is the sphere of politics, economics, and the institutions of any society. More so the sphere of private and individual interest and concerns of life constitutes the subjective spirit. In people’s history the spheres of objective and subjective spirit are organically and mutually dependent on each other, but are separable only in philosophical analysis for the purpose of knowledge and understanding. Hegel considers the realm of the absolute spirit as most important because individuals, states, all things that belong to the other two realms pass and perish. It is only the inner content of people’s strivings and conscious ideals outlive them, to pass to posterity in the

creations of arts, religion, and Philosophy. It is within these three realms that people give to itself what it regards as true, and these truths alone escape the slaughter bench of history. Hegel's books; *Philosophy of Right* and *Philosophy of History* constitute the realm of objective spirit while *phenomenology of Spirit* and *Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences (Logic)* contains his metaphysics in the purest form.

Hegel is good at illuminating historical details, for instance his explanation of the significance of Sophocles' *Antigone* (this has been discussed in chapters three and four) or Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Hegel used *Antigone* as an illustration of the place of the woman in the society and her place in the realm of the spirit. Hegel's commentaries on the *Antigone*, and his writings on the phenomenological description of the woman in the *phenomenology of spirit* was biased. We are left to ask for the relevance of Hegel for this study on women and to this contemporary time. Philosophical study of women is a study of reality and transcendence. This study as we have seen is a radical, thoughtful, contemplation of gender reality. And Hegel's idealism presented itself as a systematic study of reality as a whole. Hegel's absolute idealism achieved an extraordinary ascendancy even in the German intellectual world in the 1820s and 1830s.

The 1840's is the great age of rebellion against the Hegelian System, the age of the young Hegelians, Feuerbach, Ruge, Sterner, Marx, the time also when Kierkegaard began his short, intense intellectual career. In the 1850s and 1860s, Hegel's philosophy fell into virtual oblivion. He was vaguely remembered in Bismarckian, Germany as the state philosopher of "Restoration" Prussia and peripherally approved of or vilified in consequence. Taylor (1975:537) remarked that there is an amusing bit of correspondence between Marx and Engels of the 1870's in which they give vent to their impatience at the ignorance of the younger generation. The occasion was a footnote by a young social democratic editor in which he referred to Hegel as the philosopher of the "Royal Prussian Idea of the State". The incidence illustrates how much the Hegelian roles of Marx and Engels thought came to be misunderstood even in their own movement.

Dilthey in the 1890s stated the inquiry into Hegel's development by re-examining his writings, this inquiry continues till today. At the same time, Hegel's influence began to spread abroad. "Hegelianism" with perspective became important in England and America through T. H. Green, Bradley, Bosanquet, Royce, and was dominant in Oxford for some decades. In 1930 interest in



Hegel along with Marx, began to give in to the French philosophical world; while from the turn of the century, Hegel became an important pole of philosophical thought in Italy, mainly through the work of Croce, and Gentile.

Hegel 'comeback' seem to be a cyclical phenomenon occasionally political catastrophes and consequent cultural shift in Europe, two major movements most often cited as causes of the current renaissance are existentialism and Neo – Marxism. Well existentialism was not simply a reaction against Hegelian synthesis, but also incorporation of many of Hegel's insights as well as his dialectical method. Without Hegel, Kierkegaard would never have been the twentieth century influence he has become. Unaware a Kierkegaard may have been of how much he was borrowing from the Arsenal of his great opponent, twentieth – century existentialist such as Merleau – Ponty, and Sartre are no longer innocent in this respect. They use quite frankly those insights of Hegel that suit their purpose and have done much to 'existentialize' Hegel by his best known follower and opponent Karl Marx (Gary: 1970: 1). Sartre has in essence incorporated existentialism into Marxism by exploiting the writings of the young Marx, now often seen as precursors of existentialist themes. While the Neo – Marxists of Germany have not had return to Hegel, for in many respects they never left him. One can say that they have rediscovered the common bonds between Hegel and Marx. This shows that Hegel was from the beginning linked indissolubly with the intellectual foundations of that new way of experiencing the world during the last century which we know variously as dialectic materialism, Marxism, or communism.

The fact is Hegel is returning, ever though his actual synthesis is dead; that is no one actually believes his central ontological thesis that the universe is posted by a spirit whose essence is rational necessity. We have to ask why Hegel's philosophy is highly relevant to our time as current interest attests, even though his central thesis is dead. We need to find out why his thought can remain important while his conclusion is quite abandoned. Well the age of enlightenment with its industrial, technological advancement, urbanization, civilization could not find philosophical expression in Hegel's vision. It could be argued that modernity is a protest while Hegel's vision was of a world reconciled to the spirit, but the Romantic Spirit is conscious of being in opposition to modern society.

Hegel built his philosophy on pantheism with the objective to combine this vision of nature as the expression of the spirit, with the implied call to man to recover expressive unity with it, on the one hand, with the aspiration to rational autonomy on the other hand. Thus Hegel's synthesis is read because it is built on an earlier and outmoded form of thought which is no longer viable. However, if Hegel thesis is dead, why in his philosophy highly relevant?

Hegel's synthesis has been anthropologized (transferred from guests onto man) we see this in Marx's philosophy. Marx was the view that man comes to shape nature and society to his purpose. Marx takes up this radical critique of inhumanly (Marx 1964: 43 – 4). He takes up a common theme of virtually all expressivist critics of modern civilization, and denounces a society which makes possession the central human goal at the expense of expression. The drive our possessive it all belongs to the alienated world where human powers are so detached from him that they can be transferred and circulate as property, a poor distorted substitute for genuine recovery. "Private property has made us so stupid and partial that an object is only ours when we have it when it exists for us as capital when it is utilized in some way" (Ibid: 159).

The spirit read man, in a generic essence (Gattungswesen) not man as an individual. This implies that man takes over nature to be a problem to human. This is self – creation of man through the fashioning of an adequate external expression as the objectification (vergegenständlichung) of man's species life (Ibid: 128). This introduced division among men, and exploitation of nature. The genetic man does not recognize himself in his own objection, just as Hegel spirit is the period of unhappy consciousness. This division can be overcome if class division is ultimately forced by indigene once men have achieved sufficient mastery of over nature (Taylor, 1975:549).

In this regard, Marx writes;

Communism is a fully grown developed naturalism in humanism and as a fully developed humanism is naturalism. It is the definitive resolution of the antagonism between man and nature, and between man and man. It is the true solution of the conflict between existence and essence between freedom and necessity between individual and species. It is the solution of the riddle of history and knows itself to be the solution (1964:155).

Here, we see the transposed Hegel's philosophy used by Marx to reconcile oppositions in particular between man and nature. This is unlike in Hegel where reconciliation is achieved by a

recognition is the embodiment of spirit, for Marx reconciliation is created, not recognition. Recall that in Hegel the subject; *Geist*, is the spirit of all, reconciliation must come through recognition, while in Marx recognition must come through transformation because his subject is generic man. Marx reconciliation will be incomplete; will find its completeness in Hegel. Marx while acknowledging his debt to Hegel naturally released all the indignation of the radical enlightenment at his concept of the state. In order to reconcile radical freedom with nature, Hegel developed his notion that radical spirit was the foundation of everything; everything is an emancipation of freedom. When spirit is transposed as man, an immense, activist conception is created to generate the most powerful revolutionary doctrine. However, Marx problem was a synthesis between the radial enlightening which sees man as capable of objectifying nature and society in science order to master it, and the Hegelian aspiration to wholeness. This comes when man dominates nature and can impose his free design in it, at the same time dominates nature by objectifying it in sacrifice practice what was from young Marxist-Leninism began to be treated on a blue-print in the hands of master builders rather than the consciousness of a new age of freedom. The idea of freedom and of the wholeness of communist man in Marxist movement remain the Hegelian finding, in the society which occurs at critical turning point in history, so that the very terms necessary to explain one period are not applicable at another, this was certainly implicit in the original theory of the young Marx, as had been in Hegel. It remained essential to the logic of Marx's notion of revolution and the transition to communism.

Another relevance of Hegel can be seen from the dilemma of absolute freedom as conceived by Hegel. When Hegel's notion of the self – posing *Geist* (spirit) is transposed on to man, it seems the power of spirit who creates his own embodiment, develop his conception of freedom as self – certain. This is evidence in modern science and technology when we talk about Hegel's Absolute Freedom, it is freedom without situation. This has led to different perception of freedom which is almost everywhere among the protest and Liberalism moment founding. The dilemma absolute freedom loved be destructive, but at look beyond the empty formulae, that it should be an endless creativity, no division at any level of existence, it should be accommodative of inter – subjective ideas bring about real liberation of expression a field for creative action, the breaking down of bareness, a real participatory democracy. This could capture the modern conception of subjectivity which has spawned a number of empires of freedom most importantly, it depends

freedom as self – dependence. This is a common basic underling the revolutionary development in the modern notion on freedom.

It is by equally freedom and self – dependable, that complete freedom valid mean the absolute of all situation in this instance predicament which sets is a certain task or calls for a certain purpose from us to be free. The only kind of situation which this view can recognize is one defined by the obstacles to untrammelled action which have to be conquered or set aside external oppression, in attentive aspiration imposed by society, alienation, gender discrimination, natural limit. This calls for liberation which is a process that result in freedom full freedom would be ‘situationless’.

Hegel’s philosophy is an important step in the development of the modern notice of freedom. Hegel saw freedom there self-creation which was attribute to philosophy as the chance essence of cosmic spirit, which needed to be transposed to man to push the conception of freedom as self – dependence to its ultimate dilemma. Absolute freedom has acquired an unprecedented impact on political life and aspirations through the work of Marx and his successors. And one of the sources of Nietzsche’s thought which draw the nihilist consequences of this idea was the young Hegelian revolt of 1840s. The profoundest critics of Hegel notion of freedom (as self – dependence) laid bare its emptiness and its potential destructiveness with a truly remarkable insight and prescience. This has paradoxically helped both to bring this modern doctrine to its most extreme expression (such as in the polarity of sexes, same-sex marriage) and to show the dilemma in which it involves us. This has been argued in the scope and delimitation of the study, chapters four and five.

From another view, other relevance stems from the perspective that Hegel’s philosophy opened up the way for the contemporary turn in philosophy; first, through Hegel’s principle of embodiment and second Hegel discussion of the understanding of the language, art, religion, and philosophy as the various manifestation of the absolute.

Apart from Marx being a heir of Hegel philosophy we see Schopenhauer's pessimistic concept of the will and the body as its objectification derived from the Hegelian stream of thought. He proves a model for a deeply pessimistic view of human freedom based on the sense that man's instinctual nature is other than an uncombinable with rational freedom and at the same time unconquerable. We see this in background Kierkegaard use of 'despair' and his three stages of life aesthetics, ethical or moral life, and religion life as evidence of Hegel's dialectics. More so, Nietzsche's view that if radical freedom of self – dependable is empty, it risks ending in nihilism that is self- affirmation through the rejection of all values, is an off-shoot of Hegel's thought.

The notion of a freedom rooted in our nature and yet which can be frustrated by our own desires or our limited aspiration requires a more articulated, many smoothed theory of human motivation. The course of modern history has challenged the demand for absolute freedom and rouses the dilemmas of self – dependence in its acutest form. In this attempt to situate subjectivity, the phenomenological movement came in place with Husserl. He define autonomy of the real subject against psychologism, the reduction of logic to psychology, though he explore the structures of subjectivity, but he turns to deal with 'Life-world; the insertion of our subjectivity in our situation on natural, embodied beings. This was taken up by Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty. Finally what survived are the insights about embodied thought, phenomenology itself as a method of 'pure description' of subjectivity, disappears from the scene.

In a way to define subjectivity, there was a growing interest in tracing the conceptual connection between thoughts, feelings, intentions, their bodily expressions and antecedents, the twentieth-century philosophers made a departure and focused on theories of meaning and philosophy of language. The characteristic of the twentieth-century discussion of language is that meaning itself has been a problem especially when we ask the questions, what is it for words or language, or other signs, to have meaning? Thus language was seen as a vehicle of a certain mode of consciousness achieved through speech, or other activities which required Linguistic meaning (such as involving some power, performing rites, clarifying on us in and so on) and soon which can only be explicated by situating language is the Matrix of our concerns, preachers, activities and our forming Life. Some view of these contemporary philosophers varies, for instance, Later Wittgenstein has made arguments for the priority of language over individual words in his

discussion of the claims of ostensive definition; explication of meaning must end in a reference to forms of Life. Polanyi portrayed our explicit thought as an achievement surrounded by a horizon of the implicit, of subsidiary awareness, Heidegger speaks of Linguistic consciousness as 'disclosure; as creating a field of awareness in which things can appear and of our consciousness of things as shaped by our 'concern'. The 'structuralist' thinkers have explored language as a 'grid' embodying a certain awareness of the world. These ways of understanding Linguistic thought situate this thought in 'nature', that is, in the Life of man, an embodied, social being, while avoiding a reductive account of language and meaning through a mechanistic causal theory (for instance behaviorism or psychologism).

Hegel, in a way can be placed in the line of development which leads up to the contemporary ways of understanding language even though he departed from it. He sees different languages of art, religion, and discursive thought as expressing an awareness of the Absolute which is not at first descriptive at all (in art) and which is never simply descriptive, since the revelation in religion and philosophy completes the realization of the Absolute and does not simply portray it. Hegel's thesis is unclear. This unclear and matriculate is itself shown to have a necessary existence what makes the final ascendances of conceptual clearly is of course Hegel's ontology, the thesis that what we ultimately discover at the basis of everything is the idea, conceptual necessity itself. Once this ontology fades from view, what remains is the notion that descriptive conceptual thought is omniscient and ultimately self-sufficient, that is, that it does not in the end need to rely on a background of implicit understanding. And in this, Hegel seems to emerge as the ally of those in the central tradition of modern subjectivity who take the existence of descriptive discourse quite unproblematically for granted.

Hegel's writings provide one of the most profound and far-reaching attempts to work out a vision of embodied subjectivity of thought and freedom emerging from the stream of Life, finding expression in the form of social existence, and discovering themselves in relation to nature and history. Above all Hegel systematic thinking in philosophy, is a great; the systematic search for underlying principles and their integralities, to bring other and historical perspective to the tangled problems of their times. Hegel philosophy can be summed up as an attempt to make totality not transcendent, not inapplicable, but immanent and thus within the reach knowledge

(Rotenstreich, 1974:3). It is based on this that we anchored the search for the postmodernist phenomenologico-ontological reconciliation of the polarity between the sexes on Hegel's idealism. For the spirit is not a substance but an activity. The power of the spirit of any age (*Zeitgeist*) is what holds everyone in its spell. The overwhelming majority of men are always prisoners of the prevailing perspectives of their own period, their particular situations, and their national cultures. The spirit of any age is inexhaustible blend of the spirit of the past epochs only richer and more self-aware than any of the preceding.

#### **4.3 The polarity in Hegel's Idealism: A Postmodernist Analysis**

From Hegel's analysis of the woman in his idealism (see chapter three of this work), we see a lot of polarities in his idealism, that requires an update to sustain its relevance. The aim of this section is to discuss the polarity in Hegel's idealism. As we have discussed in chapter three, section two (3.2) of this work, we found out that Hegel's idealism relegated women in four perspectives, thus; epistemological, sexual difference, natural law, moral and political life. Thus this forms the major part of the paradox in his thought.

However, the woman is seen as the guardian of the sacred claims of the family, in Hegel's analysis in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and *Philosophy of Right* of the relation between the family, civil society and the state. From the previous discussion in chapter three, one can see that Hegel's account of female virtue and potential as being grounded in a discredited biological essentialism. The Woman, Hegel understands as by nature destined to fulfill the role of passive embodiment and as such nurturer of family values, while her male counterpart assumes the challenge of progressively transcending natural immediacy, creating a cultural sphere of free moral action of policies, art, science, religion and philosophy. Hegel's denial of reason to women constitutes a polarity in his idealism. According to Hegel,

...the difference in the physical characteristics of the two sexes has a rational basis and consequently acquires an intellectual and ethical significance.

...man has his actual and substantive life in the state, in learning and so forth, as well as in labour and struggle with the external world. Woman on the other hand, has her substantive destiny in the family and to be imbued with family piety is her ethical frame of mind (Hegel, 1967: 166).

Hegel, by this citation, relegates woman to the family level. Similarly his phenomenology, he places the woman as the custodian of divine law where she is restricted to the family and denied the transcendence of the society. As regards the woman's education, Hegel wrote;

Women are capable of education, but are not made for activities, which demand a universal faculty such as the more advanced sciences, philosophy and certain forms of artistic productions. Women may have happy ideas, taste and elegance but they cannot attain to the ideal (Ibid, 166, addition Hegel, 1973 : 263).

To say that women's education is not made for activities, which require the use of the universal faculty of reason as Hegel thought simply shows that women cannot rationalize. It also shows the extent to which Hegel denigrates the women. Since they cannot transcend, so to say, or share in the dialectics to attain to the absolute, Hegel says they cannot attain to the ideal. Hegel excludes women from knowledge that is the kind of education that will help women emancipate or enlighten themselves and give share or participate in humanity. According to Woods; "given today's social and intellectual climate, it would seem that the proponent of such quaintly repugnant view could only be condemned as among the worst of misogynists" (Woods, 1990: 243).

Hegel in his phenomenology made, consciousness, self-consciousness, reason, objectivity and dialectics to be male-centered. This is because Hegel believed that the female character is flawed. She cannot reason, the instinct of consciousness in the female does not go through the process of dialectics. Death is the last duty that the divine law accomplishes, while the human law joins the government. (Hegel, 1953: 471) Hegel believed that the woman is less rational than the man. He therefore, concretized his thoughts and ideals of rationality upon male. This corresponds with Genevieve Lloyd (1984; 104) argument that Hegel, alongside some mainstream philosophers, tried to establish the maleness of reason. This view of his is vividly captures in his popular saying that the *real is rational, and the rational is the real*. Ordinarily this fore going position of his should have rather affirmed about gender neutrality of reason, unfortunately, Hegel's analysis not only genderized reason, but established that gender difference and inequality is metaphysical and essentialized, thereby calling for a critique of such metaphysics and epistemology.



More so, Hegel's analysis of the woman and her status is seen as raising the polarity of the subjective knower and knowledge. Given the fact that knowledge is situated and self-experienced, knowledge includes the situation, perspective of the knower while breaking the claims of what claims are true or warranted. Knowledge as subjective means that people experience the world differently, by using their body (embodiment), first person to third person accounts (phenomenological facts) values, and even personal knowledge of others and their levels and styles of appreciation (naturalism, theism, and different world views) this means that gender (women) can lay claim to epistemic privileges, foundations that are already existing.

Besides, one can argue that Hegel's writing on women runs between the paradox of bias and social constructions. Thus, the paradox of bias stems from the fact that there is androgenic and sexist biases in philosophical writings, on the theories about women, sexuality and gender differences. This implies that Hegel incorporated certain bias in his philosophic writings resulting to the paradox of bias. We see this in the way Hegel anchored his idealism on Sexual Difference. Hegel's explanation of the relation between identity and differences articulates the fundamental problem of contemporary society. From this stand, Hegel division of the ethical between human law (public, male) and divine law (private, female) central to Hegel's account of the woman and the state seems asymmetrical, illegitimately consigning women to a degraded subordinate status inadequate to their true human worth as free, fully rational individuals.

Furthermore, Hegel's description of the human law in his phenomenology as the actual universality and the power of the state brings out his ideas of sexual difference (Hegel, 1953: 40). In trying to insist on women's subjugationist and subservient status, he restricted women to the confines of divine law. Within his thought both divine law and human are as parallels. This is a way of frustrating relationship between the genders. It is as well, such relationship that polarizes the sexes. Hegel (1953, 478) writes:

The brother in the member of the family in whom its spirit becomes individualized and enabled ... Passes over into consciousness of universality ... and the sister remains director of the home and the preserver of the divine law.

Hegel believes that the men passes from divine law to human law but the women remain stagnated at the realm of divine law. Nevertheless, Hegel's focus on logical relations between identity and difference, together with his emphasis upon the importance of the principle of subjectivity, individual freedom in modern society, offer contemporary feminist ample grounds for a renewed reflection on his thought. It is argued that Hegel's account is rooted in a complex appreciation of the significance of family life, which is one-sided if the family and the woman's identification with it are construed negatively, as simply a limit to be transcended on the journey to authentic individual selfhood. Ravven sees Hegel's analysis of family as being oppressive to woman both in its cultural and spiritual value. She also contends that this is its inevitable weakness as a modern institution (Ravven, 1988: 149-69). Hegel's characteristics of feminine consciousness as physiologically 'Plant-like' displays an underdeveloped unity of feelings, in contrast to a more active, articulated male existence of animals thereby denying women participation in consciousness, which is the basis for full human transcendence.

Hegel's reading of Sophocles play *Antigone* further presents perspectives to Hegel's evaluation of women. It also presents the opportunity to evaluate Hegel on issue of feminism and natural law. *Antigone* (Watling, 1954; 26) is a beautiful play that has always garnered interest from philosophers and revolutionaries. Hegel himself called it one of the most sublime and, in every respect, most excellent works of art (Aesthetics). The play presents the contentious relations between women and the state and between religion and the state, both of which are important, especially at a time when we are faced with the increasing of U.S military hegemony, as well as the unprecedented rise in violent religious fundamentalism around the world.

In the play, a brazen and brave woman Antigone defies an ordinance issued by king of Thebes, Geon, to let the slain body of Antigone's brother rot above the ground without a proper burial because of his betrayal of the city of Thebes. Antigone, citing her duties to her family and to divine law, buries her brother (we assume, though we don't see her doing so in the play). When

confronted by Creon she refuses to feel guilty and to repent for her actions, thereby inflaming the king, who rails:

Show me a greater crime in all earth? She, she destroy cities, rips up houses.  
Breaks the rank of spearmen into head long rout, but the ones who last it, the great mass of them.  
Owe their lives to discipline; therefore we must defend the men, who live by law,  
Never let some women triumph over us. Better to fall from power, if fall we must, at the hands  
of a man-never be rate inferior to a woman, never (Watling; 1954: 144).

Hegel's speculative vision of Antigone as nosily, yet traditionally, representing the divine law of the family in opposition to Creon's (human) law of the *polis* represents Antigone as a rebel, probably a revolt of the particular against subsumption into a universal. Hegel confined women to the family, but Hegel's Antigone who moved from divine law to human law was punished by death. Hegel says *Antigone* is one of the most sublime works of art. In this context, this seriously shows restricted pursuit of personal, individual freedom and rights of the women. This shows Hegel's determination to sustain the woman at the undialectical level (divine law) and exclusion from reasoning and freedom. According to Aquinas;

The natural law belongs to everything to which a [Hu]man is inclined according to [their] his nature ...Therefore since the rational soul is the power form of man, there is in every man, a natural inclination to act according to nature (Aquinas ST, 1-11, q.94, q3).

Hegel systematically misrepresents the woman Antigone as a trans-historical idea of woman, as wife and mother, who is relevant only in within the confines of the family. Accordingly, Patricia Mills makes the following submission about Hegel's treatment of women.

Unlike even the slave in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* who can become a free subject, the equal of his master through handwork and risk of life, woman appears as simply a "victim of the dialectic" whose unconscious, inarticulate, natural immediacy must be suppressed as the price of male transcendence and freedom. She is the ghost destined forever to haunt the margins of Hegel's supposedly complete speculative system, the sacrificial other whose static condition, her restriction to the passive life of the family, makes possible the development of civil society, and so the dialectical progress of modern culture (Mills, 1987: 38-9).

It could be argued that the dialectical movement in Hegel's phenomenology of spirit that leads to the possibility of the properly political, social and ethical realm is dependent on the suppression of the women and the feminine. Hegel excludes women from reason and freedom; this is most

exemplified in his analysis of Antigone as one who flouts the position accorded the woman in the society.

Obviously, Hegel did not recognize Antigone's transcendence radically. Her action destabilizes the state, and the family she represents through her public speech, act, and this disrupts the precarious balance of gender identity. This legacy of Antigone's defiance appeared to be lost in the contemporary efforts to recast political oppositions as legally plaint and to seek the legitimacy of the state in the espousal of feminist claims.

Hegel's *Antigone* is a response to the problem of female desire, and as such, is an attempt to nullify the persistence of women as *the other* as she challenges any simple notion of the rule of reason over passion. Hegel often had a reactionary attitude to women such that he relegates them to family, to emotion outside reason, to unreflecting subjectivity, and in political life, this shall be discussed below.

Unlike Luce Irigaray and Seyla Benhabib, Mills is the one who dealt in details with Hegel's interpretation of Sophocles' great play. These writers stopped at the interpretation of Hegel's writing on Sophocles' play. They missed the actual pitfalls in the dialectic of Hegel. Mills only saw the way Hegel confines woman inside the family as against the way Antigone actually leaves the family to risk her life in the polis. She considered that Antigone thus transcends the limitations of womanhood set down by Hegel. But in as much as this is the Antigone Hegel is for, it does not show that his dialectic carries him in a different direction from all his reactionary political positions on "woman".

The explanation of Mill that Hegel disregards the sister-sister relationship in his choice of sister-brother relationship as what, in theory, could possibly present the female as being equal with the male. Or that he fails to discuss Antigone's pursuit of suicide on the grounds that "she refuses to fit neatly into the Hegelian enterprise in which universality (that is the males) ultimately dominates". Mills comment reveals hostility to the Hegelian concept of the universal. Another

important fact is where Hegel concluded that Antigone's suicide is as a result of guilt of life, since she [Antigone] left the divine law to join the human law. One can argue that Antigone's suicide is as a result of strong will and determination not to fall as a victim to the king's judgment on her. We should be arguing about, the will, not exactly the guilt of life as Hegel argued same way. However, to question for the relevance of Hegel's phenomenology or dialectics is essential for feminist discourse. For Hutchings, that truth, which Hegel called "Absolute knowledge"; is not the "end of History" but spirit as ever changing realm of self-changing inter-subjectivity that is fundamentally self-determining (Hutchings, 2003: 41). For a better appropriation of Hegel, there is need to get a better understanding of Hegel's philosophic system( as have discussed in chapters one and two), rather than looking on prominent passages in his philosophy where he analyses women, the feminine, sexual difference, sex, gender, marriage and family. This is because a more comprehensive analysis of Hegel's philosophy will bring out insights for an appropriation of his philosophic system for feminist purposes and search for an emancipatory direction for women.

Simeon de Beauvoir's appropriation of Hegel's master/slave dialectic in the development of her concept of woman as other in *The Second Sex* brought out the pathway of realizing a self-conscious existence that embodies real freedom and independence through mutual recognition. Although De Beauvoir, like Hegel, saw freedom as emerging through reciprocal recognition of the freedom of the other, De Beauvoir's concept of freedom was still somewhat influenced by this abstraction of freedom from humanity's relation to nature. This means that the pull of biology as a barrier for women led De Beauvoir to the conclusion that women depend on biology to recognize their freedom. This, for sure, seems a misguided conclusion. Thus, Beauvoir limitation was the pull of existentialism that took Hegel's life as a struggle for a historical starting point for the process of recognition, passing over Hegel's view that all historical development of the spirit includes within it the biological natural foundation for human life. In Hegel analysis, human young comprehends quickly that their very existence depends on learning the accumulated social experience passed on to them through parenting.

However, human experience begins from a foundation where the social and biological are intertwined in an unconscious way through parenting and kinship ties. Ethical society, where social life has yet to fully realize itself in distinction from this natural foundation, is Hegel's starting point for the development of spirit, reflected in the ancient Greek tragedy of *Antigone*. Both *Antigone* and *Creon* are bound up by nature through kinship ties, including *Creon's* inherited position as king. Another plot to *Antigone's* tragedy which reaches beyond the ethical, moral arena is this immediate principle of pure individuality on its own account. In a non-egoistic way, *Antigone* stands out as an individual and pays with her life, both master/slave or ethical society are mere beginnings, which give an intimation of the movement of the whole phenomenology.

In theory of the *ethical*, in the *Phenomenology*, Hegel saw men as representing government, community and law. The family (divine law) where he placed the woman is to be suppressed so that the human law can excel. Hegel described the womankind as; 'the everlasting irony in the life of the community' (Hegel, 1953: 496). For Hegel, the woman is the opposite of the man. Totally different from the man, in reasoning and moral, Hegel excludes the woman from political life. Close examination of Hegel's description of the womankind suggests the following:

The woman is corrupt and therefore a criminal, in Hegel's words;

... changes by intrigue the universal purpose of government into a private end, transforms its universal activity into a work of this or that specific individual, and perverts the universal property of the state into the possession and ornament for the family" (Ibid).

This shows that Hegel did not see virtues in the life of the woman; such virtues as honesty, justice and morals. He attributed selfishness, greed and theft to womanhood. Hegel thought that in policies, the woman lacks grave wisdom of maturity, which belongs to men, to handle political and governmental activities (Ibid: 497). Most of all, Hegel's writing on the *ethical* instructs the community to take up the attitude to suppress individualism (womanhood) as a necessary hostile principle. Irigaray (1985: 217) puts it this way;

The only legitimate response to Hegel's negation of feminine freedom and dignity is to negate the negation... woman, Hegel's everlasting "irony of the community" must affirm herself precisely as the contemporary, ironic voice of radical otherness, and so create a cultural space in which genuine difference will not simply be overreached.

On reading the major works of Hegel, one may infer that the woman is neither the master nor the slave. This purposely gives her the power to upset the order of the dialectics and to threaten the progress towards self-conscious freedom of the male members of the community through her unconscious and inarticulate power.

In Hegel's schema, Mills argues that women remain at the level of pre-reflective animal life, she merely 'intuits' her role as the protector of the natural ethical law of the family' (Mills, 1987: 35) and cannot achieve even the self-consciousness of the slave because she is not someone capable of genuine human action. Confined as she is within the family... she can never know herself as a particular self. She remains one of the walking dead, an 'unreal, insubstantial shadow' (Ibid: 31).

Thus, Hegel's philosophy can be said to be limited by its transformation of the particular into the abstract category of particularity. When Hegel substitutes an empty concept (particularity for the concrete forms of actual human experience (the particular) he proclaims a philosophy of identity, dominated by the universal. This refusal of the dialectics of non-identity, of the particular, of difference, is especially relevant to the case of Antigone who symbolizes the excluded forms of female experiences.

Similarly to Mills' analysis, which then criticizes Hegel's account of woman, both because Mill's argued that Hegel restricts the woman to a biologically determined destiny as a dweller in first nature and Hegel's failure to acknowledge her concrete individuality, her capacity for a particular, free response to the confining circumstances of natural ethical life (Ibid, 27). In line with this argument, Soren Kierkegaard the nineteenth century existentialist (1813 – 1855) pursued an analogous critique of Hegel's failure to take account of the particular existing subject; he acknowledges the irredeemable concreteness of finite existence (Kenny, 2006: 327). Of course, Kierkegaard made no distinction between woman and man in this regard. For him, the main task is to oppose Hegel's view that human thought has a speculative dimension at all and not to complain, as does some contemporary feminists, that only men can aspire to thinking.

On the contrary, Irigaray argued that woman's freedom, her particularity qua differences or otherness, is manifest precisely in a deep-seated participation in primordial natural rhythms, while Mills reasserts the demand for female liberation from the bonds of nature by seeking validation for the concrete individual experience of female life. For Ravven (1988: 161), Hegel's account of modern woman is problematic. She argued that the modern state is, in principle, a reconciliation of the fully manifested purposes and conflicts of (male) individuals and subgroups. This means that while women remain essentially rooted in the peaceful immediate harmony of family life, men must negate this initial unexamined harmony, moving beyond it into a public sphere of conflict where by submitting (themselves) to physical needs and the chain of these external necessities and so imposing upon themselves this barrier and this infinitude, they can qualify themselves for entrance into a world of fuller ethical relationships; the state. Within this natural ethical harmony of the family, such true freedom is impossible. Freedom is accessible only to those who have experienced the process of self-alienation, conflict and reconciliation. Yet the condition of that process is life within the family. The family is the very ethical foundation of civil society and state. For those destined to tread the familial hearth thus it is also the foundation of their exclusion from the tumultuous sphere of individual spiritual development.

Natural, at the same time religious, morality is the piety of the family. In this social relation, morality consists in the members behaving toward each other not as individuals possessing an independent will, not as persons. The family therefore is excluded from that process of development in which history takes its rise (Hegel, 1965; 59).

Does Hegel perhaps, mean that the family principle of ethical substantiality is driven into abeyance by the rule of the bourgeois principle of individual, subjective freedom which underlines and drives the historical development of the state, to re-emerge at the end of this history in the demand for a more comprehensive articulation of their essential unity?

Is this rise of the women's movement among other things a harbinger of this post-historical mentality, which is precisely because of the principle of freedom, in actual demand now? And this demands a fuller acknowledgement and integration of that a historical, substantive ethical principle, which this very historical development presupposes? However, Hegel's modern family



can be seen as a realm of mutual surrender of individual personality. There, only women persist in this altruistic state of ethical immediacy, while man's further duty is to enter civil society, forget their individual self and so realize the explicit self-consciousness unity of the membership in the state. Through education, first in the family and then in civil society, the male sheds his passivity and immediacy to become a mature adult. However, nostalgic he may be for the harmony and immediacy of family relations. Hegel (1967: 187) speaks;

The final purpose of education (*Bildung*) therefore is liberation and the struggle for the higher liberation still: education is the absolute transition from an ethical substantiality which is immediate and natural to the one which is intellectual and so both infinitely subjective and lofty enough to have attained universality of form.

Woman and family is the sphere of ethical substantiality, from which the male citizen needs liberation. Could it be that Hegel saw family life as an end-in-itself, perhaps as oppressive? Or did he see it as a danger if it prevented men from achieving self-conscious individual freedom? The educative role of modern family is to nurture bourgeois citizenship by offering the (male) child an immediate formative experience, a model, of what it is to live as a member within a community in which his individuality is not independent, but is grasped as subordinate to the whole, when the young men move out into the market place of conflicting desires and personal choices which, is civil society. This transcendence is logically necessitated from a developmental standpoint by the male universal rational capacity. Man not woman achieves full self-conscious freedom.

Not only that one can read the influence of social and political factors on his philosophical writings, but because they are influence by the sexist values of the wilder society. This shows that philosophical writings are not only motivated from social influences, but they are also restructured by social influences, this is the paradox of social construction. This bias can be overcome in three ways; first through systematic or procedural approach where the epistemically bad bias can be kept in check through appropriate social organization or inquiry. Second, through the pragmatist tradition to undermine the sharp dichotomy between fact and value, and third, through postmodernism which stress the plurality of thought.

We limit the argument to postmodernism, leaving the others for further research. Postmodernist rejection of absolute truth, knowledge and narrative supports the fact that knowledge, truth, reason is not masculine, and it is given to all irrespective of gender or race we shall discuss the detail towards the end of this chapter. However Hegel's idealism as the culmination of thought is portrayed as the rational justification of all that exists and that the apparent denial of freedom to the female sex in Hegel's theodicy is the stage that reason had attained in his time. This notwithstanding, Hegel foreseeing America as the land of the future which will translate the concept of freedom to all sexes and to all nations, proved that Hegel is a progressive philosopher of penetrating vision and foresight, not one condemned to orthodoxy and tradition.

#### **4.4 The Paradigm Shift; from subjectivity to Inter-subjectivity**

The history of western philosophy is the history of the growing elevation of the relation of subject and object. Hegel's idealism as we have discussed in the previous chapter can be seen as a movement from substance to subject in the sense that the concept of the substance is the concept of the subject, and not the reverse. If the soul is relinquished, 'the subject' the precondition of the substance disappears. In Hegel's thought, the substance is a kind of projection of the subject not an involvement of the totality of its content, even though this notion of totality has been rejected, Hegel takes an exception to some fundamental metaphysical notion including substance and subject. The discussion about the subject has flooded modern discourse in philosophy. Husserl's transcendental phenomenology tries to show an insight into the paradigm of inter-subjectivity while simultaneously standing at the vertex of subjectivity.

Heidegger did not entirely reject Husserl's method of phenomenological reduction. *Being and Time* recognizes essential features of Husserl. Husserl's ideas of intuition and intermediately cored can be seen as Heidegger's transcendentalism. The concept of horizon in Husserl's later work is to be appreciated as a qualification of the idea of intentional act. It emphasizes that a form of consciousness in which a subject takes himself to be directed to something as an object requires an antecedent context; that is an actual apprehension. It is in the subject's awareness, embedded in a context of possible apprehensions. It is only by virtue of its having this context that it can be a consciousness of an object. This means that the phenomenon of horizon consists in the

awareness of the fact that it is only an aspect or part of the object which is genuinely perceived, not the entire objective. Awareness of what is not perceived and what is perceived is said to be an essential feature of that form of consciousness which is called perception by material things. Husserl insists that what is genuinely perceived of the object should not be construed as an item that is itself enjoying the status of an object of which is called pure perceiving. This means that perceiving is subjective and in aspect, one-sided, the other side or the inside of an object, which is influenced by the modes of consciousness.

This means that in the awareness of the subject, what is real and objective is beyond the limits of perception. The phenomenological character of the subject is limit, and the status of an experience is a limited scope. This is to say that perception is a matter of degree. Husserl insists that the element of indeterminacy is never completely absent (Husserl, 1955: 146 – 152, 3 – 15). The point is taking something as something always carries with it at least a minimal degree of familiarity with what in a given case may be very unfamiliar. One essential fact in perceiving is a general reference specifying only what the subject takes to be generally true of subjects of certain type, while leaving open the more specific details of the particular to which the perceiving is directed. Perceiving an object is multidimensional. The relationship between the perceived and the unperceived aspects of an object is correlated with the relation between my present experience and what I can do. What I actually apprehended is taken to be an aspect of an object that transcends that apprehension, because the apprehension itself is experienced as embedded in a Matrix of movements. In fact there is a correlation between the ways things appear and specific movement.

The explicit references have the phenomenological character of being called forth. The ego can actually be in some sense affected by the horizon in such a manner as to be led to direct itself to it. This presumable is connected with ego contention that the certainty characteristic of the percipient's doxastic attitude extends not only to the actually perceived but also to the horizon as such. Even if in the awareness of the subject that context leaves room for many possibilities as to detail, the context in its characteristics indeterminacy is for him beyond doubt or conjecture.

We should recall the intimate relationship between perceiving as an actual apprehension and the percipient's sense of his own capacities. This shows that the indeterminate features of the horizon are phenomenologically correlative to these capacities. This is a deep-lying certainty. Its objective correlate, the horizon can present itself as inviting our explicit references and explorations.

The actual references and explorations may implicitly indicate a mere selection from the totality of references and explorations, a particular move aimed at perceiving what is always there only one among many moves which the subject could have initiated and which would have brought to light details as real as those in fact discovered. One could as well direct one's active perceiving differently and been what one did not in fact see. The direction taken brought to fulfillment only some members of the "system of" "unfulfilled intentions" therefore the others remain as a "dead potentiality". Therefore a sense in which reality always transcends our actual experiences and explorations. We acknowledged this by saying that reality is there to be explored, even if we in fact do not continue our explorations, and that it was there to be explored by us when in fact we directed our exploration elsewhere.

Husserl's concept of horizon was formulated with references to perception of material things; one might think its applicability is limited. For me, it is not difficult to see how it can be applied to other areas of phenomenological concern (the woman or gender). We can summarize Husserl's phenomenology of perception thus, 'perceiving as a particular intentional act directed upon a particular object is in the percipient's own awareness essentially embedded in a context in which acts and objectives are systematically related in a way that performance of a particular act involves awareness of other possible acts and their relevance for his intentional relatedness to such and such objects'. This means that the subject at a given time refers to has for her a 'place' within a context in which she is at home, so she (normally) has a sense of where she is (what she is doing), where she came from (what she has thus far done), and where she is going (what might perhaps should still be done). In other words, she ascribes to herself certain powers and is aware of the election between the exercise of such and such powers and the attainment of such and such ends. The concept thus delineated clearly shows the possibility of extending beyond the area of perception. It would therefore appear that the central idea involved in the concept of horizon

make it applicable to all cognitive activities, then we ask, what cognitive steps should be taken by the hearer so to be able to assess Husserl's statement. We now turn to Heidegger.

Heidegger's discussion on this concept can be seen in *Being and Time*. Like perceiving, tool-using requires a context which makes circumspect use of a tool possible, though the total context as such must normally remain in the background of awareness. That Heidegger talks about tool-using rather than perception in developing his concept does not make any important difference. From a postmodernist ontological perspective, what Husserl stresses is the circumstance that the object of perception is embedded in a context essentially correlated with the percipient's activities. Heidegger brought Husserl views to practical affairs. He characterized the subject as being-in-the-world. Being-in-the-world is of course used to articulate the understanding of *Being* which Heidegger attributes to the subject, designated by him as *Dasein*. Heidegger emphasizes more on the concept of intentionality as significantly affected by the introduction of the concept of horizon or world. Intention of the object is possible only as the basis of directedness towards the world. World-directedness goes out beyond, and in that sense transcends, any particular thing. The language of transcendence in this connection is particularly prominent in *The Essence of Reasons*. Intentionality is possible only on the ground of transcendences (Husserl, 1955: 16, 47), in addressing oneself to some entity, whatever its qualities or structures; one has already gone beyond it in terms of a whole, which is the world as a whole. The world Heidegger (1962: 37) describes;

as a totality, world "is" no particular entity but rather that by means of and in terms of which *Dasein* gives itself to understand what entities it can comport itself to and how to do so. This awareness of the world is spoken of as a transcendental condition. The concept of the world is as well a transcendental concept (Ibid; 20, 47).

The difference between Husserl and Heidegger is on their concept on the nature and status of the subject. For Husserl, the concept of the horizon sums up, as it were the nature of reality and subjectivity in their essential correlation: nothing is real unless it lies within the scope of his cognitive powers, while the subject is defined as precisely to power to adjudicate reality claims with ultimate authority. While for Heidegger, the logic of horizon is everywhere at work, which figures the different constellation of thought. The subject is introduced as fact of existence, even though establishing facts is itself one of the powers which the subject is introduced as fact of existence, even though establishing facts is itself one of the powers which the subject ascribes to

himself by virtue of the horizon-phenomenon. Heidegger uses the term ‘facticity’ rather than ‘factuality’. Facticity (*thrownness*) is not a cognitively established fact.

Facticity lies beyond the reach of the possibilities of disclosure which belong to cognition. It is grasped or described in what Heidegger calls *Befindlichkeit*, a technical ontological term for that which manifests itself in everyday lives and moods and changes of moods. Well the subject in Heidegger confronts a radical otherness, since facticity appears as that which cancels those powers. The subject radical otherness is such that the subject’s situating of herself at a given time in such a way that at that time there are other things which are beyond her grasp. What emerges as facticity is a limitation, the ideas of facticity and world are logically distinct, and both are needed to obtain a complete view of the subject. While the idea of the world captures the range of his powers and give him transcendental status. The idea of facticity is intended to indicate the radical limitation of those powers; their range is not coextensive with reality. A horizon certainly marks out a circumscribed range of subjective powers and may in that sense be called limited. But in the case of most horizons, their limits do not limit the subjective powers to go beyond them and place a given horizon with one that is wider. Where she has exhausted all her powers, and has attended the most comprehensive horizon, she has also attained reality in its fullest extent. This is in contrast to Heidegger.

Husserl was of the view that transcendental philosophy is intersubjectivity. Intersubjectivity means the coalescing or fusing together of subjectives (Unah, 2004: 241). According to Unah (Ibid):

If my subjective views and yours subjective views intermingle or if we agree to regard certain things as the case, such fusing together of views or such agreement that a certain thing is the case becomes objective. Thus does subjectivity become the basis of objectivity.

Thus the addition of subjectivities brings about inter-subjectivity. Inter-subjectivity thus is the mathematical formulae for objectivity, transcendence and development. The only way to situate universality is through the interaction of subjectivities; that is inter-subjectivity. It is also the type that occurs in phenomenological reduction. Unah argued that in order to for our views to attain objectivity in human experience, we have to suspend, bracket out or put in abeyance our preconceptions and prejudices about the object of experience. This is how Husserl justified the

understanding his two concepts transcendental phenomenology and life-world phenomenology. This is a phenomenon that justifies the realistic (life-world) stage and the idealistic (transcendental) stage. This proves that man cannot understand things unless it moves from the natural world to the transition to the world of transcendental ego. This is the realm where reason is used as the basis of all transaction and not any other human attribute like gender.

#### **4.5 The Phenomenology of the Woman versus the Phenomenology of the Spirit: Simeon De Beauvoir and Hegel on the Context**

Phenomenology's emphasis upon being-in-the world allowed it to consider the totality of human experience in the world in terms of the individual's concrete existence. What is needed is simply natural attitude, to practice *epoche* to attempt a description of presentations without prejudicing the results by taking for granted the history, causality, inter-subjectivity and value we ordinarily associate with our experience, and to examine with absolute care the fabric of the world of daily life so that we may grasp its source and its direction. To this effect, the phenomenology of the spirit in Hegel's philosophy and the phenomenology of the woman in Simeone de Beauvoir will be discussed.

Beauvoir believed that existence precedes essence; hence one is not born a woman, but become one. Her analysis focuses on the Hegelian concept of the other. Beauvoir *second sex* dramatizes the extent to which being a woman poses a philosophical problem. While Hegel's phenomenology of the spirit illustrates how the woman (divine law) must be suppressed for the men (civil law) to transcend in the society and political life, Beauvoir discovers a new way to philosophize, a way grounded in her identity as a woman. She gave a phenomenological description of the lived situations of real woman. Hegel's monistic phenomenology created a mystified world where impossible and conflicting ideals of femininity produce an ideology of women's natural inferiority to justify patriarchal domination.

In the history of Western philosophy, the sexed/gendered body was not as object of phenomenological investigation before *The Second Sex*. The main thesis of *The Second Sex*

revolves around the idea that woman has been held in a relationship of long lasting oppression to man through her relegation to being man's "other". In agreement with Hegel and Sartrean philosophy, Beauvoir finds that the self needs otherness in order to define itself as a subject. The category of the otherness therefore is necessary in the constitution of the self as a self.

However, the movement of self-understanding through alterity is supposed to be reciprocal in that the self is often just as much objectified by its other as the self objectifies it. Simply put, the woman is consistently defined as the other by man who takes on the role of the self. In Beauvoir's words;

Woman is the accidental, the inessential, as opposed to the essential. He is the subject, he is the Absolute, she is the other"...human existence is an ambiguous interplay between transcendence and immanence, yet men have been privileged with expressing transcendence through projects, whereas women have been forced into the repetitive and uncreative life of immanence (Beauvoir, 1956, 2).

Beauvoir's *Second Sex* is divided into two major themes; The first book investigates the facts and myths" about women from multiple perspectives including the biological – scientific, psychoanalytic, materialistic, historical, literary and anthropological. Beauvoir carefully notes that none of these is sufficient to explain woman's definition as man's other or her consequent oppression. Rather each of them contributes to woman's overall situation as the other sex. Beauvoir explains this in her discussion of biology and history. She explains that the women experience certain phenomena such as pregnancy, lactation, and menstruation that are foreign to man's experience and thus contribute to a marked difference in women's situation. However, these physiological occurrences, in no way, directly cause woman to be man's subordinate because biology and history are not mere facts of an unbiased observer but are always incorporated into and interpreted from a situation. Furthermore, Beauvoir accepts that psychoanalysis and historical materialism gave tremendous insights into the sexual, familial and material life of woman, but fail to account for the whole picture. In the case of psychoanalysis, it denies the reality of choice and in the case of historical materialism; it neglects to take into account the existential importance of the phenomena it reduces to material conditions.



Beauvoir's analysis of myths tackled the way in which the preceding analyses (biological, historical, psychometric and so on) contribute to the formulation of the myth of the "External Feminine". The paradigmatic myths include myth of the mother, the virgin, the mother land, nature and borne. These multiple myths attempt to trap woman into an impossible ideal by denying the individuality and situation of all different kinds of women. Beauvoir argued that the ideal set by the External Feminine set up an impossible expectation because the various manifestations of the myth of femininity appear as contradictory and doubled. For example, history shows us that for as many representations of the mother as the respected guardian of life, there are as many depictions of her as the hated harbinger of death. The contradiction that man feels at having been born and having to die gets projected onto the mother who takes the blames for both. Thus woman as mother is both hated and loved and individual mothers are hopelessly caught in the contradiction. This doubled and contradictory operation appears in all feminine myths thus forcing women to unfairly take the burden and blame of existence.

Another important aspect is to look at the social constructions of femininity, Beauvoir's famous assertion "one is not born, but rather becomes a woman" (Ibid, 267 also Stumpt, 1995: 787), destroyed the essentialism which claims that women are born feminine, as certain cultures and epochs saw it. She argued that such are constructed to be through social indoctrination. Beauvoir used a wide array of accounts and observation to illustrate the education of woman from her experiences of sexuality; Lesbianism, heterosexual, if she has any. At each stage, Beauvoir shows how the woman is forced to relinquish her claims to transcendence and authentic subjectivity by a progressively more stringent acceptance of the passive and alienated role to man's "active" and "subjective" demands. Beauvoir explains and illustrates women's passivity and alienation in what she entitles "situation" and her "justification". Beauvoir studies the roles of wife, mother and prostitute to show how women, instead of transcending through work and creativity, are forced into monotonous existence of having children, tending house and being the sexual receptacles of the male Libido.

#### **4.5,1 The Woman as an object of Phenomenological Investigation**

The woman is seen in terms of her body that is the use of biology as definition of the woman and as a major criteria that differentiates her from her male counterpart. She is however being referred to as the sexed or the gendered body (see chapter three section 3.1, and 3.2). Consequently, Beauvoir's argument for sexual equality can be seen in two directions: First, it exposes the ways in which masculine ideology exploits the sexual differences to create systems of inequality. Second, it exposes the ways that arguments for equality erase the sexual difference in order to establish the masculine subject as the absolute human type. Plato is Beauvoir's target. Plato, beginning with the premise that sex is an accidental quality, concludes that men and women are equally qualified to become members of the guardian class if and only if the women are trained and live like men. Thus, the discriminatory sexual difference remains in play. Beauvoir's argument for equality does not fall into this trap. She insists that women and men treat each other as equals and that such treatment requires that their sexual differences be validated. Equality is not a synonym for sameness.

It is unjust and immoral to use sexual difference to exploit woman. Beauvoir finds it un-phenomenological to ignore it. As a phenomenologist, she is obliged to examine the ways in which women's bodies come to determine their experiences and how these experiences are co-determined by what phenomenology calls the everyday attitude, that is the common sense assumption we unreflectively bring to our experience.

As a feminist phenomenologist assessing the meanings of the lived female body and exploring the ways these meanings affect our place in the world, Beauvoir brackets these assumptions to investigate the ways in which they corrupt our experiences. For example, it is assumed that women are the weaker sex, the question we need to ask is the ground of the assumption? What criteria of strength are used? A bit of reflection exposes the biases of the criterion used to support this supposedly obvious fact and transform it from a fact to a questionable assumption. Once we begin this questioning, it only takes a moment for other so-called facts to fall to the side of "common sense" in the phenomenological sense.

The issue of sex-gender distinction is important here. Beauvoir gave the vocabulary for analyzing the social constructions of femininity and structures for critiquing these constructions. The phrase, 'one is not born but becomes a woman' pursues the first role of phenomenology; suspend judgments, identify your assumptions, treat them as prejudice and put them aside, do not bring them back into play until and unless they have been validated by experience. The *Second Sex* was a phenomenological analysis waiting to happen. It does not matter if a woman phenomenologist discovered the effects of sex/gender on the lived body's experience. Or that a woman taught us to bracket the assumption that the lived body's sex or gender was accidental to its lived relations, positions, and engagements is a fact of history.

The phenomenological achievement was used in *The Second Sex* as a liberatory tool. That is by attending to the ways in which patriarchal structures used sexual differences to deprive women of their "can do" bodies. Beauvoir's phenomenology provided the criteria for declaring this deprivation oppressive. It opens way for consciousness-raising, validated women's experiences of injustice and provided a program for liberation. From the existential-phenomenological perspective, the *Second Sex* was a detailed analysis of the lived body and an ethical and political indictment of the ways patriarchy alienated women from their embodied capacities; from their feminist perspective. It was also an appeal; an analysis (both concrete and theoretical) that called on woman to take up the cause of their liberation.

#### **4.6 Foucault on the Pluralist Interpretation of Knowledge (History)**

Foucault is a Neo-Hegelian, whose work in a way elucidated the writings of Hegel. His writings in essence were done to make Hegel's thought more understandable. Foucault is saying we should not build on the old world perception, rather we should look at Knowledge (history) as it evolved. This is because reason have manifested separately in different parts of the world. Postmodernism is a trend of thought that emphasizes pluralism. It upholds inter – subjectivity of ideas and views (see 4.1). Post modernism is opposed to absolutism in philosophical theories and in Hegel's idealism in particular. It also interrogates the validity of taking any model of reality or thought as the measure or standard of others. In this instance reason, truth, consciousness,

gender, sexism can be seen from many sides. Postmodernism also questions the traditional account of truth, reality, reason, consciousness, idealism, universalism and one sided perspective or ultimate ground of explanation of philosophical issues as seen in Hegel's idealist philosophy. This put forward the need for the deconstruction of Hegel's idealism from a postmodernist perspective.

Hegel's idealism needs deconstruction from a postmodernist phenomenologico – ontological perspective. This is because no system of thought in the world provides an absolute answer. More so, Hegel philosophy is culturally limited in time and space, therefore cannot serve as a universal paradigm by which every other intellectual system is assessed. This means that postmodernism is against absolutism, absolute reason, absolute consciousness, universalism, the absolute spirit as found in Hegel's thought. Postmodernism is a radical challenge to Hegel's idealism since it depends on the absolute. Postmodernism celebrates diversities, pluralism, multiplicities while Hegel idealism is a phenomenological movement of the absolute spirit in search of absolute reason, history and consciousness. Postmodernism is a radical challenge for Hegel's idealism.

Be that as it may, postmodernist phenomenological ontology regards consciousness as the foundation of discourse. Discourse for postmodern phenomenology begins from dissensus or disagreement not consensus or agreement. This means that reason and history cannot be entirely determined by an individual subjectivity of views as presented in Hegel's idealism. The above position of postmodern phenomenology corresponds with the theory of intersubjectivity of view in hermeneutic phenomenology. Intersubjectivity principle combines both inductive and deductive procedures of analysis making it more technical and advanced than Hegel's idealism, which is dominantly deductive and therefore deterministic, impositional and reductionist. The combination of inductive and deductive investigation yields a method of analysis called interpretation. Interpretation shows that reason cannot function in isolation of the human imagination, which in the first place is the faculty of synthesis. This way, Hegel's notion of reason is dissected and purged of its absolutism.

From the perspective of negative canon formation, Hegel's dialectical philosophy could be a resource for feminism when appropriated. Considering the fact that there have been several interpretations of Hegel's beyond Simone de Beauvoir's critical sexual difference and post-modernist directions continue to formulate arguments in part in relation to Hegel's work. For instance, in Beauvoir's case, it is Hegel's story of the emergence of self-consciousness and in particular the struggle for recognition, which is central to the interpretation and significance of Hegel. Other feminist philosophers like Patricia Mills, Luce Irigaray and Judith Butler explored the story of Sophocles' *Antigone* (both the play and *Antigone* the character) as Hegel retold the story in the phenomenology. Others like Starrett Ueller, and Heidi Rawen saw it in Hegel's describing of the ethical or family. In the case of all the feminist philosophers, the crux of their engagement with Hegel is connected with the way he explains the position of women in his account of the mediation between the realms of nature (organic, animal being) and spirit (self-determination) in the phenomenology. A critical study of these reveals problems and puzzles in them.

These problems are important not because Hegel can be interpreted differently, but because they are philosophically significant for the tendency of debates between feminist philosophical positions to return to the logic of the 'way of despair'. One is left to reflect on how this will result in the kind of comprehensive analysis of Hegel, which these writers claim to show. None of these contributors looked at those pages of Hegel in the revolutionary context of the journey of self-consciousness to absolute knowledge.

Now let us take up the gauntlet from Michel Foucault (1926 – 1984) so as to project the deconstruction of the Absolutism of Hegel's idealism. Hegel, as one of the key modern players of modern enlightenment promised through his philosophy the realization of human freedom through emancipation from monarchical despotism and feudalism to human consciousness leading towards a perfected future. It is true that postmodernism needs to emancipate human mind and self-consciousness from the traps of modernism, idealism, and all rigid universalistic system, but it has to prescribe a direction. This work having seen all postmodernist philosophers,

adopts the works of Michel Foucault. Recall that the methodology of this work is postmodernist-ontological analysis; we are using the themes of Foucault to anchor this section.

From the last section (4.1), we are able to see how the rigid systems in modernism have failed the postmodern condition. Here we shall examine how the gender reality has fared in history. We shall anchor this on Foucault. Given the place and status of women (as we have discussed in chapter 3, section 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3), we are bound to ask what are these changed circumstances that can prove the claim that we live in the postmodern epoch? This question is not about postmodern as the opium of new perspective or positives against older position and perspective, but about how we gain knowledge of the real past. We can now say that postmodernism is the change and contemporary condition under which we gain knowledge. The main argument is; are these new conditions of knowing the wild doubts that exist about knowledge of the world or reality? Foucault argued that the idea of man (man as historian for our purpose) is not able to stand outside society and history and thus generate objective and truthful knowledge.

He argued with other postmodernist (especially Hyndne White) that language is an ideologically contaminated medium, so the use of language is dependent on the use to which it is put; socially and political purposes. We want to relate this to gender reality; the use of language has been the major tool for polarizing of the sexes. It is on the 'alter' of language that women are mostly relegated, inferiorized (Butler, 1988: 519-53) in everyday life before given a second class description in books (Schopenhauer, 1929:448). It is the use language that brings the issue of gender, and at the same time, idealist philosophers (Hegel) wrote such in history. In the same token, the postmodernist can as well challenge the use of language, for assassination of characteristics (chapter 3, section 2), ability and role of the sexes. If language does not always say the truth, produce knowledge, this means that, we can infer the objectives of truth, According to Foucault (1961:131-132);

Truth is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation, and operation of statements. 'Truth' is linked (to the) ...statement of power which produces and sustain it.

Foucault is referring to the agent of history (you and me) to become confederates in our own subjectivity rather than just victims. This can be realized through the choice and use of language. This means that we cannot avoid being placed in the subjective position where the repression of the word fixes us all. This means that the study of organized narratives for examples, philosophy, its theories and method of collection of methodological practices is itself founded on the dispensation of authorities/power in contemporary society. How we write philosophy is as open to the uses and misuse of power as any other narratives. Foucault's definition of (historical) truth depends on the historically real, in other words the will to knowledge.

Within Foucault argument, knowledge and discourse are interchangeable since both are founded in the cultural practices of the society, are such as related to use of power both intellectual and material. He also rejected the central claim of conservative reconstructionists on the fact that the history they write is the discovery of the verifiable truth of the past. Foucault said it is naïve and as such the perpetuation of a monstrous myth. He is of the view that all discourses are at best perspectives that produce truth effects.

Foucault's anti-logocentric stance maintains that there is no unmediated access for the humankind to a genuinely knowable original and truthful reality (White, 1974: 759-775). Western culture is a system comprising of organized knowledge, and historical knowledge. This affects as well the various discourses, social and cultural practices. We see this displayed in the way western thought have mastered concepts of man, society, and culture on the linguistics constructs whereas the human science all founded on reason (rationality), knowing, certainty and deductive inference. White (1978: 22-54) noted that Foucault archeological dig into the human sciences lays open the figurative and narrative strategies that authorize their conceptualizations, to reveal the deep structure of their linguistics protocols- the tropes.

However, the historical succession of tropes as inferred by White that constrain discursive practices and condition that characterize each age (epistemes) in terms of the creation of and

policing of knowledge. This results in the endless nature of the interpretative process consequential from the situation whereby we can never scratch back far enough to find the original truth. This for Foucault is the essence of the postmodern condition.

From his studies of madness and medicine, Foucault examined the archive that constitutes knowledge in any given historical age (episteme) and accepted linguistic basis as the culturally determined discursive practices that provide the form in which our linguistically based knowledge is produced. This nature is obtained by the linked between what agents (historical) say and do within the confines of what their environs allowed or rationalized to be truth/false, right/wrong, legitimate/illegitimate. This is the social construction of reality and Foucault describes as the power/knowledge equation. So there cannot be one history, but there must be any number of histories of exclusion (the marginalized or other), inclusion (accepted as normal) lies in seeking out the underlying structures, principles and conditions governing everything that has mental existence, in this case, statement and system of knowledge.

Foucault interest is seeking out the underlying structures, principles and conditions governing everything that has mental existence, this includes statements and system of language. Our understanding of the past work well because our human consciousness works be manipulating signs and metaphor. This ravel the intermingling of linguistic and narrative interpretation, Foucault accepted Nietzsche view that history should be explication perspective is slated, being a deliberate appraisal, affirmation or negation. To be effective, the act of writing history must be interventionist and reconceived so that it may openly reach the lingering and poisonous traces of the past in order to prescribe the best antinode. This means that the new history must not be given over “to discrete effacement before the objects it observes” and should not submit itself to their process (nor) does it seek laws since it gives equal weight to its own sight and its own objects (Dreyfus and Rainbow, 1977:157). The Postmodernist position on history rejects the fable correspondence theory of truth as well as dismisses the Reconstructionist belief in a transparent narrative that allows the historical truth to emerge as it existed beyond its descriptions. Foucault thus dismisses the crude myths (that flow from general position); brute factualism, disinterested historian, objectively, process, stability, continuity, certainty, roots and the demarcation between history, ideology, fiction, perspective and empiricism will to truth.



Here we see the dethronement of both major eruditions of relating theory, interpretation and evidence around the axis of the reality of the past.

When we consider the reality of the past from the gender, we realize that Postmodernist conditions of Foucault have demolish the rigid histories which parade themselves as truth and objective especially when it pertains to the place, rationality, status of women in history of idealism (philosophy). It questions the accuracy of those documents, of their use of facts, objectivity, and perspective. This shows that those histories, idealism, and philosophies against the woman gender is unconnected and discontinuous history and epoch, unilaterally imposes an intellectual order on the generalization and utilization of knowledge. This is freeing woman from the traps of history. This is because history is no longer defined in terms of established categories of analysis, economic structure, competing nationalism, political and cultural revolutions, the match and opposition of ideas, great man and women, periods of excess and ages of equipoise, republics and monarchies empires and dynasties, famines and plague.

History is instead defined by how societies interpret, imagine, create, control, regulate and dispose of knowledge especially through the claims of disciplines to truth, authority and certainty. This provides the intellectual culture in which society, ideology, technology and all human behavior exist; events do not dictate history: history dictates events. How Foucault's conception of history does challenge the established, prevalent and dominant epistemological paradigm?

Foucault selected to solve the challenge from the treatment of ill, in his 1960s text, *The Birth of the Clinic, Archeology of medical perception and madness and civilization, A history of insanity in the age of Reason*. In the sixteenth and twentieth centuries people unconsciously organize and create knowledge as discourse and practices within each of the four distinctive historical ages or/ epistemes, each of the epistemes constitutes its characteristic, fields, branches, concepts in western thought. Foucault noted three fundamental branches of knowledge to include life (biological discourse), wealth creation (social-economic discourse) and language (cultural

discourse). He remarked that the concepts these branches of knowledge employ provide the question with which, they interrogate their data and thus create knowledge. Within their orientation there are mental or intellectual senses of difference, resemblance and representation leading to the formulation of each episteme as an assemblage of concepts that fix and define knowledge within its own epoch. These characteristics each epoch in terms of trans-disciplinary attitude, condition of thought, dominant form of narrative representation, dominant tropic signature. The central lesson of Foucault is lies in the recognition of the cognitive authority of form, and by linguistic and all our attempt obtain truthful representatives are conditioned by linguistic and social perspective. No knowledge of the past can be objective, and the world of the past cannot exist independently of our representation of it in the present. This shows that the knowledge paraded around the woman-gender reality in Hegel's idealism and in western classical philosophy is mere a socio-linguist creation. It is neither absolute truth, dominate ideology nor a cultural universal, rather it is a subjective view, which we have just deconstructed.

#### **4.7 Postmodernist the Pluralist / Humanist Interpretation of Reason as the Basis of Women's Transcendence**

Reason is discussed as the basis for all human transaction including women emancipation and self – transcendence (see chapter three, section 3.4. 3.5 3.6). This resolution (see 4.3) of the polarity in Hegel's idealism through a post – modernist phenomenologico – ontological analysis provides an outline for feminist phenomenology. This is discussed below. However we have said in the chapter 3.6 and through the postmodernist standpoint in chapter 4.1 and 4.6, that reason is given to all irrespective of gender. The problem we have is the problem of perspective, that the way knowledge and history is chronicled. If we take from Foucault and other postmodernist philosopher the attitude of presenting knowledge, history and philosophy the way they evolve without delineating and merging them as a whole. We will see the reason and knowledge has manifested in history. The idea that history and knowledge has been channel to a singular way of understanding means that there are some of the manifestations of reason in human history which have being neglected.

Reason is the law of nature, which is strengthened by understanding. Reason which is the right of nature teaches co – operation with others. This means that humans who seek their own advantage rationally will seek it equally for others. Humans desire freedom because their intelligence can function reliably, away from strong emotional impulses. This is justified by sound logic.

Hegel (chapter two sections 2, subsection 1) saw reason as the substance of the universe, through which all reality has its being and subsistence. The importance of Reason is that women participate in reason. The relationship between reason and history, Hegel writes;

Reason is the substance of the universe, via that by which and in which all reality has its being and substance...it is the infinite Energy of the universe...it is the infinite Complex of things, their entire essence and Truth...while it is exclusively, its own Basis of existence and absolute final aim, it is also the energizing power realizing this aim; developing it not only in the phenomena of the natural, but also of the spiritual universe – the history of the world (Hegel, 1956; 9-10).

Another important relationship is the relationship between the spirit and freedom. In Hegel's definition; *the spirit is self-contained existence*. Now this is freedom, exactly. For I am dependent, my being is referred to as something, which I am not. I cannot exist independently of something external. I am free, on the contrary, when my existence depends on myself (Hegel, 1956: 17-18). Hegel saw spirit in contrast to matter as that which has its center in itself. This self-contained existence of spirit is none other than self-consciousness of one's own being. It involves an appreciation of its own nature, and also an energy enabling it to realize itself, to make itself actually that which it is potentially. The essential nature of freedom is to be displayed as coming to a consciousness of itself and thereby realizing its existence, itself is its own object of attainment, and the sole aim of spirit (*Ibid*; 19). The essential fact is that the woman can attain self-consciousness, which Hegel's account of women in the phenomenology denies her of. Considering the fact that the essential nature of freedom is to be displayed as coming to a consciousness of itself, the woman, as our arguments have shown, can attain freedom by coming to the consciousness of herself in Hegel's criterion. The women liberation movement and all other women or feminist movements is one proof that shows that the woman can attain consciousness and self-consciousness.

Since the world spirit is active and dynamic, and the very essence of spirit is activity, the spirit realizes its potentiality, that is, makes itself its own deed, its own work and this becomes an object to itself, contemplates itself as an objective existence. Hegel writes:

Spirit is essentially the result of its own activity its activity, is the transcending of immediate, simple unselected existence – the negation of the existence and the returning into itself (Ibid: 78) Although nature changes...changes take place in the region of the spirit, does anything new arise (Ibid: 54) This development implies a graduation, a series of increasingly adequate expressions or manifestations of freedom... it assumes successive form which successively transcends (Ibid: 3). This shows that the world spirit is active, and bring about dynamic development. Although Hegel was of the view that development takes place in dialectical mode.

The world spirit realizes itself through history. History, in general, is the development of the spirit in time, as nature is the development of the idea in space (Ibid: 72). Hegel saw freedom as the truth of spirit and the Engine of history. (Okoro, 2008: 218) The women liberation movement is revolutionary movement and a progress of the consciousness of freedom needs not be deprived. Freedom, being the engine of history, shows that women movements are parts of history. Thus Hegel establishes the relationship between freedom and history as follows:

The history of the world is none other than the Progress of the consciousness of freedom... The Destiny of the spiritual world, and... the trial cause of the world at large, we claim to be spirit's consciousness of its own freedom and *ipso facto*, the reality of that freedom... This is the only aim that sees itself realized; the only pole of response amid the ceaseless change of events and conditions and the sole efficient principle that pervades them... (19-20). Universal History is the exhibition of spirit in the process of working out the knowledge of that which it is partially (Ibid: 17).

Since the woman is free and part of history, Hegel says the state is the end of history, the embodiment of reason. Hegel saw the state as;...the divine idea exists on earth ... it is the object of history in a more definite shape than before....is that in which freedom obtains objectivity for law is the objectivity of spirit... only that will so free (Ibid: 39).

This shows that women are part of the state. From the ongoing argument, we can conclude that since woman can attain consciousness, self - conscious, reason, they are part of history and so can as well be free.

#### **4.7,1 Reason as the basis for Women Liberation**

Women all over the world have created all sorts of rational awareness towards the systematic sabotage by oppressive social relations. This social sabotage is seen as a patriarchal structure sustained in being, historically, as a means of preserving the power and dominance of men. Several movements came up as a reaction to the sustained sabotage. The women liberation movement was a phenomenon of the late sixties. The intellectual, social and political ideas it embodied have a considerably long history. There are also women emancipation movements, women empowerment movements, and several other groups aimed at alleviating the women's plight all over the world. These feminist movements sought the opportunity for women to vote and hold public offices, access to jobs, education and equality of legal rights in marriage. The women's right movement aimed at entrenching these rights into the written law of the state. The 1998 "Bill of Right" was of importance in the United States. The core of feminism seems to be a concern for liberating women from the long history of traditional and cultural sex-based division of labour within the family and community. This concern cuts across various segments whether they are called "liberal feminist", "social feminist", "lesbian separatist" or "radical feminist."

Women liberation movements called forthrightly for women's equality and freedom. It also condemned their servitude within the existing marriage institution and railed against the double standard of sexual chastity. One common issue is that the feminists condemned lack of autonomy possible for women and argued that women's potential for a fully rational, fully human life has been systematically sabotaged by oppressive social relations; a patriarchal structure sustained in being historically as a means of preserving the power and dominance of men.

The origin of this historically novel development lies in a conjuncture of historical forces operating at three different levels, namely; intellectual, political, economic and social. In general social – economic and political development lay behind the emergence of organized feminism. The historical development of philosophical feminism shall be discussed under three sub-

headings; they are the economy, socio-political and ideological foundations of feminism. Before then, let us discuss the role of reason in women movements.

#### **4.7,2 Reason as the basis for the Ideological Origins of philosophical Feminism**

The ideological origin could be traced in the eighteenth century enlightenment (Wollstonecraft, 1963:33 also Millet, 1971: 65). The enlightenment thinkers rejected the view that revelation from God was the source of all knowledge. Truth, as they argued, could be found out of free and reason enquiry. Truth, when discovered, should be applied and traditional institution censorship vested interest, which impeded its application be removed. The triumph of reason was assured. It is believed that all human beings were fundamentally rational creatures. Once they were educated they would perceive the truth revealed by reasoned enquiry and naturally proceed to implement them. Thus the enlightenment curiosities were all-embracing. It was natural that one of the topics they touched on should be a topic, which had escaped the minds of previous thinkers throughout the ages: the nature and role of women.

Many of the leading philosophers of the eighteenth century devoted at least some attention to the questions of women, marriage and family. Few did not specifically and none devoted an entire work to the subject. Those who did were generally on the fringes of the movement. The German writer, Gottlieb von Hippel (1974: 30, 235,430) is a good example. His book is an example of enlightenment's contribution to feminism not only because it is representational but because it is not discussed in other general books or anthologies. He was the Mayor of the East Prussian town of Königsberg and a friend of the philosopher, Immanuel Kant. Hippel argued that women's abilities were same with men but they are not simply neglected, they are deliberately suppressed. He questioned why women should not be raised to the ranks that belong to them naturally as human beings after such a long suppression. He saw his age as the age of female equality. The fact is that reason is a gift which nature has vouchsafed to all human beings to the same extent. The most basic principle of natural law, in the implementation of which compulsion may be used without fear of contradiction, is the law opposed to anything that endangers the full development

of human beings. The fact is that women should be allowed to develop their abilities and personalities without hindrance. Although Hippel introduced most terms that reoccurred in feminist propaganda, his own writings were limited in several ways; for example he believed that women are capable of full and equal participation in politics and justice. He argued for equal education, and urged the employment of female physicians. He also thought women were naturally more peaceful and generous than men. He uses this for an additional reason for placing women as juries and officers of state. He did not seem to sense the contradiction between his belief in the equal abilities and differing natures of the male and female. This too was a contradiction that was to reoccur with great regularity in feminist writings. Hippel was attacked and derided by his contemporaries. Nevertheless, his book was an important one above all for its enunciation of the principle that women should be allowed to develop their abilities and potentialities without hindrances.

Also, the French revolution provided an important impetus to that of the enlightenment in the development of feminist ideology. The morality of marriage, the reform of the law or the restrictive nature of the nobility has long been discussed in relation to the place of women in France. (Lounsbury, 1972, also Williams, 1971: 333 - 51) The leading French writer of the enlightenment had considered the question but only in passing. Rousseau was anti-feminist, while Montesquieu, Diderot and Voltaire were sympathetic to women's claim. Condorcet was enthusiastically on the side of feminism. By 1789 there was a respectable body of literature advocating equal education equal access to jobs, equal political rights of women, justifying these claims on the grounds that all human beings were equally endowed with reason.

In Paris, from 1789 – 93, women themselves began to organize in the struggle for their rights. They formed women's political clubs, and exerted strong pressure on some of the leading men's political clubs, which formed the equivalent of political parties in the revolution. Etta Palm was a woman of Dutch origin who petitioned the Assembly and spoke before it in 1791 in favour of equal right in education, politics, law and employment and tried to form a national movement of women's clubs. There are others even Marie Gouze (known as Olympe de Gouges) drafted a

*Declaration of the Rights of Women*, modeled on the basic document of the Revolution, the declaration of the rights of man and citizen. Olympede Gouges was executed as a royalist in 1793. Feminism in French revolution did not last long. Other like Theorogue de Mericourt was beaten up by Jacobin women in the same year and ended her days in a lunatic asylum and the women's clubs were discovered by convention, at the instigation of the Jacobins in 1793.

Most French feminism in the revolution was merely a marginal phenomenon. Most of them seem to be minor writers, intellectuals or journalist with no social political backing. The Legislation of the revolution ignored women almost completely. The mass of women who participated in the great bread riots and street battles of the revolution had no time to think of the theories of enlightenment feminism they were too busy simply trying to feed themselves and their families. (Hufton, 1971: 53) This provides graphic details of female poverty and violence in the Revolution).

Feminism remained a predominately literary phenomenon in France for decades. It continued in the revolution to concentrate on the theory of education and the conquest of equality of educational opportunity. The most famous feminist polemic to owe its inspiration to the revolution, Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), is really an educational tract. The ideas in Wollstonecraft's work are still those of the enlightenment. Wollstonecraft argued that women were endowed with reason; therefore man's predominance was arbitrary. As civilization progressed, reason advanced "As sound politics diffuse liberty, mankind including women, will become more wise and virtuous, women were kept in unnatural subjection, the spread of reason and the reform of education would bring them to the full realization of their innate rationality. This would then result in an immeasurable, improvement in the state of mankind as a whole as women become truly useful members of society".

However, the limitations of these ideas were as clear as their bolder and original features. The rationalist assumptions of all these writers would soon be shown to rest on false premises and only minorities of women were capable of responding to the call. Few could read at this period, fewer still could afford books. All these optimisms lay behind all the tracts we have noted and



reflected a faith in human progress, which was eventually to be belied. The enlightenment did assemble a whole battery of intellectual weapons to be wielded in the feminist cause; ideas of reason, progress, natural law, the fulfillment of the individual, the beneficent power of education, and the social utility of freedom from restrictions and equality of rights.

All these were insufficient to bring about feminism on a permanently effective basis. Another development and inspiration on feminism was, as the enlightenment or French Revolution was, the social ideology of Liberal Protestantism. The protestant religion was founded on the belief that the individual, neither the priest nor church is responsible for his own salvation. They applied it to both men and women. Martin Luther and Calvin agreed that woman's submission to man was ordained by God. Luther's disciple John Knot, published a notorious tract against women rulers, entitled "*The first Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*". Nevertheless, their belief in the priesthood of all believers did explicitly include women. All human beings were held by them to be equally capable of direct contact with God, without distinction of sex. Luther and the Calvinists went to some length to demonstrate the falseness of the Catholic belief that women were unclean and agents of the devil. (Bullough, 1973: 195 -229) The Protestant Reformation quickly spawned a whole brood of extremist religious sects whose doctrines went even further than those of Luther and Calvin, advocating independence of the female sex.

The Protestants believed in the right of every man and woman. This perhaps was not of any greater and lasting importance to the development of feminism. The rationalist of the enlightenment and the moral imperative of Protestantism came together in the nineteenth century and fused in the creed of liberalism.

Liberalism wanted a society government in the interest of the people through institution accountable to them. The liberal creed was a durable one and by mid-century, it had been subjected to a good deal of elaboration and discussion. But its fundamentals remain unaltered. The classic statement of their appreciation to women was given by one of the greatest of liberal theories John Stuart Mill (1806 – 1873). Mills essay, *The Subjection of Women*, published in 1869, was the feminist bible. It was difficult to exaggerate the enormous impressions, which it

made on the minds of educated women all over the world. Mills' book was influential because it summed up the feminist case in a way that linked it firmly to the political theory of liberal individualism and tied it to the assumptions about society and politics held by its audience. It is often claimed that the appeal of the subjection of women is timeless. Nothing could be further from the truth. Its power derived precisely from the fact that it was, in many ways, a summary of the prejudices and preconception of the age. The subjection of women was no harmless anachronism. Mills argued that it positively impeded the further progress of the human race by denying society the use of the talents of half its members, and by the morally corrupting effect of the unearned power it gave to men. The only school of genuine moral sentiment, said Mill, is society between equals. He used "British England" as where such existed.

Mills conceived of equality as consisting in the absence of positive legal guarantees of inequality. Thus, he defined female emancipation in term of the removal of women's disabilities. Mill preserved the achievement of legal equality of women as an integral part of the progress of mankind towards a just society affording equal opportunity to all. Mills argue that women should be allowed freedom to discover the limits of their abilities. Mills' work, gave the ideology of feminism its theoretical backbone.

Several theories have been advanced by historians to account for the rise of feminism in the nineteenth century. A consideration of the origin of feminism in the social and political changes of the time is necessary. Many historians have attempted to explain the use of women's emancipation movements in the nineteenth century as a product of the decline of domestic production and the major changes in the structure of the family which this brought about.

The nineteenth century was the age of industrialization/Industrial Revolution, which saw the rapid urbanization of most societies. Before then, most extended families were reduced to nuclear in search of means of livelihood. The Industrial Revolution replaced this kind of domestic production unit with the factory and the large scale industrial enterprise. With the growth of industrial society, bourgeois living standard improved and social aspirations were

raised so that middle-class men tended more and more to wait until they had amassed property before marrying. The emergent proletariat provided poor girls, driven into prostitution through financial need, for sexual gratification. The middle-class wife came to be treated as a piece of ornamental property, expensive, useless and untouchable. The replacement of the domestic economy by large scale industry robbed the family of its productive functions.

The rise of feminism was a reaction to structural pressures operating on the family. The explanation for the rise and decline of the feminist movement should be sought for in the sequence of events by which these structural pressures were achieved and new family systems become institutionalized. (Bank, 1904: 563) Certainly, feminist movements began by addressing themselves to women's economic dependency and the explanation that resulted from it.

#### **4.7,3 Reason as the Foundation for Politics and Morality**

In the nineteenth century, the middle class liberation had many objectives varying from country to country. They include; national self-determination, parliamentary, sovereignty, the ending of serfdom and slavery, the curbing of the power of the Catholic Church, the broadening of political nation to reduce the power of the aristocracy, and the pacification of the new working class through social and moral reform. The priority given to different objectives naturally varied according to the political situation of the country concerned and the age of social development it had reached.

Besides, these movements have a concern for individual as a common objective to achieve. The common experience of women active in these movements was one of initial enthusiasm, followed by disillusionment with the restraints placed on their activities by men who led them.

Their objective was not only to achieve original reform movement, but to obtain equal right for women as well. A common pattern can be observed in many countries if a progression from the involvement of women in charitable, religious, moral, social, political or cultural organization to their foundation of or involvement in feminist association.

However, the aims and objectives of feminists were remarkably uniform in the nineteenth century. Those demanding for more economic, educational and legal spheres were seen as moderate feminists. Those concentrating their demands on vote were seen as radical feminists. Liberal movements were spreading the values of independence and self-sufficiency throughout society (Zeldin, 1973: 348). The vote for women was raised at a comparatively late stage in the development of feminist movement. The shows that the apparent narrowness of aims and smallness of scale of early organized feminism was a reflection of the fact that its adherents were pioneers who required great courage to brave male hostility and prejudice and defy social convention in daring to raise their voices for more rights for women at all, however insignificant these rights may have seemed by later standards.

As moderate feminism developed and became progressively more independent, so it turned gradually towards new objectives. The most important of these was moral reform, which became an integral part of feminism in the nineteenth century. Although not an easy one, moderate feminist penetrated the barriers of convention which prevented women from confronting questions of morality from a feminist standpoint, especially sexual morality. These feminists emphasized in the need for morality to replace coercion as foundation for political and social life. As John Stuart Mill argued, legal restrictions on women's right prevented women from developing the self-respect, self-help and self-control, which are the essential conditions both of individual prosperity and social virtue.

J. S. Mill and the great majority of active feminists saw the emancipation of women as an aspect of social progress from barbarism to civilization. Major dangers to the civilized society were seen by the middle classes in the nineteenth century in drunkenness and sexual license. More so, besides being examples of general self-indulgence, alcoholic excess and sexual profligacy were also instances of the exploitation of women by men. Drunkenness led to wife beating, the neglect of the family, loss of social status, or the squandering of hard earned wages or salaries or carefully accumulated properties. Sexual liaisons for women outside marriages were usually disastrous for women in an age of inefficient contraception, double moral standard, and non-existent social welfare. The feminists argued more explicitly that prostitution spelled diseases

and humiliations for thousands of women. While the men who exploit them in turn often neglect their wives or infected them with venereal diseases (Banner, 1974: 192 - 225).

Be that as it may, feminist moral crusaders formed part of a wider policies context in which stricter and more repressive moral codes became a desideratum of important political movement apart from feminists'. Possession of political power was then linked to moral probity. This gave feminists the incentive and opportunity to demand vote for women. One can say that their justification for female suffrage was frequently highly moralistic. It was one of the most common of all feminist propaganda devices to point to the fact that drunken or criminal men possessed the role, while virtuous women did not.

Feminism was able to link movement to wider political currents, which would help them to gain their objectives. Moderates and radicals in feminist movement were often divided by far more than a simple disagreement about the way to achieve female equality. The diversification and expansion of feminism was also a fragmentation. The development of a moral dimension to feminism and more decisively the creation of a suffrage movement marked the radicalization of feminism. The radicalism of the feminist movement helped draw more support to moderate feminist movements by making them appear respectable in comparison with the suffrage upon which the odium previously attached to the moderate feminist pioneers now fell. Aided by the expansion of female education and female professionals (above all teaching), feminism now becomes a mass movement. The nature of this interaction of course differed widely from country to country and from period to period. Nowhere did it precisely conform to the rather Schematic model outlined here.

#### **4.8 Postmodernist Phenomenologico-Ontological Deconstruction of the 'Other'; Towards a theory for feminist phenomenology**

A postmodern Feminist Deconstruction of the 'Other' provides us with the need to look at Hegel's phenomenology from another angle. From the perspective of negative canon formation, Hegel's dialectical philosophy could be a resource for feminism when appropriated. Considering

the fact that there have been several interpretations of Hegel's beyond Simeon de Beauvoir's critical sexual difference and postmodernist directions continue to formulate arguments in part in relation to Hegel's work. For instance, in Beauvoir's case, it is Hegel's story of the emergence of self-consciousness and in particular the struggle for recognition, which is central to the interpretation and significance of Hegel. Other feminist philosophers like Patricia Mills, Luce Irigaray and Judith Butler explored the story of Sophocles' *Antigone* (Both the play and *Antigone* the character) as Hegel retold in the phenomenology. Others like Starrett Ueller, and Heidi Ravven saw it in Hegel's describing of the ethical or family. In the case of all the feminist philosophers, the crux of their engagement with Hegel is connected with the way he explains the position of women in his account of the mediation between the realms of nature (organic, animal being) and spirit (self-determination) in the phenomenology. A critical study of these reveals problems and puzzles in them.

These problems are important not because Hegel can be interpreted differently, but because they are philosophically significant for the tendency of debates between feminist philosophical positions to return to the logic of the 'way of despair'. One is left to reflect on how this will result in the kind of comprehensive analysis of Hegel, which these writers claim to show. None of these contributors looked at those pages of Hegel in the revolutionary context of the journey of self-consciousness to absolute knowledge. For example, Mills chose thirteen issues to represent a multiplicity of interpretations. She organized them in four general themes. Thus:

- a) Hegel's comments of women (first five chapters) in the phenomenology and philosophy of Right.
- b) Two chapters that look at Hegel's Aesthetics
- c) Hegel's account of marriage, reproduction and family
- d) The relation of Hegel's philosophy to the feminist political practice of consciousness raising.

We shall look at two, which reveal the kind of pitfall feminist theory has contended with, in its struggles over the past thirty years.

In philosophy, the root of existentialism is existence while phenomenology is the search for a philosophy without presuppositions, the intentionality of consciousness and the refusal of subject-object dichotomy. This section is going to look at the status of women from the perspective of an existential phenomenology. This means that existential phenomenology insists that the observer cannot separate himself from the world. The women in this instance cannot separate themselves from the world. Consequently, the procedures of conscious experience are the ways one is in the world; being-in-the-world. Being-in-the-world refers just to human realities and beings. This means that human realities are situated in a concrete world context. This implies that one is identified based on one's actions. Phenomenology constitutes the totality of all human action; including thoughts modes, efforts, emotions and many others. Existence refers only to human reality, in other words to exist is to be part of the various tasks and actions in the world. The task here is to use existential-phenomenology to inquire into certain assumptions by philosophers, Hegel in Particular and their philosophies on women. This constitutes the core of the problems in feminist phenomenology.

#### **4.8,1 The Phenomenology of Women's Rationality in Philosophy**

The fair description of woman's disposition and virtue could be seen as being under suppression. The lack of autonomy for woman is obvious, in the sense that she is confined to domestic and familiar roles, where she scarified herself daily. The woman is so constituted that she never had a mind or wish of her own, but preferred to sympathize always with the mind and wishes of others. What could be deduced here is that the women's potential for a fully rational, fully human life has been systematically sabotaged by oppressive social relations, which is a patriarchal structure sustained in being historically as a means of preserving the power and dominance of men. Given our cultural and traditionally-imposed backgrounds, women themselves accept, seek out and even defend such confinement and see women who opposed it as reactionary. Daly (1978) speaks of women who accept the roles assigned them in patriarchal culture as "femboots" – robotized, moronised, lobotomized "puppets of papa" who do not realize the depths of their own degradation.

Surely, this degradation, subjugation, alienation, relegation and so on, are rooted in social conditioning of our society by patriarchy. There is need for revolutionary programme before all women will be empowered to recognize and take their rightful places as fully equal participants in humanity and human affairs. There had not being a uniform idea or argument about the unjust and illegitimate consignment of women to a subordinate condition. Wollstonecraft, in vindication of the right of woman, argued that there is no logical ground for regarding women as lacking in rationality, and therefore preventing her from participation in public and political life (Wollstonecraft, 1967: 33).

The denigration of the feminine is, to this research, the most salient aspect of the maleness of the philosophical tradition. The lives of women incorporate the impoverishing restrains of reason's transcended 'nether world'. But maleness, as we have inherited it, enacts no less, the impoverishment and vulnerability of public reason. Philosophers have defined their activity in terms of pursuit of reason, free from historical conditioning, circumstances and social structure. Despite its professed transcendences of such contingencies, philosophy has been deeply attached by, as well as deeply affecting, the social organization of sexual differences. This is reflected in the works of mainstream philosophy while the other philosophers assign a complementary excellence for woman. J. J. Rousseau's romantic account of women's education and the proper role in his treatise on education of Emile is one.

While Rousseau envisions for the boy Emile, an education aimed at fostering independence of mind and spirit, autonomy and self-sufficiency, his companion-to-be Sophie, is to be educated to please Emile and so fulfill her feminine potential. Thus, she is to be compliant and obedient, modest and chaste. Her rational faculty is to be developed only in so far as it helps her to realize these uniquely womanly excellences. To reject this distinction between manly and womanly virtue is a good step to autonomy. Rousseau although stressed that woman's faculties are not inferior to man's, but are different and complementary. This idea of complementary is another strong way of showing difference in sexuality. Wollstonecraft argues that Rousseau's setting up of a separate standard of excellence for women undermines the universality of rational freedom.



She acknowledged that if the women are frivolous, swayed by emotion and lacking in manly virtues of moral courage and disinterestedness, then this is not their natural character, rather it arises solely because of educational practices and social expectations, which prevent them from perfecting their latent rational capacities (Wollstonecraft, 1967: 33, 34). However, if education is same for both sexes, there would not be cultural and social variants.

This shows that the context of femininity is no less than its subordinate status, has been formed within an intellectual tradition. Philosophers have been churchmen (especially as in the medieval), men of letters, university professors but there is one thing they have in common throughout the history of the activity; they have been predominately men, and the absence of women from the philosophical tradition has meant that the conceptualization of reason has been done exclusively by men, hence the sense of philosophy as a male activity. The claim that reason belongs to male, should not involve sexual relativism about truth, or any suggestion that the principles of logical thought valid for male do not hold also for female reasons.

In the thoughts of past philosophers, the female characters are flawed. This brought out the belief that women are less rational than men thus formulated the ideals of rationality based on the male paradigms in mind. This maleness of reason is beyond this, according to Lloyd (1984: 104),

Our ideas and ideals of maleness have been formed within the structures of dominance-of superior and inferiority, 'norms' and difference, negative and positive, the essential and the complementary. And the male-female distinctions itself has operated not as a straightforwardly descriptive principle of classification, but as an expression of values.

This shows that rationality has been believed as transcendence of the feminine, and the feminine itself has been partly constituted by its occurrence.

#### **4.8.2 The Philosophical Status of the Woman's Biology**

Most criticism of the woman or the female is usually grounded in biological essentialism. Wollstonecraft believed that the female biology is accidental to woman's true humanity. Political

freedom and equality follow from the premise of a universal human nature. There have been divergent assessments of how best to realize feminine equality, liberal, existential and Marxist feminists alike argued that underlying woman's apparent passivity, immanence or lack of class solidarity, is a potential for free subjective action and thought, waiting to be liberated through some form of progressive revolutionary struggle. In Western democracies, there had been a significant political and social transformation. Elshtain points out that the suffragist movement was characterized by very strong emphasis upon women as bringing to the political arena her uniquely feminine virtues, which, it was argued, would illuminate the egoism and immoralism of public life with the values and ideals of private family life (Elshtain, 1981: 22).

The idea of women's biology has an ontological status in philosophy. Some female philosophers see biology as the criteria for being less human, while others see it as a starting point for liberation and recovery of an authentically feminine identity. The fact is that male and female have a natural destiny such that traditional gender roles, rooted in irreducible biological differences, must be respected. But the fact that potentials, rationality, capabilities could be traced and assigned to biology is obvious and needs to be redressed. Besides the fact that one biology is superior, and the other inferior and lack philosophical aptitude, needs to be reversed. Biology is the core reason for massive and systematic suppression of authentic feminine nature.

And the male nature becomes the standard, universals, which must be emulated by the female, while what is feminine is judged inferior. There is need to differentiate the struggle for equality from the struggle for liberation from feminine nature. The patriarchal culture has imposed male power on its female victims, through a genealogy of women's operation of the body, ranging from pornography and prostitution to religion, marriage, motherhood and heterosexuality (Rich, 1976 and Daly, 1978: 39).

How can the female nature be retired and revalorized from the historical and social conditioning of patriarchy? Do women need to self-consciously celebrate themselves as women and work towards recovering an authentic female identity, free of dependence, on norms and expectations generated by male-dominated culture? According to Daly, (1973: 26) ...women can cease to play the role of complement and struggle to stand alone as free

woman beings ...female sphere as embodying a style of individualism aligned with life, dedicated to opposing...men who have sapped the life force from women (Ibid; 173). Women must take back the power stolen from them by men...The source of the energy is woman's participation in the power of being as we hear and speak forth our own new world (Ibid).

Daly's was of the view that woman's nature be redeemed from its dept, rooted in nature, in life and in the immediacy of a Re-reflective feminine spiritual harmony. For feminine scholars like Simeon de Beauvoir, Kate Millet, Betty Friedan, Lives circumscribed by domesticity and child-rearing are not fully human and women who accept the socially-constructed belief in a pre-given female nature and hence, in a determinate female destiny, are accomplices in their own enslavement. The scholars saw the reversal of roles, accepting and identifying oneself with the male model of transcendence, which is traditionally presented as neutral ideal, is available universally to all human beings, as the only means to come out of self-imposed oppression (Beauvoir, 1968, Friedan, 1963; Millet 1971). This cannot be achieved in the home; rather in the labour market, where the person will fully explore all technological means available to ensure his full transcendence of the physical and cultural exigencies of conception, reproduction and family responsibilities. Following through this logic Shulamith Firestone (1979) envisions an androgynous Utopia, in which reproduction had been entirely given over to technology, thus freeing women to be the equal of man.

Existentially, the biology of the woman should be able to present the woman as autonomous, self-sufficient individual, whose identity is to be forged in independence of prevailing socio-political expectation and institution. The woman should be seen as an individual, given the enlightenment liberal revolutionary view that abstract rational equality among persons and the capacity progressively to transcend natural limits are universal features of the human condition, which override all differences of class, race, sex, or the other. However, the claim that certain natural differences are essential are essential to individual worth, that genuine freedom is realizable only through negating life denying principles of abstract human equality and a common rationality putting in their place concretely lived subjectivity rooted in precisely those natural distinction and capacities so devalued by the prevailing humanist ideologies.

Both sides formulate different ways of how freedom can be achieved in terms of post speculative philosophical position. Much contemporary feminist critique of traditional philosophy must be seen, not as an unprecedented, direct confrontation with the limits of such philosophy's patriarchal understanding of woman, but as mediated through its reliance on categories forged in earlier, non-feminist critical assaults on the foundations of traditional thought. The standpoint of a radically free, finite subject, an individual fully at home in a world of his/her own making; which is the standing point and goal of post speculative post metaphysical thought. This is a re-occurring feature in feminist discourse, further mediated however by the feminist concern that this idea should be exhibited in its full generality, and not simply as another male prerogative.

#### **4.8,3 The Epistemological Significance of Women's Biology: A Postmodernist ontological foundation for Feminist Phenomenology**

Phenomenology is derived from two Greek words; *phainomenon* (appearance) and *logos* (reason or word). Phenomenology is a reasoned inquiry, which discovered the inherent essences of appearance. Husserl saw phenomenology as a discipline that attempts to describe what is given to us in experience without obscuring preconception or hypothetical speculation. And in the words of Husserl; "things- in- themselves" (Unah, 2004: 209), Husserl wrote that philosophy must turn to a pure description of what is. Husserl influenced Heidegger and a whole generation of German philosophers. Phenomenology is the science of beginnings. The first step in phenomenological philosophy is reflection on the meaning or essence of the experience of consciousness, which is Hegel's starting point in his *Phenomenology of the Spirit* (Hegel, 1931: 1). Phenomenology, whether Husserlian, or Heideggerian, becomes a method of deconstruction, thus presenting us with a vivid understanding of the essence, and true nature of things. Hegel used the term phenomenology to describe the science in which we come to know mind as in itself through the study of the ways in which it appears to us (Ibid). Phenomenology, being the process of revealing or un-concealing the true nature of entities, is seen as a descriptive and transcendental philosophy intended to take us back to "the-things-in-themselves", (phenomena), so that we might gain true knowledge of "the essences of things."

Phenomenology, as a branch of philosophy, is primarily seen as a processes of luminosity, of revealing and un-concealing, by which entities are meant to stand out, or show themselves, as they really are so that we can come to gain clear and distinct knowledge of them. Although there are two versions of phenomenology namely Husserlian phenomenology and Heideggerian phenomenology, when we talk about freedom, history, they are experimental. Hegel phenomenology brought out the place of “experience” in philosophy. According to Unah ‘The aim of phenomenology is to perform a bias-free or prejudice-free analysis and description of experience’(Unah, 2004: 211). Thus the role of phenomenology includes the analysis of the place of women’s experience in philosophy; that is a bias-free and prejudice-free analysis of the description of women’s experience. This shall now be discussed as feminist phenomenology.

Having seen what phenomenology means earlier and what feminist means, when we talk about feminist phenomenology, what is meant there is that experience is personal and influenced by factors such as gender and culture. Using phenomenology as a method, the feminist scholar can relate female, gender or sex experiences to philosophy. When we talk about the place of philosophy in the plan of human experience, the question then is inevitable; is woman experience part of the human experience? When we talk about the study of history and history of philosophy in particular, we talk about the actors/actresses, (is it only men or both male and female). Thus we have the notion of philosophy itself as a factor in the life history of the human experience of the individual mind. The development of this notion in and through the various forms of concrete human existence gives us the philosophical interpretation and vindication of the place of philosophy in experience. This is where Hegel differs from other philosophers. Experience can let us see what the categories are, which constitute human history. Hegel further explained that experience is thus constituted and permeated by self consciousness of the self, in the subject becoming gradually aware of or finding itself in its object, and so coming to be “at home” in its world (Hegel, 1939: 438). In this way the principle of reason was taken to be the essential activity of self consciousness. To be is to be experienced. From this point of view everything falls within experience, and the experience contains all reality and even the appearance of reality. Experiences can take various forms, perceptual experience, scientific, moral, religious experiences. They are ‘given.’ Hegel sees experience to be a systematic whole,

permeated by a single principle, self-conscious reason or spirit, whose highest realization in the final outcome of the whole process such as interpretation of experience is what he means by a scientific (philosophical) explanation of it.

We next ask; how are the forms of experience to be found? Whose experience is under consideration? What determines the selection of the type to be considered? Hegel writes that for the purpose of a system of experience we must therefore combine two aspects. That science requires its generality, the experience requires individuality, the individuality of experience must be generalized, the generality of science must be individualized. Hegel notes that history may not repeat itself, but experience do, as we see it from the simple facts of language, custom, and tradition.

The phenomenological program of reclaiming lived experience is important for women who want to ask how the experience of women and young girls may differ from those of men or boys. This is a phenomenological method of radically questioning one's assumption as compatible with the reflective unraveling of male prejudice in language and in the institutions and practices of everyday life. Thus the interest of this research is to make phenomenological emphasis on suspending theoretical biases which may serve to make us aware of the patriarchal roots to many theoretical concepts, linguistic structures and methods in various spheres of knowledge especially philosophy. Thus, phenomenology here entails turning to experience as we live it rather than as we present it in abstract theories and in binary oppositions like thinking and feeling, cognition and emotion, action and reflection, potentiality and actuality, subjective and objectives, matter and form and so many others. Critically speaking, feminist phenomenology allows for a better understanding of how experience of the world is always embodied experience. That is experience has to start from a particular person, a particular body, with particular attitude effects and purpose of action. We do not just have bodies, but we are bodies.

The embodied subject has beliefs that are changed in certain ways by non-discursive habits, feeling and perceptual orientation. The woman who becomes a feminist after raising her

consciousness, experiences a change in belief and in this non-discursive field. The conversion to feminism and the radical and often, discontinuous change that can accompany that conversion involve a shift in altitudinal orientation and affect as well as change in belief.

Phenomenology, being the study of experiences, assumes the world as we encounter it. The Starting point of the experience is the body as reflected in the views of Beauvoir (1949, 76). But on the contrary, the women are mainly identified by their body and men by their spirit. It is salient to note that human experience is essential for an understanding of feminist theories and practice in particular and philosophy, in general.

Going through some philosophical texts on women, these texts usually identify the women by their body. And the women are known by the constructions of language users to impose rules and standards in most human endeavours. In order to understand the contents of feminist phenomenology we shall look at some of the critical issues already raised above on the view of the body in relation to experience.

The body is seen as the starting point of experience. Phenomenology, being the study of experience, sees the world as we encounter it. Maurice Merleau-Ponty's work, *Phenomenology de la Perception* (1945) is known for the theory of the body and his criticism of the dualism of body and spirit that reduces the body to a physical entity with its own natural laws. Merleau-Ponty saw a new meaning of knowledge, about the relation of mind to meaning, about the primacy of perception. Merleau-Ponty explains,

Our knowledge is the product of our body's perception of the world.  
There can be no knowledge without the activity of our bodies. Our  
Bodies are the means by which we have access to everything that  
exists ( cited in Stumpt, 1993:523).

Merleau-Ponty re-established the roots of the mind in its body and its world. He sees our body as inhabiting space and haunts space. Merleau-Ponty was influenced by the advocates of Gestalt

theory. The Gestalt theory was a theory of psychology that emerged in the 1920's and offered a new conception of perception. The advocates of the theory believe that our perceptual experience, the events of our mental life, possess form, structure, sense, meaning, value, and all simultaneously (Stumpt, 1993; 523).

This theory is, to an extent, opposed to the rationalist theory, that the mind at first is blank without any content, as implied in Descartes description of the mind as simply “a thing that thinks” According to Descartes’ description of the mind as simply a thing that thinks, his emphasis on the nature of the cogito was criticized by Merleau-Ponty, in Descartes words; ‘I am therefore only a thinking thing, a mind, an understanding or reason I am then, a real thing, and really existent what thing? I have said it, a thinking thing’, (Descartes *meditations*). On the other hand, Merleau-Ponty insisted that there can be no consciousness without the consciousness of something. The *cogito* is always accompanied by a *cogitatum*. He insisted that Descartes was wrong in isolating the self as a ‘mind’ existing without any reference to the world.

The role of the body in perception and experience is necessary in the sense that the body is the vehicle through which we experience the world and the means by which we are able to have communication with it. The body experience is essential because it is the experience everyone has and it is most importantly a relation with the world before any reflection takes place. Merleau-Ponty insists that the mind is “incarnate” or “embodied” the mind, or spirit, soul encounters the world through the body. According to Merleau-Ponty;

There is (in perception) no distinction of the absolute or of rationality here only of the absolute and the rationality separated from experience ... by the words “The primacy of perception” we mean that the experience of perception is our presence at the moment things, truths, values are constituted for us...

It is not a question of reducing human knowledge to sensation, but of assisting at the birth of the knowledge to make it as sensible as the sensible to recover the consciousness of rationality (cited in Stumpt, 1993: 5 24).

Seeing our body as our point of view of the world, Merleau-Ponty says ‘every perception takes place within a certain horizon and ultimately in the world’. Perception or experience is as a result of the presence of the body in the world at a certain time and with a unique perception (Ibid;



525). This means that our ideas reflect or show our partial view and experience for only a period of our lives. This shows that perceptions result in the relativity of knowledge. Merleau-Ponty however has developed a phenomenology of the body in which existence is analyzed as both embodied and gendered. The outstanding thing about Merleau-Ponty is that he did not reduce gender to either biological and sexual functions or psychological mental functions (representation or imagination). But he analyzed it as lived experience of gender. His conception of lived experience is influenced by Husserl's phenomenology. The concept of lived-experience based on the phenomenological concept of intentionality, which finds its counterpart in the hermeneutic concept of understanding. The concept of lived experience is particularly promising as it avoids the two impasses of either reducing rationality in favour of direct or immediate bodily experience or reducing embodied experience in favour of abstract rationality.

Going through the history of philosophy, one finds out that the reduction of embodied experience in favour of abstract rationality is typical of the western intellectual tradition. It is responsible for the absence of sustained reflections on the status of the body and of gender. This re-establishes the fact that the body is the object of experience. Thus, we can see that the idea of embodiment is a suspicion of the views that see woman as being more naturally embodied than are men. This led to the rejection of a dualistic view of man as constituting of mind and body and women as constituting of body. This has placed embodiment in a historical and social context. The suspicion of *embodiedness* is central to feminist phenomenology. This constitutes a hierarchy in western history of philosophy in which men are identified with mind/soul and woman as the body. Thus an inevitable critical approach to embodiment shares the importance of 'body right' as the right to control one's own body. Obviously, the absence of body right is a heritage of western patriarchal mind/body dualism. The failure to value body right results in a serious personal and social ill as violence against women and... (O'Neil, 1993: 139 - 60). Thus, body right in particular will help to stop women from being vulnerable to the control and exploration by others. It brings about bodily integrity, freedom from violence, harassment and freedom to choose or refrain from sexual intimacy, which is essential for full personhood for women.

Obviously, a greater appreciation for the embodied character of human existence has the potential to transform our understanding of what it means to be human, challenging prevailing notions of rationality and autonomy as superior to affectively and interdependence. The moral aspect of 'embodiedment' is one in which one's rationality and emotions are integrates, and one which considers the concrete, as well as the theatrical, consequence of one's actions and which celebrates the joys and the delights of woman's sexuality (Toronto, 1993; 1ff). Feminism is a totality of ideas rooted in the experience of woman, the sexual operation which takes up a critique of patriarchy, which takes an alternative vision for humanity, the earth and actively seeks to bring this vision to realization.

Feminist phenomenology may be considered as the part of this quest for justice, which concerned with criteria analysis of woman's experience a common human experience. What is the nature of bodily, socialized, psychological, historical, religious, political, cultural, racial, class or economic experiences? We have to note that there is no unified body of woman's experience; rather there are multiple forms and multiple dimensions of woman's experience. There is need to value the distinctiveness of woman's embodied experience (Tori, 1987), while recognizing that menstruation, pregnancy and child birth are distinctively female experiences are mediated by culture, we see this expressed as sexism.

Sexism is seen to be a dominant practice in our society such that sexism is observed in religion, social life, history and politics and economic lives. This is affecting the woman both socially and physiologically. Must saliently, it interlocks with other forms of oppression to shape a violent and dehumanized world. The belief that persons are superior or inferior to one another on the basis of sex is sexism.

Sexism is at work in attitudes, value systems, socio-cultural patterns, which supports and expresses/shows it. Historically, sexism has supported the view that person of the male sex is superior to person of female sex by nature. The females have since then experienced prejudice

and classified as being deficient. They have being deprived certain rights on the grounds of personal, physical or psychological characteristics alone. However, sexism sees the woman as essentially less than man and labours greatly to keep her in her proper social place. Sexism is experienced in social structures and personnel attitudes and actions. Sexism makes way for patriarchy.

We could phenomenological trace this in the analysis of subjectivity and language in our everyday use. While post modernism declares the death of the subject, feminist phenomenologist questions its demise just as women have begun to name themselves as acting subjects of their own history. To define subjectivity, the importance of the role of language and reason in relation to the role of emotion in human life is necessary. However, the concerns for the nature of the self, the self's embodiedness in philosophy, and the power of language to constitute the self are central to feminist reflection. This results in the emergence of difference, which is another discourse in feminist phenomenology. Thus, this difference is necessary because feminist phenomenology is rooted in the patriarchal nature of the western history of philosophy and the canonical greats. The plurality of feminist phenomenology is certain, but the common goal is a shared passion for justice for women.

Justice could be measured using the theory of freedom, given the fact that freedom is against alienation, prejudice, antagonism, and monism. The implication of this is that freedom is a universal and should be defined from the position of Intersubjectivity of reasoned freedom. What does it mean to be free? When we are free, we are allowed to do certain things. Nothing is interfering with out acting as we wish. Freedom is defined as the right to do or say what you want without anyone stopping you (Hornby, 2000: 413). This means that it is a state of not being confined a slave or a prisoner. In philosophy, there is an issue of freedom verses determinism. The determinist argues that everything, every event and every aspect of nature is determined and there could be no other way. The determinist argues that there is no way the human will is free, William James show his determinism is the following words;

:.... These parts of the universe already laid down, absolutely appoint and decree what the other parts shall be. The future has no ambiguous possibilities hidden in its womb: the part we call the present is compatible with only one totality” (cited in Stumpt, 1983:742).

The indeterminist argues that human experience is incomprehensible without the assumption that the will is free. But there are core and soft determinism. If determinism is accepted, there is no scientific ground to justify such acceptability. Freedom has been identified with the following, will, responsibility, destiny, capacity, determinism and self. The fact is that human freedom is a fact of experience. For the sake of this research, our interest is how freedom is experienced by the female gender contrary to that of the male in the society. Freedom is based on the facts of human experiences. How reliable are those experiences? Our belief that such experiences support the doctrine of human freedom is illusory. Also, the conviction that human freedom is tied to the process of rational decision-making could be partially true. In fact weighing up reasons is only a very special case of the experience that gives us the conviction of human freedom. And it is an experience from which we are able to strip away the conviction.

By contrasting freedom as the experience of engaging in voluntary and involuntary human actions from the fact that human behavior is controlled by casual laws shows that there is a limit to human actions. And that this limit is set by human freedom in our society today, we live under laws; governmental, social, cultural and religious. These institutions have some level of constraints on our freedom.

There are also laws from these institutions that moderate our actions. The problem here is that sometimes, these laws are made based on gender. This leaves us to ask the question, *is she free?* This question brings out other conviction that might lay another question to us as; Does our socialization as female have anything to do with our choice of carrier, or who we marry, or our political orientation and how we come to choose the things we do? To answer these questions, how free people are is not one that applies to all people just in virtue of being human, but rather, it depends on who the people are, where and when they are living. We have to recall that

freedom is experiential; it is tied to human endeavours, such as social, political and historical actions. It is not as such metaphysical. It is from these systems of social, political moral cultural and religious spheres that history is experienced and restricted. Hence we are under governmental policies, legal and social laws, cultural and traditional norms. These in turn, restricts freedom and will to act. Our capacities are restricted and tampered. It is within this sphere that one sex-group is preferred to another, thereby gendering freedom.

### **Highlights**

We discussed some reaction against Hegel's idealism on the status of women from a postmodernist phenomenologico - ontological perspective. Postmodernism provides ground for inter – subjectivity of thought and a fair ground for the proliferation of ideas. Discourse on postmodern phenomenology begins from dissensus or disagreement not consensus or agreement. This means that reason, history and the status of women cannot be entirely determined by an individual subjectivity of views as presented in Hegel's idealism. The views of other philosophers like Simeon de Beauvoir, Kate Millet, existentialists, and postmodernist were also discussed. The above position of postmodern phenomenology corresponds with the theory of Intersubjectivity of view in hermeneutic phenomenology. Intersubjectivity principle combines both inductive and deductive procedures of analysis making it more technical and advanced than Hegel's idealism, which is dominantly deductive and therefore deterministic, impositional and reductionist. The combination of inductive and deductive investigation yields a method of analysis called interpretation. Interpretation shows that reason cannot function in isolation of the human imagination, which in the first place is the faculty of synthesis. This way, Hegel's notion of reason is dissected and purged of its absolutism. Postmodernist orientations in Inter-subjectivity paved ways for us to explore the principles of duality, complementarity, and pluralism. Now let us discussion how use this orientation to bring relevance to in our contemporary world and bring synergy and symbiosis among the sexes.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **POSTMODERNIST APPRAISAL OF WOMEN IN CONTEMPORARY ERA: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE NIGERIAN WOMEN**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter will to x-ray the nature of the Nigerian women in our contemporary society in relation to the idealist presentation of women in philosophy. It shall also discuss the postmodernist conception of inter-subjectivity in relation to African metaphysical theory of gender as this will be used as foundation for the resolution of the polarity between the sexes, such that the polarity that currently exist among the genders in the western world does not get transplanted (because it is occurring already) in the African soil. More over postmodernist phenomenological-ontology will discuss how this inter-subjectivity creates the avenue to explore into the principles of duality, complementarity and pluralism in African thought system. This suggests that a postmodern critique of modern subjectivity might open up a reconstructive, communicative reason and an applicable theory of human nature for the reconciliation of the polarity between the genders in this contemporary society. The purpose of this chapter is to show how a postmodernist phenomenologico – ontological analysis of inter-subjectivity can open up new possibilities for a communicative, gender-neutral and integrated human society.

#### **5.1 The Nigeria Woman Today and the clash of Traditional and Modern Values**

This study noted that in as much as atypical African society is based on complementarity and Pluralism; it is neither strictly patriarchal nor matrilineal. There are cases where strict patriarchal or matrilineal principles were used to maintain orderliness in the society. We have already argued in page 105(chapter three section 2.1) of this work that traditional African society is pattern in three different ways, thus

- (a) The Matrilineal
- (b) The patriarchal
- (c) The intermediate (mixed)

We shall examine the place of women within these three patterns of the society

### 5.1,1 The Traditional society and the Place of women in an African Culture

In Matriarchy, the socio-cultural systems give power and authority to women and (Hornby, 2006:727), in such instances, the women are recognized as the head of the home. We find this socio – cultural sphere in some parts of Igbo land namely Oguta (Imo State), Afikpo, Abiriba and Ohiafia (Abia State). It is as well a situation where inheritance by sons is (a) tailored through the lineage of the mother (*iri na nne*) or (b) a situation where inheritance is passed from one mother to daughter.

Matriarchy is a socio-cultural system which presents the oldest or well experienced woman as the symbol of power, authority, head and controller of its possession and environs. This is obtainable in such areas in Igbo speaking Imo State and Abia State. This is as well comparable to an extent to that obtainable in British world, when Queen Elizabeth II and Britain's Queen Victoria rule, even when their husband Prince Phillip and Prince Albert, respectively were not kings, but Princes (Chinweizu, 2005:78). "Matriarchy" according to Chinweizu (Ibid: 112) "is a form of social organization in which the female head of nest exercises dominant power in it and serve as the formal machinery of authority". Matriarchy as we see in those Igbo speaking states essentially connotes the principles of succession and inheritance based on descent from the mother's lineage. These societies more so base their justice system on the power of women, that is their ability to take unbiased decisions and action to maintain peace, give justice and sustain stable inter – socio relations within their society.

In such societies, women are seen as priestess (Uchendu, 1995:66), Shimmers and are involve in settling of disputes. This has been seen in such instances where women insist on a particular right or a demand for justice, as Nsugbe (1994:93) captures it;

*Ikprikpe* (women's group) can rule that village housewives should leave their homes and husbands en-masses abandoning all children temporarily, except suckling babies and would not return unless their views are heard or their grievances working into and some comprises reached.

In patriarchy which designates the male head of a family community, clan or any organization as the head of authority and the dominant exercise of power, it is as well opposite of that obtainable in Matriarchy. In the majority of Igbo land, the practice of patriarchy is common. Patriarchy in

Igbo land arrogates to men the use of power and authority over the women. It also defines the sexes according to their roles. The women are not to be seen or heard as an individual, but are recognized as groups, for instance, *Otu Umuda* or *Umu-mgboto* (married daughter group) *Otu-Alutara di* (married women group), *Umu-Ndomi Idem* (women's wing of Idem village) *Umu-Omuru na-ulo Luru N'ulo* (daughters born and married in their village) and so on. It is more so within these groups that they settle their disputes, send words to the male in events of disagreement, or a situation that needs the intervention of men. As individuals, they are not allowed to suggest in community congress, town hall meeting and other gatherings. More so in Patriarchy, the women are not allowed to break *kolanut*, which is a symbol of unity, acceptance or togetherness, they are allowed to eat after the men have broken the *kolanut*. The properties were exclusively owned by men. And inheritance is exclusively from father to son. The men marry women and pay their bride price; it is assumed that the woman is the propriety of the man.

Another instance as we discussed in section 2.1,1 and in the literature review that the success of a woman is measured by how fruitful she was and by her economic prowess. This stems from the fact that the peoples' marriages are based on responsibility. Marriage in Igbo land is usually aimed to be for fruitfulness. A man's wealth as well is measured by the number of children he has, which is usually expressed in the Local language as *Nwakaego* (child is greater than money), *Nwa-amaka* (giving birth is beautiful) and *nkemuakolam* (I shall not lack what I should have). In other instance, the number of male children also measures the successfulness of the marriage. This is seen in the male – preference attitude of an average Igbo man as the lineage bearer. It is made more pronounced in certain rite of passage. For instance in birth songs, when a baby boy is born, the birth say will say *O ji egbe gba nga* (that is, a person that has gun to shot), it is a show of a power, strength and courage. It is indeed a symbol of masculinity. Whereas if it is the birth of a baby girl, the birth song will say *O ji ego gbaa nga*, this means that the person that has money should come here (for marriage).

In a typical traditional patriarchal society the prejudice among the sexes is drawn in early life. The male characteristics are pronounced. The myths, folk-tales and proverbs purveyed negative gender which were inculcated from early age (Kalu & Kalu, 1992:6). There are others like *Nwanyị wu nwa nyiri anyi* (The name woman means one that is difficult for us; a hectic



assignment). *Onye jiri nwaanyi mere aju, gba isi okporo* (one who trust in a woman as a support for carrying his load, had nothing as support). *Obi obula nwanyi wu eze, ala aruola* (for a woman to rule in a clan is a taboo). He that owns a woman owns here wealth (*onye ji nwaanyi ji aku ya*). The essence of all these illustrations is to illustrate the ideological frame work of patriarchy in Igbo land. The critique of patriarchy is beyond the scope of this study and we reserve them for further research.

Having said that patriarchy is a socio-cultural structure in which men have all the power, authority and right of inheritances are passed from father to son. Today, a typical Igbo family or clan have evolved from strict patriarchy to intermediate that is a mixture of Matriarchy and patriarchy. This means that in both patriarchy and matriarchy communities in Igbo land, now co – exist. There is integration of powers and authority. ‘In reality’ according to Chinweizu (2005:1123) “mother – rule and father – rule, each has its own sphere in each society; some powers are in the keep of mothers and others powers are in the keep of fathers. It ought to be noted here that, in any organization, there are front structures of formal authority as well as back channel of unformalized power”. He (Ibid) also explained that in every society the patriarchal subsystem specializes in the front structures of authority, the matriarchal subsystem specializes in back channel power. The supremacy of the matriarchal subsystem explains why, even in an all – men organization, advancement comes easier to those men who are championed by the wives, mistresses, daughters and female confidants of powerful men. Down in Igbo culture, this mixture of power has been used to solve some problem that pertains to each Matriarchy or Patriarchy. For instance, the problem of procreation, which is the only means of acknowledging a successful marriage in Igbo land, has been overcome. The couples who had no male issues or no children at all can resolve to adopt the idea of (a) female husband (b) male – daughter to sustain their family and indirectly sustain patriarchy.

Female husband or woman – woman marriage was more pronounced in Igbo land especially where a rich widow did not have a male – child for her husband, or where a rich wife did not begat a male child or children for husband and wishes to get a wife for her husband (Nwoko, 2009: 93). Upon marriage, the husband impregnates the new wife or in the case of a late husband, the female husband gets her wife impregnated through her choice of one of the husband

male relation to sleep with her new wife. By this action the wife has solve the problem of barrenness, and strong male-child desire (that is the male child preference is to maintain continuity of lineage) among Igbo men. This is a way of solving the friction caused childlessness and male- child-preference in Igbo traditional society.

There are other cases in the quest of a male child, where the female children of a family collectively contributed the bride price of a younger woman after the demise of their father, in the name of their eldest sister so that the new bride could procreate and raise male children to preserve their family lineage. In that case the new wife will select from, the men in the family as her bedmate. We do not want to delve into the selection of bedmate or the rites and rituals involved. We leave it for further discussion. What actually matters is that the aim of female husband is to sustain the lineage, give male children. This is not the same with the western notion of same-sex (Gay / Lesbian) marriage as obtainable in the English world. It is not however within the scope of this work to discuss such, we leave it for further.

Furthermore, it is for the same reason of lineage sustenance that the Igbo culture practice the keeping of male-daughters. Male – daughter are kept to sustain the family lineage in the case where the wife have daughters and no son, the first daughter will not be allowed to get married. She will stay in her father's house and procreate her own children from a man selected by the family that have dignity, integrity and character. Our concern here is not to argue for the moral implications or social stigmas or religious implications. We leave it for future research.

The fact is that the Igbo (African) have gone a long way to preserve family life and maintain a stable society. Every human being (men / women, widows / widowers, Adult youths, Orphans adolescence, boys / girls, and children) were put into structures (for example, age grade, out nzuko- various clan meetings) to maintain the society, to put checks and balances and to avoid polarity in the society. The widows who have children were asked to be taken care of by a male relation, who will take care of his brother's children and as well take care of the emotional needs of the wife, this called '*Nkuchi Nwanyi*'. Not only that those that have grown old for procreation and are not married were as well given out to men who are widowers and have children or as second wives to men that have children from their first and other wives. The social system of the

Igbo people were so much structured in such a way that the society did not leave room for sexual taboos. The sexual taboos were as well punished by a process called *Ikwa-ala*, literally seen as an ‘action to appease the land’. The social breakdown among the sexes such as homosexuality, divorces, single motherhood, mistresses and prostitution were seriously put on check.

Within the matriarchy – patriarchy, there were situations which women perform some rights denial from them. For instance, women had the power to break kolanut (*Iwa orji, ma obu Iga orji*) at menopausal age. Chieka Ifemesia (cited in Okonkwo, 2005:221) had it that, Elderly women, who lived to grand old ages, were greatly respected and treated with much considerations and affection by the young members of the lineage and the rest of the village. They were conceded the privilege of breaking kolanut for distribution where it was normally the men’s right.

### **5.1.2, Clash of Cultures: Its Effects on Women**

From the ongoing analysis, our concern here is to show that the (Igbo) Nigerian of recent past have done the calculus of keeping sexes checked in the society, so that there will be balance. This essence of this is for the society to sustain their family values, virtuous and a stable society. The essence of the age-groups and age-grade both at the adolescent age, women and children is essentially for identification and for checks and balances. By this the polarity among the sexes is to a large extent avoided.

However, the coming of western civilization feminism as one of its contents has torn the African (Igbo) culture apart, the average African/ Nigerian woman is in the perpetual internal dialectics of reconciling the western (modern) values with African (traditional) values. This inner class affects the woman in the sense that she want to be seen as modernize and at the same enjoy the benefit of traditional society. The traditional African woman (in the village) is not a sting demanding for equality. They are agents of economics and transmission of culture.

Today, an educated African woman is undecided within two cultures. She want to gain from both sides of traditional and western systems. It is such that because of their in abilities to resolve

their desire to be in both sides of the systems, what is hunting marriages in the western world is also hunting marriages in our African cities. An African society is built on freedom, economic power and responsibility, this ensure that the dialectics in polarity is overcome to an extent of crisis free environment. How do we reconcile the inner crisis of feminism verse modernism, traditional verse modern in the lives and educational structures of our society? We shall discuss this next.

## **5.2 The Complementarity of Sexes: The Traditional Metaphysics of Harmony**

The traditional African society is such that accommodates the sexes based on the complementarity of roles. Complementarity of Sexes was the Metaphysics of resolving the place and roles of the sexes within an African traditional society. We shall delineate and use this complementary role of gender in the traditional societies as an integrative metaphysics of gender in a phenomenological theory.

There has been a contested concept between the Eurocentric and Afro-centric scholars, in the contemporary times, about the place or status of women in pre-colonial Africa. Some scholars argued that the place of women in pre-colonial Africa was patriarchal and patrilocal, with husbands at the helm of affairs in each household (Akumadu,1998: 125-126, also Modo, 1994:183), while others argue the place or status of women in African societies were seen as separate and complementary.(Naira, 1993:150, also Chinweizu, 2005: 134 ff). Generally, gender scholars in Africa have agreed, through their writings, that women played notable roles in governance, economy, military and socio-cultural spheres in pre-colonial Africa (Isichei, 1997: 151 also Awe, 2001, 3-11).

During pre-colonial era, most of the West African countries saw men and women as belonging to three basic kin group of (a) corporate unilineal descent groups (lineages) (b) domiciled extended families made up of certain lineage members and their spouses and dependent children (c)

conjugally-based family units (subdivisions of the extended family) where procreation and primary responsibilities or socialization rest (Naira, 1993:152). In most cultures, women are seen in high position in the governmental structure during pre-colonial era. The *Iya Afin*, *Iya Oba*, and *Erelu*, *Iya Agan*, *Iya Abiye*, *Iyalode* were the roles that women took in palace administration in Yoruba land (Mba, 1982, 2-6, 55-71). This led to the belief that sexual segregation in policies was not obtainable in Yoruba land. Also Asante witnessed the predominant roles of women in indigenous administration. *Akan* group people experienced the complementary role women played in hierarchy of the society. It was recorded that they were actively involved in legislative and judicial councils (Oppong: 1983, 93-9). In Igbo traditional politics and administration, the *Umuada* (married daughters of the lineage) and *Umuokpu* or *Otu alutaradi* (association of all married women of the town) were outstanding and dynamic in decision making and governance of the community (Chinweizu, 2005:137). Their members were powerful and respected by the communities. Chinweizu noted that among the Igbo of the Niger banks, the role of women is dominate, thus Chinweizu speaks;

The female institution of *Qmu* (Queen or the head of the women) and the *Otu Qmu* ( Council of women of rank and title; the female grandees) were the female counterparts of the male *Obi* (King) and his *Ichie* (Grandees). The *Qmu* and *Otu Qmu* controlled the affairs of the women and were like a shadow cabinet to the *Obi* and his *Ndi-Ichie*, and if the male ruler were absent for any reason, these parallel female structures took governance till such a time as their male counterparts could resume their duties (Ibid).

Generally, African women were recognized at different degrees in various cultures in policies and military. In the military, they mostly encourage the man, chant war-songs, and provide material, spiritual and logistic help when needed (Isichei, 1977: ch9). In some cases, they were recruited in the military for example, the *Dahomean* army in West Africa(Amazon), were greatly feared and held in much *honour* even though they were forbidden to marry (Arhin, 1983: 96). Apart from instances of few roles in military, the African culture compelled a woman to be a conflict manager and peace advocate. This she starts from her immediate family to the extended family and community at large.

Other prominent places where women play beautiful roles in Africa economy includes their engaged in production, family, trade, brewing, textile, ranching, cloth/textile manufacturing. They were involved in inter-regional trade in pre-colonial Africa. These roles of women were remarkable contrary to views that say that woman were dominated and relegated in Africa during pre-colonial era.

### **5.3 Dualism and Gender: An African Philosophic Deconstruction of Patriarchy**

African cosmology is a verifiable celebration of pluralism. (Riley, 2003: 479, also Chinweizu 2005:131). And the problem of gender in the history of philosophy arose from the monistic cosmology of the western cultures. This cosmology suggests that there is only one being, as described in most philosophical works as, the unmoved mover, the intelligent, and the Absolute as popularized by Hegel. For instance, Hegel's system is a grandiose of idealist pantheism in which all existence and all history are part of God's cosmic self-development. "God is the absolute spirit, substance, the only time actuality (Hegel, 1984: 309). This monist view of Hegel affected his philosophy and of interest to us is how he presented the women in his philosophy, in such a way that monistic attitude seems obvious and the subsistence of patriarchy seems inventible. In the court of pluralism especially in African context, the monist becomes systematically flawed in certain human endeavours. Dualism here means mutually irreducible and complementary pairs of things.

Many African scholars in philosophy have identified pluralism (dualism) as essential basis of African thought (Momoh 2008: 8 also Chinweizu 2005:131 and Iroegbu, 1995: 361-2). The concept of realty, according to Okoro (2010, 2), encompasses the totality of everything that exist; visible or invisible, real, actual or potential. It is referred to as an inclusive system and therefore, integrative. The aim, according to Okoro (*Ibid*), is to harmonize all opposites by way of interfusion or integration. Dualism (as a form of pluralism) pervades the African thoughts,

beginning with Egyptian thought and psychology and including Igbo metaphysic and cosmology among others, thus. Chieka Ifemesia wrote,

In Igbo cosmology, nothing is absolute. Everything everybody, however apparently independent, depends upon something, upon somebody else. Interdependence exhibited now as quality or reciprocity, now as ambivalence or complementarily has always been fundamental principle of the Igbo philosophy of life (Cited in Chinweizu, 2005, 132).

Interpretation of Gender falls within dualism in African thought. According to Chinweizu,

“Of all dualisms, the most basic in African thought is gender dualism. Treating male and female, or maleness and femaleness as two primal axes for representing reality, as two complementary bases of social organization, is a principle of the core of African thinking and activity (Ibid).

Therefore, African metaphysic is the foundation of complementarily and pluralism. Gender dualism is seen in African pantheons, African (male and female deities) social organization and African gender diarchy. However, with the invasion of the west, during the colonial era, and the coming of western religions, the African gender traditions were tampered. The patriarchal Christianity destroyed our invaluable material networks and antonymous female organization, while patriarchal Mohammedanism locked our women in *purdah*, to riot with their talents and potentials (Ibid; 147). These result to assaults on gender, weaken African gender ideas and practices. We are left to ask questions such as, where did westernization drop our African thought and disorganized the idea of gender that metaphysically harmonize our human organization and sustain our lives? This calls for a way forward. However, as proposed by this research, there is need to go back and give the African dualism a metaphysical, scientific and ontological strength. This is because the rehabilitation of African gender traditions will bring a revolutionary and emancipatory direction for women and the rest of other forms of oppressed social identities.

#### **5.4 The Synergy between Postmodern and African Ontology of Knowledge and History**

In African ontology of knowledge and history, dialectical delineation of inter-subjectivity is cyclical and pluralistic, while Hegelian dialectic is linear, monistic, and reductionist. The dialectic of intersubjectivity brings about transcendental analytic. According to Okoro (2010: 7),

“in the transcendental dialectic we are opened up to the realization that reason is the faculty of transcendental ideas. It is the overall coordinator of the total functions of consciousness and it does so by way of legislating of general idea or a frame work (form) of thought”.

This means that dialectics of inter-subjectivity makes emphasis on reason. This ensures reason is a way to attain universality; it is from this background that we criticize Hegel’s view on the status of women as purely discriminatory, subjective and thus a polarity in his thought. Thus Okoro (Ibid; 9) argued that Dialectics and Hermeneutics [of inter-subjectivity] are methodologies for articulating the phenomenon of change [in this instance on the status of women] and for resolving conflicts [between the sexes]. Conflict resolution follows a determined order which is in the proliferation of ideas to attain to a universal. This means that the reconciliation of the polarity of gender cannot be possible within the dialectics of inter-subjectivity. Since this dialectic is in cyclic order it means that anything within this cosmos has a beginning and an end. That means that the polarity of sexes could be resolved with the dialectic of inter-subjectivity.

Dialectics of inter-subjectivity presents us with Pluralistic world view. This means it is neither an absolute system nor a determinist system. It ascertains the importance of various subjects. This means individual existence is authentic. Persons are treated with dignity; it encourages a gender neutral scenario. In this regard, Ogundowole says...

The outcome of the dialectics of inter-subjectivity is a body of proposition concerning the laws of development that are applicable to all spheres of objective reality – which enables one to arrive at a correct and adequate view point about the world. The nature of dialectics [of Intersubjectivity] is such that it allows the researcher to find a new approach for



articulating reality all with a view to avoiding dogma and stereotypes (1988: 19 – 20. Cited in Okoro, 2010: 10).

It also brings out the place of *I in WE*, the *I* is not swallowed in the *We*. The primacy of *I* as well as the *We*, is emphasized. That means that the individual is not swallowed by the society. There is a symbiotic and mutual relationship between the *I* and *We*. It more so encourage principle of spiritual primacy; it hold that things are two but on is superior for peace to hold. This is complementarity, it is built on equity (we shall leave how it is consolidated for further research). Postmodern intersubjectivity bring about relevance to African law maker, to create synergy for mutuality, symbiosis between the sexes, it is not bring dichotomy or division.

### **5.5 Women as Persons: Towards an Integrative Metaphysics**

Person refers to the human being as an individual (Horney: 2001: 867). Aquinas classified man in the genus of the ‘person’. This is as a result of Aquinas perspective on how the hierarchically of creation is structured. This implies distinction expressed in rank, position, grade or order (Aquinas: S.T. 11-11, q. 183, art, 1 ad.3). ‘*Persona*’ mean “mask” in Greek. The term acquired anthropological significance in religion whereby mask individuals represents ‘gods’ or goddesses’ were equally called persons or actors. The term *persona* or *prosopon* acquired theological, philosophical significances. Boethius saw person as signifying name whereas Aquinas saw person as manifesting dignity and excellence (*Ibid*, ad 2, Aquinas, *ST* 1 q. 23 art 3c). They attributed rationality as the most dignifying property of person.

In philosophy, there are very classical definitions of the concept of person, which will be of an advantage in discussing the problem of women not being qualified as persons. The first usage of person may be logical that is a person as being entitled to be treated in a special manner. For example, in Kant’s famous phrase, persons are end “ends-in-themselves” and sources of value in their own right. The third definition of persons may be legal as in a personal being that has legal rights and duties. In this case, one would insist that persons alone are responsible and that rationality is a precondition for responsible action. A fourth condition may be termed metaphysical that is a person ought to be defined primarily by reference to self-consciousness.

Thus, in Leibniz idealistic personalism, the hierarchy of psychic beings (monads) is determined by the degree of consciousness possessed by any monad, and the supreme monad is God.

The fifth meaning, if we recall an archaic usage of the term, derived from the Latin word *persona* (a mask and an actor) as in the works of St. Thomas Aquinas on persons, a definition of the concept of role. These variations create problem in philosophy as in defining women as persons? Thus the view that a person is an entity logically distinct from mere thing becomes puzzling when related to the views defining women as objects. Those persons, as ends in themselves, seem to fall short of descriptive universality when related to definition of women as means of reproduction. And in various countries and epochs, the notion of persons as beings who have rights and responsibilities admits numerous exceptions with regard to women, while the list of theories attempting to show that women lack one, most or all abilities allowing them to be recognized as persons is endless.

When persons are defined in terms of self-consciousness, Simone de Beauvoir summarized the issue, “women are the sort of metaphysical entities assuming the “immanent” feature of human condition, because it would seem that the “transcendent” ability of human beings has been far exhibited only by male”. This shows the view that women have specific or inferior roles, which define their intrinsic feminine nature is easy to document. In this case, women are defined as persons, but only in the allegedly archaic sense of *personae*.

Why is it that women cannot be defined as persons? One could see this from this view of the standard of prejudices as disruptions of rationality; prejudices are explained by non-rational factors such as emotions, inattention, idiosyncrasies and historical conditioning vested interests and so on. This approach does account for prejudices in the sense of premature judgments, the conceived opinions or unreasoned beliefs about women. Altogether, it cannot account for sexist prejudices taken in another sense. For instance, philosophical beliefs appeal to non-conceptual factors fails to explain why this concept has been used in order to substantiate views, which were detrimental to women. One can also say it loud that the concept of persons has all been defined by males and for males. Postmodernism has counted this idea, because it allows for plurality of

ideas. It supports inter - subjectivity of perspectives and therefore support the fact that women are persons and should be treated with dignity.

### **5.6 Dissensus: Promoting Communication and Dialogue on Women**

The desire to live above Hegelian dialogues is a view shared by many philosophers. For examples, David Carroll observed that for Jean – Francois Lyotard, “the central problem is still, as it has been since at least Nietzsche, how to escape from or exceed the recuperating powers of the dialectic” (Carroll, 1984, 79). Other French philosopher like Foucault, Deleuze, Derrida as well as Lyotard had their works directly rooted in the critiques of the Hegelian and Marxist dialectics. In Foucault (1971:28) words;

Truly to escape Hegel involves an exact appreciation of the price we have to pay to detach ourselves from him. It assumes that we are aware of the extent to which Hegel, insidiously perhaps, is close to us. It implies knowledge, in that which permits us to think against Hegel, of that which remains Hegelian. We have to determine the extent to which an anti-Hegelianism is possibly one of his tricks directed against us, at the end of which he stands, motiveless waiting for us.

Hegel by fixing thought, reason, conscious to the Absolute, creates monism, and the fact that dialectics is used to show the movement of the absolute in self-realization is a fallacy of absolutely or better philosophical errors; the philosopher error suppose that the value of his philosophy lies in the whole, in the structure; but posterity finds its value in the stone which he used for building, and which is used many times after that for building – better. Thus it finds the value in the fact that the structure can be destroyed and nevertheless retains its value as building material (Nietzsche, 1968: 156). Hegel tries to show how reality is one he assumes that communication is consensus. Consensus is not the goal of communication, but rather its death. Discourse can be kept alive once it is seen that disagreement, Paralogy, its end. Disagreement as the end of communication allows a transverse of the Hegelian dialectic that succeeds in escaping its recuperative moment.

Disagreement or Dissensus is the basis of postmodernism thought, this is unlike Hegel who thinks that the goal of dialogue conversation, and philosophical investigations is agreement, to consensus and unanimity to the self – confirmed whole. That means the nature of humanity to

press onward to agreement with others; human natures only really exist in an achieved community of minds. Disagreement is postmodernist phenomenological – Ontological discourse is such that will produce different paradigms and revolutionary principles, creates illuminatory and artistic genres that will launch novel fields of inquiry. Disagreement in the realm of postmodernist phenomenological ontology permits the metaphysics of inter-subjectivity especially in human relations. This supersedes Hegel dialectic which assumes that indifference towards agreement would mean abandonment to of humanity.

Hegel's dialectic is one-side, a partial truth masquerading as a whole truth, especially when one read the lines on "the woman". It subsumed as a moment in the dialectics progressive unfolding, if any contestation plays by Hegel's rules. The Hegelian dialectics is neither eluded by being turned upside down, nor evaded by being turned inside out. What is needed is that the presuppositions that allow it to function must be displaced, and in a way that doesn't make similar assumptions. Hegel's text and its construction surreptitiously facilities certain readings and impedes others. For instances Hegel asserts that reason is what makes us human, Reason is the engine of freedom, in Reason in History, in another look, phenomenology of spirit., wrote that women cannot attain to absolute reasons by extension freedom. At the risk of anthropomorphism and biological-essentialism, it might be said that a text clandestinely seeks to establish the protocols of its reading.

What is needed is a reading of Hegel's text that attends not only to their manifest contents, but also to their construction. Well, one may suggest a rheological reading in Hegel to foster some interpretations and to exclude others. It also allows text to see interrogated, asking what is at stake in the readings they forbid. This may permit a displacing of analysis from the firm ground of logic onto the stormy seas of rhetoric, and so create the possibility of a change of terrain "from a unique logic and stable locus, from utopia of Absolute knowledge to an undesirability of fluid topic "(Smith, 1987:251). Contesting Hegel's dialectic recuperative moments, necessitates ignoring the protocols his text endeavor to institute whereas rhetorically his text in ways they impede, against their grains, thereby doing violence to them. Violence here is the condition of the possibility of reading, forcefully removing things from beginning for a reading of Hegel's texts. Reading that is mere parroting of an uncomprehend text always is born to struggle.

The violence that engenders text rhetorical reading opposes the violence of the text which attempts to suppose alternative interpretations. This is Foucault's (1971:22) points when he states that "we must conceive discourse as a violence that we do to things. Or, at all events, as a practice we impose upon them, it is in this practice that events, of discourse find the principle of their regularity". The problem with a text such as Hegel is not reading rhetorically or some other method of interpretation, the problem is the truth in the text and a rigorous analysis, and profound understandings. Thus Foucault (1980:53-54) claim that "the only value tribute to thought such as Nietzsche's is precisely to use it, to deform it, to make it groan and protest this might be equality applied to Hegel.

Dissensus is the turbo of communication; it should not be constructed as a call for willful self-assertion or factures contentiousness. It showed also be noted that the search for new incommensurable idea and concepts is the aim of dissensus or disagreement. Dissensus cancel Hegel's idea of absolute knowledge, ultimate agreement. Dissensus brings about revolutionary knowledge. We need to recall that a system such as philosophy, Religion, history, and ever culture has failed in their reconciliation of the paradox and polarity of gender. For the reconciliation of sexes, there is need for a revolutionary silence, such that dissensus is used as our framework. In *The Postmodern Condition*, Lyotard refers the process of dissensus, disagreement as paralogy: He argues:

Consensus is a horizon that is never reached. Research that takes place under the aegis of a paradigm tends to stabilize; it is like the exploitation of a technological, economic, or artistic "idea" it cannot be discounted. But what is striking is that someone always comes along to disturb the order of "Reason". It is necessary to posit that existence of a power that destabilizes the capacity for explanation, manifested in the promulgation of new norms for understanding or, if one prefers, in a proposal to establish new rules circumscribing a new field of research for the Language of science, this is the context of scientific discussion is morphogenesis. It is not without rules, there are classes catastrophe, but it is always locally determined. Applied to scientific discussion and placed in a temporal framework this properly implies that discoveries are unpredictable. In terms of the transparency, it is a factor that generates blind spoke and defers consensus (Lyotard, 1984:61).

This shows that the paralogical search for new ideas and concepts (for reconciliation of the sexes) is what permits and perpetuates communication. Human nature is expressed in disagreement consensus is only a particular state of discussions a necessary moment in dialectic, but its result is dissensus. The scientific or phenomenologic observer, views the moments of

dialectics as moving towards a mere comprehensive perspective in which the knower and the known are identified and factions disagreement are resolved in a reconciling consensus. The scientific is distinguished by the designations 'we' or 'us' from experiencing processes of consciousness. The phenomenological observer views the moments of dialectic as moving towards a more comprehensive perspective in which the knower and the known are identified, and factions disagreement are resolved in a reconciling consensus. Seeing the dialectic this way supposed a decision that this is the correct purview.

For Hegel, dialecticians of this sort would be retrograde, because the interested is to move forward to disagreement with others. From another perspective, Hegel's own text can be interpreted as generating such proliferation of perspectives if the synthesizing moment is seen as introducing a new position which remains on the same argumentative terrain as the contending stances it claims to subsume. This rhetorical reading transgresses the Hegelian dialectic, but is not absorbed by its recuperative moment. Disagreement may appear as a negative moment that will in turn be subsumed by Hegelian dialectics synthesizing moment. One has to note that complete consensus is never reached, and the possibility of future ruptures cannot be foreclosed. This means that the presence and introduction of disagreement as disorganizing the recuperative moment and precluding subsumption. Well one can agree that whether disagreement is sublated by the Hegelian dialectic or is the process that fractures sublates, is a question of punctuations. This means that it is not the movement of the dialectic towards agreement wholly immanent to its moments, but an objective truth about the dialectics direction, a fact of the matter, a truth independent of any contribution provided by the observing not necessarily according to Hegel.

If interpretation of the dialectic is seen as moving towards consensus it is something contributed by the Hegelian "we". Hegel (1977:55-56) maintains for instance that, "the new object shows itself to have come through a reversal of consciousness itself". This way of looking at the matter is something contributed by us, by means of when the succeeding experiences is not known to the consciousness passes in and into a scientific progression, but it is not known to the consciousness that we are obsessing in the philosophy of history he (1988:14) also writes; "to him who looks at the world rationally, the world looks rationally in return".

This relation is mutual, Hegel even though he distinguishes between the natural consciousness which exist within the particular moments of the dialectical development, and phenomenological observer who chronicles the dialectal transitions which the natural consciousness experience and to which it is subjected, in the other hand Marx argued that the natural consciousness exists essentially in immediate unity with the total situation which at any given time dominates and determines it, it belongs thereto, although the situation may rank for it as a sphere of object hood standing opposed to it. This immediate unity to consciousness and determines situation was referred to by Hegel in the phenomenology is the shape of consciousness. Natural consciousness appears in a multitude of shapes. This is the realm while the naturalness of consciousness is not natural in the sense of an eternal nature, but is rather on the contrary and just because of the changing situation; a changing and in this sense a historical consciousness, as a historical consciousness, natural consciousness changes. Hegel may be right in drawing the differences between natural consciousness and the phenomenological observer, but he misunderstands its nature, and so misreads its significance. To clarify this Anthony wilden (1980:111) believes;

The communication viewpoint necessarily destroys the objective values of scientism, and even in physics especially as a result of relating on the one hand and of quantum mechanics in the other hand, it is almost universally accepted that the behavior of any system, open or close, informational or energetic, organic or inorganic, is a function of the way the observer-participator punctuates it ... moreover to call the observer any participator, are all acts of punctuation, if at a more abstract level, than the punctuation which occurs in the observation itself.

This shows that the question of the context of the text cannot be raised within the text; in this instance communication about communication is metacommunication. The reading of the text depends on the context in which the text is punctuated. "The relation of text and context is one of punctuation, for it involves the problem of boundaries" (ibid). A text's interpretation is determined by how it is punctuated, which happen at the contextual level, the communication can only be properly examined by reference of the metacommunication levels of punctuation and context.(ibid, 114). A text in one sense of the world may contain many levels of text and context, since it is always possible to ask after the context of the content a context is always the text of another context.

"There is" as Jacques Derrida (1976:158) writes, "nothing outside of the text is underlined by context is concentrated by punctuation." Even though Hegel recognizes that the meaning of a

text is conditioned by context, that a context can be contextualized, and that text and context are constituted by punctuation, it is crucial to note that for Hegel, this dialogue occurs on the level of text, and not of context. It would not be précised to say that Hegel, places the mutual relation of self – consciousness that is, the relationship *ego* and *other* within the individual self - consciousness, and the relation of self and others between at least two self-consciousness. This is at the level of the natural consciousness since there is a progressive permeation at the natural by the phenomenological consciousness. This relationship in one that is punctuated by Hegel, This is ‘ontological optimism’ Hegel placed himself at the vantage point of truth (of the whole) in order to consider the problem of the other. To this, Satre (1986:243) to writes;

This when Hegelian monism considers the relation of consciousness, it doesn’t put itself in any particular consciousness. Although the whole is to be realized, it is already there as the truth of all which is true. Thus when Hegel writes that every consciousness, since it is identical with itself in the whole, outside consciousness, and he considers them from point of view of the Absolute. For individual consciousness are moments in the whole, moments which by themselves are *unselbststanding*, and the whole is a mediator between consciousness.

Two things are gained out here; (a) Hegel does not allow his punctuation to be contented, (b) he does not permit the punctuation of his punctuation, this mean that he traits potential dialogists like dummies so that he can impersonate a ventriloquist.

However, postmodernist phenomenologico-ontological analysis creates room for dissensus, dissensus goes to limit the rules of enunciation; rationality, readability and communication. It may be said that one can find Hegel’s text paradoxical. Dissensus brings about the talk on metacommunication, text, context and punctuation; this is to counter Hegel’s dialectics. Agreement in the goal of many particular discussions, but the regulative idea of discourse is not consensus, but dissensus.

The goal of communication is dissensus; it means that communication ‘dynamo’ in the search for new, incommensurable ideas and concepts that fissure a previously existing consensus (in this instance, the section of women in Hegel’s philosophy). Dissensus as a postmodern culture creates the ground for interplay of ideas, and creates new paradigm. It is in the search for the new orientation in gender studies that the polarity of the sexes can be resolved especially from a postmodernist perspective. Dissensus creates time scenario for a philosophical change in the status of women, to use Lyotard’s phrase, *the time has come to philosophize*.



## **5.7 Developing a New Orientation to the Women in Philosophy**

When we discussed gender in relation to history, social and political life, we saw the feminist stand (see sections 4.5, 4.6, 4.7 and 4.8) is necessary to maintain socio-political order in the society as well as balance history in diversity. Now, we shall face the philosophical cannons. Is there any need to re-write it? Who are those who canonized philosophy? How can we relieve and re-evaluate the devalued works and contributions of women in philosophy? There is need to acknowledge, at this point, the various works of women philosophers, feminine philosophers and feminist philosophy in philosophy through communication and dialogue.

Going through the works of the feminists in history of philosophy, one issue that is argued vehemently is the value of philosophical cannon to feminism, its theories and action; should we open up the curriculum to include new voices, excluded perspectives? Or should we continue to teach and read the traditional cannon? What do the writings of the philosophers whose thoughts have formed the core of western philosophy have to offer feminists?

Feminist philosophers have also challenged the history of philosophy by re-interpreting and appropriating its ideas for feminist purposes. One finds the negative ideas about women in philosophical cannon as sources that describe the philosophical theories and the philosophers that view women with prejudices. Feminist historians of philosophy access their facts and use them as philosophical inquires in the works of mainstream philosophers. Valuable concepts and inspiring pronouncements were also seen in the works of mainstream philosophers like Aristotle and Descartes. For example, Marcia Homiak has argued that Aristotle's rational ideal, far from being antithetical to feminists, actually captures some of feminism's deepest ethical insights (Homaik, 1993). Descartes' idea of reason can also be re-interpreted in egalitarian, rather than mascularnist terms, can be used to argue for equal education for women.

Obviously, if feminists can evaluate the whole philosophical works from different perspective, the question of coherence of feminist interpretation of texts arises. Are Descartes' ideas dangerous for feminists or useful to them? How is Aristotle's work classified in feminism: positive canon or negative canon? If both positions are argued for, we are left to wonder the need to see or read a philosopher from a feminist perspective. Of course the issue of coherence and unity of feminist works in philosophy and the project of revision is possible. *Why the different, and incompatible, interpretation of history of philosophy by feminists?* Well the various interpretations of history of philosophy make feminism a unity in diversity and this supposedly is part of the debates on identity and self-images. These diversities are the result of debate within feminist philosophy over feminism and its contents, core values and theoretical framework. This, in turn, raises arguments on the limits of history of philosophy and the criteria for adequate interpretation. These diverse contributions to these questions reveal that the thought of traditional philosophers are rich with possibilities for feminist interpretations, and also established the relationship between feminist thought and traditional philosophy.

The traditional philosophy (history of philosophy) was bound to tradition. Historians of philosophy should include feminist historians, masculinist historians, and neutralist historians. In other words, history of philosophy should not only include women and men, it should include other philosophies and philosophers termed as minor, oriental and African. A close look at the philosophical approach to the history of philosophy should follow an inclusive outline, content, and methodology in such a way that historical text in philosophy should not only reflect history but also should take certain direction as resumption view (focusing in comments on philosophical text) the super-metaphysical view (Heidegger's for instance), hermeneutic view, foundational view and the reconstructive view (feminism). By this, reality is captured and not selected, and philosophical canon are enriched, expanded, and balanced.

## **5.8 A Postmodernist Phenomenologico- Ontological Application of Intersubjectivity in our Contemporary Society**

### **5.8.1 Women and Socio-Political Order:**

By socio-political order, we mean the arrangement of things in the society, to enable proper function of things. The social institutions such as political, economic, religious and scientific and technology need to be organized and harmonized to ensure socio-political order. Socio-political order more so includes the conduct of individual members of the society. This means that application and appreciation of communal and human values brings development and social order. Given the gender issue and difference, there is need to create awareness on it so as to bring about socio-political order. It entails political stability *and social order*; let us discuss this in details.

#### **[1] Re-Orientation on Gender Tolerance, Equality and Difference**

Why do we need the re-orientation or education on gender tolerance? Given the way gender has structured human thoughts from perspective that mainstream philosophies, their philosophers and histories gave answers to them, these have created problems of physical security, dignity, respect, self-expression, discrimination and intolerance. There are two concepts that could be used to explain gender intolerance; equality and difference. Gender is socially seen as difference epistemologically. Sex is a distinction, whereas equality is equivalence. Feminist critique has exposed the male-dominated nature of every social institution, especially in philosophy. This has left us with incompleteness and bias, such that it has created a self-referencing system by which those things culturally identified as ‘male’ are more highly valued than those identified as female.

The word “Equality” could be seen from many perspectives of law, language, conceptual and mathematical. The concept of equality in this sense of gender equality suffers from “mathematical fallacy”. This is the view that the same things are equal. In legal instances, courts find women’s difference sufficient justification for inequality, constructing at the same time a specious “sameness” when applying phallocentric (male viewpoint) standards “equality” to men and women is different; including reproductive biology, or economic positions to yield (not surprisingly) unequal results for women (Littleton, 1987: 75).

The questions bothering gender, inequality and difference are seldom asked. This is because of the way gender has structured thought and perception that mainstream philosophy and moral theory gives tactful answer to all. In a perspective, we build the concept of equality, presupposes sameness and the concept of sex presupposes differences. Sex equality becomes a contradiction. This perhaps suggests why we are having difficulty getting equality. The term gender-neutrality is considered to be formal equality.

Gender is also a question of power, specifically of male supremacy and female subjugation. It suggests hierarchy, power and dominance. Gender is a consequence for social power and linguistic constructions and altitude. Going by this, what could count as a model for re-orientation on gender tolerance? According to Okoro, when embarking on an emancipation of the oppressed, it requires a great deal of political power (Okoro, 2000: 47) and;

...any ideology that shared serve as the means to solving a people's problem, must not only reflect their social circumstance, it must be such that both the leaders (men) and people (women) engage in the emancipation... such ideology must not be eclectic, but fundamentally original. It is neither idealistic nor materialistic, but a realistic dialectics-which is human center (Ibid; 50).

This means that any model for re-orientation on gender tolerance should be to provide descriptions of "human beings" that will be true to the conditions of women's lives. *"It is only such a dialectics of realism that enunciates the totality of the society and is as such pedagogic by nature"* (Ibid, 51). This is seen as reconstructive philosophy, which should include, explain and reconstruct the reforms agenda necessary for the safety and improvement of women's life in direct language that is true to our (women's) own experience and our own subjective life. This means that there is need to accept tolerance in difference since the inequality of the sexes stands in complex relation to the problem of survival. The following should constitute the contents of the re-orientation program.

- a) **Consciousness-raising:** This means a clear expression of self-creation and responsibility. Consciousness-raising creates knowledge by exploring common-experiences and patterns that emerge from shared telling of life events. It creates a sort relationship between theory and practice. It should also create awareness on the law. Consciousness-raising strengthens the fact that perceptions have meaning only in the context of an experience that matters-feminism in this sense.

- b) **Interpretative:** It must be interpretable. It must, not be fallacious, in the sense of meaning different things at the same time. It must be conceptually and linguistically clear.
- c) **Educative and informative:** It must be educative and informative. It has to integrate the necessities, experiences of both genders. It must be pragmatic and inclusive of the truth situation of both women and men's experience, honesty to implication and recognize different gender complements.
- d) **Liberal:** It must be for men and women and be free from systematic subordination because of sex. It must take much cognizance of anti-discrimination because the reason for having anti-discrimination laws is also the same reasons to allow discrimination. It must also address real problem of women such as pregnancy legislation, social justice and economy.

## [2] **Justice as a Social Idea; Gender Justice as Cultural and Ethical**

With human relationship, there is need to draw attention to a contrast between an ethic of justice and rights and either of care. In other words, those who see the self as different from others are more likely to voice a morality of justice. And those who see the self as part of others would express a morality of care. This is in line with Gilligan's view of *In a Different Voice* (1982). Gilligan's thesis could be used to justify confining women within the private sphere and to explain how inadequately theories of justice have so little covered the spheres of family as well as address the participation of women in public spheres. Hegel affirmed in the phenomenology that subordination of women in marriage and family is necessarily to build the state (polis). This means that without this contract of suppression, the building of civil society is not possible. This calls to our mind, the idea to separate political or civil right from paternal right. In this way, masculine right over the women is declared as non-political.

Within Hegel analysis of the woman, the private (divine) and public (human) were held together by the paternal. In other words, the public sphere had all forms of social life except the domestic. This means that the domestic life is the major distinguishing feature of public and private world. The principles of association obtainable in these two worlds are different. The civil society or public enjoys liberal criteria such as rights, property, equality, while the private is based on national ties of sentiment and blood and marriage relationship. The liberal feminism concept of

women is not enough to advocate for equality. The inclusion of feminist jurisprudence became obvious. Iris Marjan Young's *Justice and Politics of the Difference* (1990) had that it is a mistake to reduce social justice to distribution. She suggests that social justice means "the elimination of institutionalized domination and oppression" (Young, 1990: 15). In philosophical discourse, issues like this are neglected such as decision-making, division of labour, culture. Theories of justice like Rawls (1999) and Nozick (1974) have no room for a concept of social groups. Young believes that where there are social differences and as an inevitable concomitant, some groups are privileged and others are oppressed. In her words, "social justice requires explicitly acknowledging and attending to those group differences in order to undermine oppression. This is a theory of justice that addressed injustice (Young, 1990: 3). Distributive issues remain important but "the scope of justice extends beyond them to include the political as such; that is all aspects of institutional organization in so far as they are potentially subject to collective decision" (*Ibid*; 8). However the primary terms for conceptualizing injustice are oppression and domination.

Young was emphasizing on difference whereas liberal feminist movements were emphasizing sameness. It is a denial of difference that contributes to oppression. According to Young, for a politics that recognizes difference, oppression can result from tyranny mostly from everyday practices, unconscious assumptions, and reactions of well-meaning people in ordinary interactions, media and cultural stereotypes, structural feature of bureaucratic hierarchies and market mechanism (*Ibid*; 41).

Be that as it may, oppression can be seen in different faces of: exploitation, magnetization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence. Exploitation is felt most in structure and social groups where it enacts strong differences and dominance. Marx dialectical material is a good illustration of exploitation. Marx in 1852 was of the view that history is the history of class struggles. In the *Capital* (1852: 832), Marx wrote that there are three large classes in capitalist system, wage labourers, capitalist and landowners. History is the struggle between two classes. For Young, it is gender. This has two aspects; first the transfers of the fruits of material labour to men, and the transfer of nurturing and sexual energies to women and race.

The most dangerous form of oppression is marginalization. ‘Marginals’ are people the system of labour cannot or will not use-although distributive justice may address material deprivations, but there is justice beyond distribution. Young argues that “the provision of welfare itself produces new injustices by depriving those dependent on it of rights and freedom they have and even when material deprivation is somewhat mitigated by the welfare state, marginalization is not unjust because it blocks the opportunity to exercise capacities in socially defined and recognized way” (Young, 1990: 54).

Powerlessness is a form of oppression experienced by non-professionals. This comes in form of powerless lack of authority, status and sense of self (Ibid; 57). It also includes lack of autonomy and respect. This privilege of professionalism respectability manifests in the dynamics of sexism and racism. For instance, in the experience of women and black men, most time their treatment of respect comes after their status is revealed, unlike the white men. Young argued that in daily intercourse, women and men of colour gain their respectability through their profession (Ibid; 58). More so, Young noted that to experience cultural imperialism is “to experience how the dominant meanings of a society render the particular perspective of one’s own group invisible at the same time as they stereotype one’s group and mark it out as the other” (Ibid; 58-59).

The challenge and injustice in imperialism of culture is that the oppressed groups own experience and interpretation of social life, finds little expression that touches the dominant culture, while the same culture imposes on the same oppressed group its experience and its interpretation of social life. Charles Taylor (1994: 5) talks about the “politics of recognition”. Demands for welfare or health care rights are examples of redistributive justice for gay and lesbian households exemplify a politics of recognition (Kiss, 1998: 487, 497). Just claims for redistribution so that each supports the other and not the reverse. More so, racist attacks, sexual assault, domestic violence are various forms of oppressive systematic violence. Young (Ibid, 62) asserts that “what makes violence a phenomenon of social injustice, and not merely an individual moral wrong is its systematic character, its existence as a social practice.”

From the on-going analysis, feminism as justice means that the fundamental contradictions that characterize women's life are not reflected at any level whatsoever in contracts, torts, constitutional law, or any other legal doctrine. The value that follow from material potential for physical connection are not recognized as values by Rule of Law, and the dangers attendant to that state are not recognized as dangers of the Rule of Law. This explains that Rule of Law does not value intimacy because its official value is autonomy. The implication of this is material consequences of this theoretical undervaluation of women's value in the material world is that women are economically impoverished. The value we women place on intimacy reflects our existential and material circumstance. According to Robin West,

Nurturancy, intimate labour is neither valued by liberal legalism nor compensated by market economy. It is not compensated in the home and it is not compensated in the workplace whatever intimacy is, there is no compensation (West, 1988).

The rule of law is not well distributed; it does not recognize values or intimacy, rather autonomy. The rule of law, in essence, does not recognize the contradictions, which characterize the phenomenological experiences of women. For instance, the cases of rape are either not criminalized or published. To do so would bring about the stigmatization or stereotyping of the victim, this leads to identity formation. Similarly, fetal invasion is not understood as harm. The right of aborting should be seen as the right of self-defense; to protect the body's security against annihilation liberally understood, not invasion.

Of course, over the decades, there have been law reforms in areas of rape, sexual harassment, reproductive freedom and pregnancy right at workplace. These laws and reforms should be conceived as right to privacy; but it is used instead to characterize the women tragedies. Feminism, as justice, advocates for fairness in every human endeavour, especially political, and conceptual (philosophical) barriers to women freemen. This envisions a post-patriarchal world where justice is human-justice and not one sided.



### **5.8,2 Postmodernist Position on the Place of Women in the Contemporary Society**

As have discussed in section five sub-section one, contextualism refers to views that emphasize the context in which an action, utterance, or expression occurs. Contextualism insists, in some important respect, that action, utterance or expression can only be understood relative to that context (Price; 2008). More so, the fact that we live in a pluralistic world is the evidence that our differences should be accommodate. Our ideas, perspectives and experiences are multiples of different perceptives of the world. The fact that Humanity is gendered male and female presupposes the difference views of the world. Not only that the fact that human irrespective of genders are place at different locations of the, with different experiences, understanding, and different views about reality in its originality is a composite and only truth about knowledge.

However, Polarity occurs when the multiple views of the world are tailored into a singular whole and as well hierarchized. Truth, knowledge, as well as history become polarized. This means that our knowledge of reality have been defected in the process of editing by cannon creators. This is one of the major problems created by orthodoxy. This as well underlines all disciplines; History, philosophy, and science. This means that our knowledge of reality had been polarized by cannon creators. Our disciplines need a re-evaluation to make truth, which we suppose to know be known, and to correct the errors of building on false foundation. Truth should include the ideas of all; man, woman and all races. As such should be reported in multiples, plurals, without being universalized or hierarchized.

Philosophy should be seen not only as a sum of eternal truths, but also as a result of human activity in time. The philosopher is a human being who does not live in isolation but lives within the society. Therefore, he is the object of personal, political, scientific and cultural influences. All these influences are relevant for the emergence of his philosophic thoughts, ideas, concepts, paradigms and conclusions. All these influence the philosopher in the choice of topic and in the manner of argument presentation. But historians usually ignore the context of philosophical argument. History is made timeless. The hermeneutical interpretation of the text is ignored properly because of lack of access to such knowledge. This makes philosophy and its history, disjunctive alternatives. This disjunctive can be found between systematic philosophy (Hegel) and the history of philosophy.

According to Jürgen Mittelstraß in his paper *Die Philosophie und Ihre Geschichte* (1981:17), there is an error in identifying philosophy with what had hitherto been identified as philosophy. Contrary to scientific disciplines, philosophy cannot refer to any other means than argument for securing the validity of theorems. But only by considering arguments (which can, of course be historical, that is taken from texts) can a philosophical theorem or a philosophical truth be verified. Mittelstraß writes that even if one accepts the historical aspects of these arguments, one should not demand a historical character of philosophy. On the contrary, such demand would silence all intentions to secure validity with the help of argument (Ibid; 25). Therefore the study of philosophy should be a history of argumentation (Ibid) or a history of reason. With this, history of philosophy should be more into the relationship between argumentations. Authors, as originators of argumentation, have to move to the background, the context in which they have produced their philosophies, their motives of treating the topics, the occasion for and the conditions of their philosophical work. This approach has been ignored in the methodological discussion among the historians of philosophy (Jürgen, 1981: 27, also Skinner, 1987).

The philosophical problem of female subjugation in history of philosophy needs to be re-addressed in the historical context to discover the reason that has led to it. That is, the interest of a (feminist) historian of philosophy is to examine the context and identify the range of questions that have been given to this canonical question. It is wrong to assume a neutral or transparent context. This will help to uncover the error and fallacy of over generalization about the status of women in reality. It will bring about the two major issues; the primary history and the restoration of reality.

The fact is that to be a person is to be within the spheres of one expression of a complex nature of artifacts, which includes language, ritual, social institution, styles of arts, architecture, cosmology and myths that constitute culture. Culture shapes history. Hegel asserted the distinction between the natural, that merely survives and the human, which exists historically. Hegel brought about the historical conception of humanity and the historicity of the person. Women are humans, who exist also with the complex nature of artifacts; the cultural and mythological conditioning, an exceptional. Hegel's phenomenology of the spirit is not

exceptional within these influences. That is philosophy presented women as inferior in western history of philosophy is not far from the cultural and mythological influence on those philosophers in time.

Moving beyond this suggests that history of philosophy, especially those areas on women as irrational, inferior or as sex objects (Schopenhauer inclusive) should be given historic context. Otherwise, there arose a textualist and contextualist confusion. Similarly, Foucault focused in the historical context of thought. Foucault showed that the way in which we organize the order in our consciousness identities, emerged from “being-in-the-world”, it is not a prior knowledge, no essential order of history things (Cited in Lechte, 1994: 111). Foucault developed his theory of historicity of the concepts of “reason” and “madness” and of the changing institution and practices adopted by the later. Foucault developed this to argue that the “knowledge” which is expressed in various discourses, is a form of power. Institutionalized power, according to Foucault, is not the application of some a-historical reality, but is co-extensive with the way and manner in which it construes that which it deals with. Foucault’s analysis shows that the ‘knowledge’ contained in a mode of discourse and its referents has an authoritative instrumentality, and thus the working of power can be understood through studying the social practices, which have given rise to particular forms of discourse.

The very fact that knowledge is never objective but an intrinsic part of particular social practice and relations, and the idea that ‘knowledge is ‘power’ means that power is never objectively grounded or defensible in universalistic terms and is potentially dispensable throughout society. This makes case for feminism; the status of women in history of philosophy.

The idea of truth being objective is that one’s beliefs, no matter what they are, have nothing to do with the material world. Postmodernism does not believe that language represents and captures all reality. The concept of reality understood as given and objective is fallacious. This means that truth is not singular about the world. Our knowledge is reality as a product of influence and constructs from the multiple context of our environment such as culture, values, norms, race,

gender, economy and so many others. Truth is also relative. This means that there is neither an authoritative projection into the future nor an objective history from which to derive it. According to Jacques Derrida, language could be seen as 'value-laden' or 'ideological' (cited, Lemon, 2003: 363). Accordingly, Derrida argued; language is expressive of desirousness and consciousness is that a specific human being experiences within a definite spatial/temporal context, then language is not denotative reality.

However, within feminist discourse, the fact that language does not represent reality, the fallacious nature of objective and the plurality of truth, stand out for feminist arguments against the objectivity and truth in history. This objectivity and truth has been conditioned by certain social influences and reduced them to Masculinist thoughts about them. This is a crisis in representation of thought, since the past is not discovered but created and represented by historians (Lemon, 2009: 370). This leads to the question; How can we objectively, faithfully and truthfully represent the past? This raises further question on the content of history, the history that could go as sources for epistemological, social and political knowledge. From the on going analysis in this work, it then means that in our contemporary or postmodern world, knowledge, whether history, science or philosophy conceived of as an empirical search, with its method based upon the belief in some reasonable, sound, accurate or proven correspondence between the part, its interpretation and its nature of representation, is no longer a tenable conception of the task of the people in-charge of orthodoxy. Instead of beginning with the past, we should start with its representation, because it is only by doing this that we can challenge the belief that there is a discoverable and remedy representable truthfulness in the reality of the past. This raises the issue that all historical knowledge is mediated in both terminology and linguistic forms.

Since no history can escape being culturally, socially politically and ideologically influenced (see sections 3.5 and 3.6), then let it be open and directed towards the objective of "emancipation" and of whom? Foucault says this lies in equation of information (knowledge) with power. In philosophy, mainstream meta-narratives and 'ownskist' history legitimizes the dominant social orders, political structures and economic systems, ignoring the disadvantaged position of "the other" (women especially) and its "rationality" turns attention away from the

ever-present possibility throughout history, of reaching for something 'sublime' outside the mentality of those comfortably entrenched in the instrumental routines of society. Thus, to describe postmodern history Branda Marshall asks;

Whose history gets told? In whose name? For what purpose? Postmodernism is about histories not told, retold, untold. History as it never was, histories forgotten, hidden, invisible, considered unimportant, changed, eradicated... (Cited in Jenkins, 1995: 38)

When we talk about deconstructing history, we mean removing its dominance, oppression, segregation, remove all that is not supposed to be in history and include all that is supposed to be included so that this will give voice to all; women and other oppressed group. Postmodern study of history can empower and help emancipate not only the women, but all of us.

However, to analyze and deconstruct history as power and dominance, epistemological and political capacities are needed. Philosophers of history like Fukuyam and Alexandre Koj've built their ideas upon Hegel's ideas about the struggle for recognitions. History has been building a long line of dominance, power and for the interest of particular groups. This is contrary to postmodern feminism, which is the ultimate acceptor of diversity. Postmodern feminism accept that the male/female binary as a main categorizing force in our society. They criticized structure of society, the dominant, order and history, especially in its patriarchal contents. In this case, multiple truths, multiple roles, much realities are part of its focus.

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

### **SUMMARY**

This study is a tour in Hegel's idealism. Hegel is a profound philosopher with a wide encyclopedic writings as has been discussed in chapters one and two. A summary of Hegel's idealism will not be easy, even our interest which is on the status of women in his thought, cannot be comprehended in isolation except it is discussed as part of his systematic philosophy. The essence of this study is to lay a metaphysical foundation for women's self-transcendence within philosophy in particular and the society at large. To this effect, we embarked on the deconstruction of Hegel's idealism which laid a metaphysical foundation in history. We argued that Hegel's idealism which made reason the engine of history with its end as human freedom could be used as a foundation for women self-emancipation from the subjugation in Hegel's thought ( in western classical philosophy) only when it is deconstructed. Hegel made dialectic his methodology, we argued in chapter one that dialectic as the logic of Hegel's philosophy has its limitations, in the sense that when this logic (dialectic) is laxed – up on Human relationship it creates Polarity. The resolution of this polarity is one of the major tasks of this study and more so to advocate for intersubjective idealism.

Again in chapter one, we discussed Hegel's idea of the absolute spirit, we saw that the absolute spirit is the controller of the entire universe and manifest itself in human History. Through the use of dialectics, Hegel expressed how the absolute spirit works with consciousness's, manifests itself in history, (as expressed in human experiences), and unites all realities. Hegel sustained brilliant effort to analyze the life of the human spirit, to express these controlling ideas in orderly, connected system as had certainly never before. Hegel saw the necessity of sustaining speculative imagination to the solid ground of tried and verified experience. We saw this in chapter two which is a discourse on Hegel's idealism. The movement of the absolute spirit from sense certainty (consciousness) to self- conscious and understanding (reason and truth) were the different stages of the manifestation of absolute reason in its search for truth and knowledge. This constitutes the ground for different expression of the variety of philosophical system. As brilliant as this idea looks, we argued that Hegel's thesis of absolute spirit (absolute reason, absolute consciousness, absolute truth and absolute freedom) as the center of all things and the unity of the whole is indeed determinist. The movement and manifestation of the absolute spirit

imposes determinism on the human species. Hegel's system is discontinuous, exclusive and independent (does not allow intersubjectivity) while his use of "absolute" introduces a rigid system of thought in the form of monism; a polarity in his thought. This imposition of determinism was deconstructed and reconstructed in chapter four of this study, where we argued from postmodernist phenomenologico-ontological perspective.

However, chapter three is the crux of this study; it discussed the status of Women in Hegel idealism from a comprehensive, comparative and expository perspective. The status of women in various epochs of philosophy was discussed. Apart from Plato and J. S. Mill, whose perspectives were of equality of sexes, the pre-Socrates, Aristotle, the medieval and modern mainstream philosophers (Hegel in particular) were guilty of bias and biological essentialism in their philosophy. We argued that there are elements of exclusivity (of women), subjugation, misogynist, and gendered analysis in the works of these mainstream philosophers on their views on women in philosophy. This study posited that philosophy is gendered male by its practitioners. Hegel apart from being guilty of bias institutes the maleness of absolutes: reason, consciousness, truth, history and freedom. Hegel expressed the maleness of absolutes as: the hero (male factor) is the greatest ally of the absolute (maleness of history), women do not attend self-consciousness (maleness of consciousness), the difference between the sexes have a rational basis and acquire an ethical significance (Maleness of reason, citizenship and leadership), and the subjugated analysis of the woman (see chapter four for details). These have led to the assumption that women are mentality and rationally inferior to men. This assumption erroneously permeates western classical philosophy and the society at large.

Furthermore, Hegel's analysis of the place of women in his thought (Ethical life) led to another polarity which this study identified as monistic dualism. The spirit's social existence is manifested in the ethical life. The ethical substance (human agents) experiences customs and law as an absolute given. This is seen as human law (male, purely social relationship) and divine law (female, natural relationship). Hegel in a way to explain that there is only one law suppressed the divine law (female), in order to show the supremacy of the male. In other words, Hegel instituted the hierarchy of genders, in addition, he fell into bifurcation of terminology (expression of subjugation as opposites) as a way to show the supremacy of one sex (male) over the other (female). This is monistic dualism. Hegel expressed this using Sophocles' *Antigone* as a lesson

for the women not to seek self-transcendence and remain in their place so as to avoid guilt. With strong hermeneutics effort, one can draw some lessons from Hegel's attitude to women. First, Hegel's master-slave dialectic recognizes the fact that we can be aware of ourselves only when others are conscious of us. In this instance, the concept of desire and the woman can be used as tool for transcendence. The woman has to be mindful of the fact that when desiring to control the other in sexual relation, then sexual desire becomes something like the Hegelian mode of power. Hence the notion of sexual desire cannot be separated from Hegelian attitude of women.

Hegel's analysis of the woman oscillates between the family, civil society and the state (see chapter three for detailed analysis), there is grounded in bias; biological essentialism. All these amounts to polarity: of knowledge and the subjective knower (in terms of denial of attainment of consciousness of the female), of social construction and bias, of fact and value, and of influence of political and social factors in terms of objectivity of thought. This study using postmodernist phenomenological ontology as its methodology rejected absolute truth, knowledge, and narratives that supports the fact the knowledge, truth, reason and philosophy is masculine (see chapter four for details). This study therefore posited that intersubjectivity of ideas should be the grounds and foundation for knowledge, as such should be the major basis for gender tolerance (this is discussed at length in chapter five).

In order to obtain a win-win temperament in the resolution of the polarity between sexes, this study used the theory of intersubjectivity, which drawing synergy from African complementarity ontology of sexes, and African metaphysical dualism (is contrasted with dualism) theory to show that a zero-sum result could be achieved. This way, Hegel's idealism is loosed of its monistic and absolute principles and a foundation is laid for women emancipation.



### **Textual analysis and Findings:**

A postmodernist phenomenologico – ontological analysis of Hegel's Idealism reveals the following findings:

[1]One fundamental point made by Hegel is that reason is the basis for freedom and development in whatever dimension. Crafting of new methodology for rationality cannot be done without the reason.

[2]Reason is gendered in Hegel's idealism in the historical consciousness of his time. Hegel attributed this metaphysical power of reason to be essentially belonging to the male – gender. Thus there exists the problem in Hegel's idealism of the *maleness of reason*. The fact that reason is endowed to all irrespective of gender flaws Hegel's idealism and his gendered reason. The way that reason is gendered male varies from *Phenomenology of spirit* to *Philosophy of Right*, to *Reason in History* and to *Lectures In Philosophy of World History* but the fact that they are gendered is constant; only the genderedness is in congruence with the spirit of the time, not for all times.

[3]However the above pluses for Hegel notwithstanding, a postmodernist phenomenologico – ontological analysis of his thought reveals that Hegel did not articulate the entire human entity in all. There are other aspects of human entity such as will, understanding, passion and imagination which Hegel failed to reconcile in his thought. Hegel's dialectics that subsumes passion and other human aspects for reason entity cannot bring about complementarity, equi-primodality and reconciliation of the sexes; it will further segregate them (see page 9, paragraph 2 of the delimitation)

[4] There is a polarity in Hegel's Idealism. Hegel's presentation of reason as what makes us human and the foundation of freedom, and reason as gendered is not logical. If we argue Hegel's thesis as follows; (i) reason is what makes us human (ii) women lack the power of reason (iii) therefore women are less human. Hegel through his dialectic thus grounded the metaphysical and phenomenological omission, exclusion and irreconcilability of the sexes from the classical western philosophy. Hegel (1973:263) wrote that women are not capable of doing philosophy, by implication; philosophy is or ought to be a male pursuit.

[5] Hegel anchored his idealism on the metaphysics of gender. Hegel's idealism proceeded by bifurcation between man (human law, conscious being, rational) and woman (divine law, unconscious, irrational). Again transcendence, reason, hero, the universal and spirit were all male within Hegel's Idealism whereas women are victims. We can see that most of the mainstream philosopher grounded their thought on the metaphysics of discrimination. The historical exclusion of women from the history of philosophy suggests that there are no woman or female philosopher. We are faced with a tradition that believes that there are no women philosophers, and if there are any, they are absent from the history of philosophy. However we could argue that, western history of philosophy is incomplete because it omits women philosophers and it is biased because it devalues any woman philosopher it forgot to omit. In the cause of a thorough search in the history of philosophy, this work has documented, at least 16 women philosophers in the classical world, (including Aspasia, Diotima, Hypatia), 17 women philosophers from 500 – 1,600 ( including Mary Aster, Mary Wollstonecraft and Elizabeth Stanton) and over 30 from 1,600 -1,900( including Hanna Arendt, Edith Stem, Simeon de Beauvoir). We have to note that these women are not women on the fringes of philosophy but philosophers on the fringes of history.

More so within the philosophical canon, three out of fourteen canonical philosophers are women; Mary Wollstonecraft, Hannah Arendt, and Simeon de Beauvoir. However, it is important to note that none of this three is canonical-if by that you mean included in the history of as it is told in philosophy department curricula in histories of philosophy and in scholarly writing. Not only that, the Encyclopedia of Philosophy published in 1967, which contains articles on over 900 philosophers, does not include an entry for any of them. If the index is to be believed de Beauvoir, Wollstonecraft are not mentioned at all in any article, and Hannah Arendt merits a single mention in an article on "Authority" These women are not read even in a survey of existentialism or political philosophy. Obviously, Hannah Arendt should have become a proactive subject for feminist discourse because of her criticism on feminism. While Wollstonecraft and de Beauvoir were both feminists, they did not share a common philosophical voice or common philosophical principle. In the *Vindication of the Right of Women*, Wollstonecraft argued for the education of women using enlightenment principles, while Beauvoir's *Second Sex* reflects her Marxist and existential roots.

The recovery, re-evaluation and inclusion of female philosophers in philosophical canons have challenged the myth that there are no women in the history of philosophy. This is a radical project because by uncovering a history of women philosophers it has exposed the alienating myth that philosophy was, and by implication, is or ought to be, a male pursuit. This is a distinctive project because there is no comparable activity undertaken by other contemporary philosophical movements for whom canon creation has been largely a process of selection from an already established list of male philosophy.

The idea of the woman in the works of canonical philosophers had enough to say about their subjugation. It suggests that: (i) Philosophical canons are misogynist, For instance, Aristotle's wrote in the *Politics* as between male and female the former is by nature superior and ruler, the later inferior and subject. Also Kant's writings contain both overt statements of sexism and racism and a theoretical framework that can be interpreted along gender lines. The negative canon exposes the way in which the views of canonical philosophers throughout history of philosophy are implicitly or explicitly misogynist or sexist. Some of the statements are explicit statements of misogyny in philosophical texts, as we have discussed in the works of Aristotle, Kant, and Schopenhauer, there are lots of them, and also in the works of Hegel. (ii) Gendered interpretation of philosophical concepts, Such as in Aristotle's theory of hylemorphism we find a connection between form and being male, and matter and being female. More so Hegel's interpretation of human laws and divine laws, we find that human law as men, and divine laws as females. Both Aristotle's and Hegel's philosophy intrinsically are gendered and sexist. (iii) Synoptic interpretation of the philosophical norms (patriarchal thinking, and conceptions) we also discovered that the Canons central to philosophical norms and values, like reason and objectivity are gendered norms. The synoptic approach considers the Western philosophical tradition as a whole and argues that its core concepts are gendered male. Moreover, philosophy's self-image as universal and objective, rather than particular and biased, is mistaken. The way that reason and objectivity is gendered male varies from one philosophical theory to the other and historical period varies, but the fact that they are gendered is constant. From Aristotle to Hume, from Plato to Sartre, reason is associated with maleness. Therefore, the notion of reason that we have inherited, whether we are empiricist or existentialist, requires critical scrutiny. For instance

one can see the maleness of Cartesian reason as both in a social meaning and a psychological content. First, the social meaning of maleness; in the seventeenth century it (the feminine orientation toward the world) was decisively purged from the dominant intellectual culture through the Cartesian “rebirthing and restricting of knowledge and the world as masculine”. This social meaning is paired with a psychological consequence. “The great Cartesian anxiety” although manifestly expressed in epistemological terms, disclosed itself as anxiety over separation from organic female universe. The presence of contradictions or instabilities in a philosophical text is symptomatic of the failure of patriarchal thinking to contain sexual difference.

[6]Hegel denied women the authenticity of existence (Hegel. 1973:263). This character of reason that distinguishes human from the rest of other beings Hegel denied that character in women. If well understood, it will provide a solid basis for peaceful co – existence and tolerance.

[7]This research found out that the inability of Hegel to do critical evaluation of man and woman nature provided a fallacy in his idealism especially his analysis of consciousness, self – consciousness, history, society and state. A critical look of Hegel’s idealism shows that it revolves between biology and history. Within Hegel’s idealism, both biology and history gave tremendous insights into the existential, familiar and material life of the woman, but failed to account for the whole picture. In the case of biology, it denies the reality of choice. In the case of history, it fails to take into account the existential importance of the phenomena it reduced to material conditions. This is a polarity in his thought. To this end a postmodernist phenomenologico - ontological deconstruction of the status of women in Hegel’s idealism could resolve this metaphysics.

[8]The most striking feature of Hegel’s thought is that “history is completed” that nothing new again can happen. This is paradoxical and wildly implausible since within Hegel’s idealism, women were seen as incapable of self – transcendence and self - emancipation. Hegel imposes determinism on the human race, we evade the argument in this study of how human life is to be determined historically and the logical necessity to explain that thought is relative to time. All the same, this portrays structural and systematic sabotage which only a postmodernist phenomenologico – ontological analysis can salvage by advocating for inter subjectivity of ideas.

[9] One of the revelations of this research is that the western Polarity of Sexes is fast encroaching the coast of our continent. That is to say the high rate of divorce, single parenthood, same-sex marriage, and above all the killing of the traditional family structure, is fast germinating in our continent. Our traditional and cultural heritage is fast being apostate at. The African continent is now exposed to the jaunty nature of western ideology on the sexes without placing cautions. However, the standpoint of this research is a jingoistic projection of our traditional values to the world, without opting for that which belongs to the west as ideal

[10] The women movement in the Nigeria of today has emerged as a jigsawed evidence to accommodate the western as well as the traditional values at the same time in the country. This is one of the reasons why women self-emancipation in Nigeria (in particular) has not been fully realized. This stems from the very way or attitude that the educated African woman is cut in the dilemma of confusion of values, whether to stay in the traditional roles or to join the feminism trend without leaving the benefits of the tradition society. This is an internal dialectics of African woman which need a synthesis to achieve its stability. To achieve this stability, a postmodernist attitude is the right start.

## Conclusion and Recommendation

### Conclusion

Hegel's thesis that reason is what makes us human and as that which propels freedom guided the focus of this research. Hegel, in a way, endeavored to show the growth of knowledge and how society could be structured but ended up relegating women to the background and denying them the metaphysical power of reason. And we argued that this is a polarity in Hegel's idealism. This shows that Hegel anchored his idealism on the metaphysics of gender. We proceeded for a postmodernist phenomenologico – ontological analysis of the status of women in Hegel's idealism to emancipate women from the trappings of Hegel's idealism. Hegel's system made a mockery of the woman; a lack in historical consciousness and he did denied women integrity of human life and the power of self – transcendence, an opportunity to participate in freedom. For the spirit is not a substance but an activity. The power of the spirit of any age (*Zeitgeist*) is what holds everyone in its spell. The overwhelming majority of men are always prisoners of the prevailing perspectives of their own period, their particular situations, and their national cultures. The spirit of any age is inexhaustible blend of the spirit of the past epochs only richer and more self-aware than any of the preceding.

If we follow Hegel's analysis of the spirit as absolute whose essence is rational necessity and this absolute spirit chooses its male ally to achieve its concern, as evidences in human history, we will discover that the argument is mythologized, not only pantheist but also patriarchal. This means that Hegel took reason to the male; this could cancel his dialectic, which is the logic of his idealism. The effect of this analysis in Hegel's idealism is that it has a polarity effect when it is laced up on human relationship. The paradox of Hegel's Idealism stems from the fact that his notion absolute freedom is;

( a) situation less, that is without definition, purely absolute, self-dependency

(b) the absolute freedom is under dialectical movement, this could lead to post-barbarism

(c) it spawned a number of empires of freedom which is destructive on human society ( in this instance we consider the fact that the reconciliation of the sexes is lopsided, especially in the western countries, where there is high rate of divorce, legalization of same sex marriage, single

motherhood, incest, and the gradual demise of the institution of family life. This has been argued in the delimitation)

(d) the necessity of a more articulated and smoothened theory of freedom (subjectivity) to replace Hegel's recognition with reconciliation through inter-subjectivity of ideas. Not only that the course of modern history has challenged the demand for absolute freedom and raises the dilemmas of self-dependence in its acutest form,

(e) the implication to the Nigerian society is that, if this polarity of sexes is not resolved and left to be transplanted (it is occurring in African soil) in our society, it will lead to a social volcano, considering the fact of the repression of African cultures by western civilization. Waiting for the natural dialectical process as espoused by Hegel will take forever. This is where the postmodernist phenomenologico – ontological tradition comes to the rescue. A postmodernist phenomenologico – ontological analysis recognizes that human reason is inexhaustible, and the metaphysical power of reason should go beyond the given (such as in absolute and monistic system) to actualize human pluralistic approach to reality and to promote gender neutrality.

## **Recommendations**

Despite all the criticisms, Hegel's thesis that reason is what makes us human and the foundation of our freedom still stands but this time irrespective of gender. From the exposition and analysis of the status of women in Hegel's idealism from a postmodernist phenomenologico – ontological perspective, the following are our recommendation;

(1) The place of reason in human development has to be re – emphasized. This is because it is through the act of reasoning that humans can develop good principles and virtues that will enhance social relationship and societal development. To this effect the act of critical reasoning should be extended to primary and secondary school, professional and in seminar and conferences, as this will bring development at both the personal level and societal level.

(2) Policy makers and national ideologist must demonstrate a high level of reasoning in their decisions, without being (gender) bias. We recommend reason as the basis of every human action not gender. This shows that impact of policies and national ideas is determined by the soundness of reason which it demonstrates. If nations, states and communities must succeed they must demonstrate a high level of reasoning. To this effect we recommend institutes whose focus will be on the learning, teaching, and research on the act and skills of reasoning, be established.

(3) The curriculum of centers for women or gender studies should develop course work on reason as an ideology of women's self - development and transcendence. The choice of wanton materialism over reason has become the order of the day. This study is of the view that when the skills of reasoning are impacted on the women, there would be a positive revolution on the status of women. Apart from that the standard, attitude of women will change; there will also be more professional in the female circles as never before. This will bring about socio-economic and technological development.

(4) A postmodern in phenomenologico – ontological analysis recognizes that possibilities are more in activities of man's social and political space. For social harmony and political order to be achieved in various spheres of human life, the metaphysical power of human (reason) should go beyond the given to actualize human intersubjective approaches to reality. Intersubjectivity of



idea and opinions should be the criteria of social and political dialogues, not gender. It will also serve as a tool for rational transcendence.

(5) It has been argued that women have demonstrated inferior rationality in the course of history, until recently. Hegel's idealism as a photograph of reality could not be parallel in outlook, how be it, with a proviso of transcendence in the dialectical methodology which forges or synthesis of opposites. To this effect, the women, themselves should show authenticity, exercise the power of reason instead of rational inferiority and wanton materialism. The society should be structured in such a way that women should be allowed to play in that realm of metaphysical transcendence.

(6) This work more so recommends Hegel's idealism, his methodology (dialectics) for scholars for a more in depth understanding of his thought will broaden our minds on human relation and societal civilization and the dangers of imposition of subjective view and thesis for human development.

(7) This work also recommends chroniclers of foundations to be intersubjective in their records, so that history will not lose its purpose. It also recommends the training female chronicles, since no history can capture all reality.

(8) This study recommends that disciplines in African schools should adopt intersubjectivity as a tool to revise the African value (tradition, culture and religion) system as against the fast encroaching of western polarized (failed culture) sexual relationship and values to develop a foundation that will sustain human relation (especially between the sexes) and strong value system for the society. If this not done, when our culture collapses, the real crisis of westernization will volcanize.

## **Contributions to knowledge:**

- Earlier deconstruction had been made by Marx and the Existentialists, this study adds up to the major deconstruction of Hegel's idealist philosophy, by offering a postmodernist phenomenologico – ontological resolution of the polarity in his idealism with an African metaphysical tilt.
- This Thesis contributes towards the provision of an epistemological and ontological foundation to feminist phenomenology. Hegel's absolutist differentiation of the sexes from a rational, intellectual perspective and inability of the woman to attain self - consciousness has been deconstructed; this study asserts that reason is given to all irrespective of gender.
- This study posits the supremacy of gender neutrality which constitutes the foundation for the liberation of women from Hegel's subjugation in particular. This will contribute to the evolution of loftier perspectives that can effectively assist in conflict and crisis management as evidence in the new thinking like conflictology and philosophy of peace.
- The postmodernist phenomenologico – ontological perspective coupled with African metaphysics offers the opportunity for further research that will see to the emergence of new humanism that is free of racial and gender bias. This contributes to the crafting of new orientations (such as in applied metaphysics and philosophy of liberation) for the emancipation of women.
- A postmodern phenomenologist makes inter - subjectivity of views a cardinal focus of discourse which combines both inductive and deductive procedure of reason and resolves issues at the level of interpretation. With such a level playing ground, there is proliferation and inter – subjectivity of opinions and ideas irrespective of gender.
- Finally, this study having shown a critical expository analysis of Hegel's (1967, 1953) two major books, will therefore contribute to a more profound, radical understanding of Hegel's *phenomenology of Spirit* in the light of *Reason in History* and his dialectical methodology, from the post – modernist phenomenologico – ontological tradition.

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