

# Freedom Beyond the Will: Heidegger on Finite Liberty

## Preamble

- Comes out of my ph.d thesis
  - Working on Heidegger and Freedom
- This is as topic that:
  - does not have a great deal of secondary literature
  - Falls into difficulty with the fact his arguments about freedom are scattered spanning different texts and different decades. He never brought them together to make a systematic point
- **What** I'm working on is:
  - Bringing together SZ and G26
  - SZ
    - Most famous work
    - Comprises an analysis of human beings based on how they live their lives.
    - Rarely mentions freedom, but all of the arguments orbit around the concept
    - Unfinished.
      - IMO – would have got to freedom in the end,
      - But, such considerations are a waste of time. He wrote what he wrote.
  - G26
    - Metaphysical Foundations of Logic
    - Nominally a course on logic and Leibniz
    - But, in the second part, it turns into what is effectively heidegger's most Metaphysical arguments that invoke freedom as the foundation of the world and humanity, although this concept of freedom has undergone a radical transformation.
      - At points, he even starts to sound like a Kantian, though not quite.
      - Surprising:
        - Heidegger ends up being very critical of metaphysical arguments later
        - One sometimes hear people accusing H. of sloppy arguments that aren't metaphysical enough.
- **The** main purpose today is do use these more metaphysical arguments to

- Give some more philosophical ground to some of the claims of being and time
  - Not because the arguments are insufficient
  - But it isn't clear exactly how deep these arguments go
  - He really thinks he is talking about the foundation of our existence, an ultimate explanation, or interpretation of what it means to be human.
- Anticipating what I'm going to say,
  - I think Heidegger is probably unique in offering us an account of freedom:
    - Not based on the Will (though he doesn't deny the will's existence)
    - Not based on causality (more important)
  - We really do have to go back to Aristotle and Plato, I think, to find something so different. That is, we have to go back before the concept of the will was developed.
  - I mention this because, although it is uncontested that the later Heidegger criticises willing, the path of least resistance in the scholarship is that the early Heidegger is either definitely a voluntarist, or suspiciously similar to one.
    - The most nuanced account is by Bret Davis, in a book released in 2006 called *Heidegger and the Will*.
      - He argues that it is ambiguous in SZ,
      - but at the very least we have to say that the seeds of a voluntarism are there
      - And these seeds are what lead to his support of National Socialism in 1933
    - This paper is part of my attempt to develop a partial critique of Davis' argument, by saying that there is no legitimate way of reading SZ where we can call him a voluntarist, even if H. temporarily becomes one in 1933.
      - Heidegger's very brief embrace of the will is a foreign import into his writings, and utterly inconsistent with everything he seems to have said elsewhere.
      - I'm not going to go to far into this, but I'm sure you can already tell that I want to be able to say that there is nothing fascistic about Heidegger's philosophy.
- That is how things stand in relation to the secondary literature
- But, I don't think these arguments exist in a vacuum
  - H has great relevance to discussions of freedom in the history of philosophy
  - And it can inform a critique of society, not just in H's lifetime, but also today
  - So I am going to gesture to these wider issues to give proper context to what is, otherwise, an internal debate in Heidegger scholarship.

## Introduction

In 1984, Fred Dallmayr, the first scholar to genuinely reckon with Heidegger's concept of freedom, said this about what it can bring society at large.

We find ourselves today once again in an increasingly threatening confrontation between East and West, a confrontation in which the latter is designated commonly as the "free world" or as the bastion of human freedom. Little inquiry, however, is required to show the deep opacity shrouding the concept of freedom in contemporary Western thought and its deterioration into an ideological slogan (akin to the status of socialism or fraternity in the East). Mankind, one has the impression, is drifting steadily toward a political cataclysm, on both sides propelled by watchwords whose significance is only barely intelligible. In this situation I believe, Heidegger's work offers some aid, by encouraging a rethinking of key assumptions governing traditional philosophy.<sup>1</sup>

For Dallmayr, there was a critical need to turn to Heidegger's philosophy to address the deficit in the understanding of freedom. A buzzword: little understood, but powerful and ideologically central in the West's opposition to Communism. In 1988, in a text that turns to Heidegger's philosophy of freedom and calls for greater scholarship in the area, Jean-Luc Nancy makes a similar statement.

If nothing is more common today than demanding or defending freedom in the spheres of morality, law, or politics—to such an extent that "equality", "fraternity," and "community" have demonstrably and firmly been pushed, if at times regrettably, into the background of preoccupations and imperatives, or have finally even been considered as antonyms of freedom—then nothing is less articulated or problematized, in turn, than the nature or states of what we call "freedom".<sup>2</sup>

Today, there does not seem to be any political crisis concerning the concept of freedom. And yet, its concept has influence everywhere unnoticed. I mean this in the sense that Heidegger warned of in *Being and Time*.

Dasein [...] falls prey to the tradition of which it has more or less explicitly taken hold. This tradition keeps it from providing its own guidance, whether in inquiring or in choosing. [...] When tradition thus becomes master, it does so in such a way that what it 'transmits' is made so inaccessible, proximally and for the most part, that it rather becomes concealed. Tradition takes what has come down to us and delivers it over to self-evidence; it blocks our access to those primordial 'sources' from which the categories and concepts handed down to us have been in part quite genuinely drawn. Indeed it makes us forget that they have had such an origin, and makes us suppose that the necessity of going back to these sources is something which we need not even understand. [SZ 21]

Our historical inheritance, especially when we do not discuss it explicitly, always conditions the way in which we interpret the world and ourselves as old interpretations slip into self-evident truisms that require no evidence because they are obvious. Perhaps, then, the reason liberalism is such a dominant ideology is not because of widespread passion for liberty leading to its popular support, but that a concept of freedom has become so deeply ingrained in contemporary consciousness that it has achieved such a mode of banal self-evidence. And, if the 1980s kindled interest in Heidegger's concept of freedom because of ideological abuse of the concept, it was because this abuse was blatant. Today, if there is a need to *rekindle* that interest, it is because of a complete lack of a sense of

a problem of freedom on any level, let alone the traditional concept. Or, as Heidegger himself puts it, a 'plight lacking a sense of plight [*die Not der Notlosigkeit*]' [G65 235/185].

From of a Heideggerian perspective, we can say that there is a concept of freedom that has been traditionally inherited. This concept has a long history from St. Paul to Descartes, from Kant's transcendental idealism to contemporary neuroscience. In it, the measure of human freedom is the existence and strength of our will. We are free only if our will exists. We are free only if our will is unimpeded by others or by the state. We are free only if our will is powerful. In short, we are free only if our being is entirely under our control, without any external influence.

Thus, technology is said to enhance freedom insofar as it increases our power. And, out of this, we can see other examples of how the concept of freedom permeates everyday existence in the panoply of things sold to us on the premise that they grant greater power or control: the phone that gives you greater control of your life through apps; the rival phone that lets you organise those apps in *your* way how *you* want them; the encrypted webmail provider to give you control over your data; the credit report website that helps you gain control over your financial future; "MP recall", a proposed policy to give you greater control over your elected representatives and eGovernment to do the same; eBook readers to hold an entire library in your palm; pro-biotic yogurt to control your metabolism; a new razor blade that can give greater control over your appearance because it is designed using something called "the science of shaving"...

This list is neither exhaustive nor profound and any cynic can "tut" at trends and clichés. I do not make this list because I consider it to be a helpful diagnosis of our condition. All that is important is to recognise that all of these technologies and strategies are made possible by a particular concept of freedom, perfected in Kant's philosophy, that the majority of people in our society have not read or noticed, but which has a profound influence over all.

Will, control and technology are themes Heidegger addresses most emphatically in his middle to later work. He takes this tendency towards greater control, the expansion of the domain of the will—seen as a faculty of the self-sufficient, independent subject—to be the great danger of our time. And, in his earlier work, in the late 20s and early 30s, Heidegger attempts to offer a different account of freedom prior to willing, as essentially finite, and never under our control.

This transformation moves away from finding human freedom in its ever-increasing power, isolation, and separation from its world and its peers, towards finding it in the limits of its finitude and its involvement in the world. For Heidegger, we are only free insofar as we have been grounded in the world, not in spite of the world.

## **Theory and Practice**

Heidegger's concept of freedom is so fundamental to his thought that, in order to get some grasp on it, we have to start with how he conceives the human being itself. This may not be surprising, since the most famous part of his philosophy is the existential analytic of Dasein (a philosophically neutral

term Heidegger uses for the human being), which attempts to describe the human being as being-in-the-world. This concept, which at first may sound trite, is a sophisticated attempt to displace or dissolve all forms of dualism, and especially those that distinguish, like that of Descartes, between the human being as mind and the world it finds itself in. Such a view, as Heidegger argues, conceives of the mind (the human) as being contained in a box that is opposed to another box or **box** called the world. The question then arises of how the intellect escapes its sphere and enters the box of the external world. In contrast, if we are already, in our being, being-in-the-world, we are first and foremost, *a priori*, always already in the world. As such, the “problem of the existence of the external world” and the question of whether or not we are a brain in a vat is a pseudo-problem, because the question “does the world exist?” could never be asked except by the sort of entity that is already in the world in the first place!

But, this is equally not reductionist or eliminative materialism. Being-in-the-world, as Heidegger describes it, is equally incompatible with those who would say that all that is, is the world of atoms and quarks as physics describes it, and that the human being is just a physical arrangement of the same. The fact that we are always already in the world, encountering it, not as dead matter, but as full of issues and projects that are important to us (my house, my job, my friends, my government, my property, my lunch etc.) proves that existence cannot be explained by science alone. The world is not a bland framework filled by arrangements of particles, cells and bodies passively being moved around. The world is an issue for me, an issue that I am involved in, that is a source of concern, anxiety and stress! (and happiness and pleasure, if you insist). This is what is meant when Heidegger says that being is an issue for Dasein. The world is a vibrant and vital distribution of things that bother me, and the philosopher must take this phenomenon seriously. In other words, the idea of being-in-the-world, if true, allows characteristics we usually attribute to the mind (meaning, agency) to be recognised as also true of the world because there is no longer a barrier between mind and world that would force us to presume that the world is a causally determined heap of inert and meaningless matter.

There are several ways in which Heidegger makes this argument. The way in which he does so that is most relevant to a discussion of freedom, however, is his consideration of the concept of transcendence in the late 1920s. Transcendence itself is a term that disappears quite quickly, because, ultimately, what he wants to argue is that “being-in-the-world” is a better term for transcendence. But, what Heidegger wants to invoke with the image of transcendence, which means literally a “stepping over”, is that somehow, the human being is peculiar in that it transcends beings such that it can understand them and do things with them. The term in metaphysics that comes closest to what Heidegger is talking about, but which Heidegger would never use, is sentience. He is trying to understand phenomenologically why it is that we are able to encounter, perceive anything at all. Not just how we are able to perceive the external world, but how we are able to perceive our own being. One of the first things Heidegger says in his first major work *Being and Time* is that we have an

understanding of being. Unlike rocks and plants, human beings understand (more or less) the being of the entities they encounter. How is this possible? Dasein is an ontologically transcendent entity that surpasses beings and encounters their being.

One important division Heidegger claims to be solving by talking about transcendence, however, is that between theory and practice. Traditionally, we can classify all human capacities into two camps: theory and practice. Or, in the Ancient Greek, *theoria* and *praxis*, thinking and doing, intuition and action: the faculty of thought and the faculty of the will. When it comes to thinking about freedom, it is usually placed on the side of the will. Although, as Hannah Arendt points out, it is odd that we would associate the will with freedom, since the will is the faculty of command, imperative and control.

To use a helpful way of defining this division found in early modern philosopher John Locke, what we are talking about here are the active and passive powers of the mind. The main active power of the mind, says Locke, is volition or willing. The mind has the power to move itself and the world. In other words, doing. *Praxis*. The passive power of the mind, for Locke, is perception. The mind has the power to receive impressions from the outside world in the form of ideas. The mind can be influenced by the external world. In perception, the mind has no activity whatsoever. It starts life as an empty vessel that is filled by the ideas presented to it by the world. In volition, however, the mind does take a role and actually does something. As such, we have *theoria* associated with the passive and *praxis* associated with the active. Thinking and freedom are conceived as two utterly distinct faculties of human being.

Heidegger, however, argues that this, like the mind and body problem, is a false dichotomy.

If we now pose the problem of transcendence in connection with the problem of freedom, we must not take freedom in a narrow sense, so that it pertains to *praxis* in contradistinction to *theoria*. [...] the problem [of freedom] is the common root of both intuition, *theoriein*, as well as action, *praxis*.

So, if were to write this up on a diagram, we would have *theoria* and *praxis* as grounded in freedom.

*Theoria* ---- *praxis*  
*Freedom*

But they are no longer in opposition, so it would be better to say

(*Theoria* ----- *praxis*) = freedom

## Understanding Projection

In short, Heidegger's concept of freedom is intended to collapse the distinction between the theoretical and practical, between thinking and doing. The way that Heidegger shows this in *Being and Time* is by arguing that understanding (*theoria*) is always practical (*praxis*). He famously argues that the entities we find within the world are first and foremost encountered as *tools*, not as

indifferent objects. Heidegger shows that the way that we understand the world “proximally and for the most part” is as a working environment (*Umwelt*), where things are not encountered as “objects” with a set of properties, but as tools or equipment, or “stuff” (*Zeug*). The way that the world and the things in it normally give themselves to me is as things that can be used in such and such a way in order to do whatever it is I am working towards doing. Heidegger famously (over)uses the example of a hammer to illustrate this point.

When I am using the hammer, it does not appear as an object called “hammer” with certain properties like solidity, heaviness, wooden and metallic. It does not really appear to me at all. In fact, I don’t really think about the hammer. I just use it. What I am thinking about is the thing I am building and the reason I am building it for. The hammer and nail and wood are there inconspicuously as things I need in order to make the table, which is that for the sake of which I am doing work at all. In short, this “for the sake of which” is what conditions my understanding of the hammer and the nail. If I wasn’t building a table, the hammer would have a different meaning. If, for example, I was going through my toolbox looking for a screwdriver, and the hammer was on top of the screwdriver, the hammer wouldn’t be “stuff for hammering”, it would be “stuff in my way”, but what is really on my mind is the IKEA bookcase I’m screwing together, not the hammer or screwdriver.

In short, we encounter the world pragmatically in accord with an aim we are working towards and Heidegger argues that *all* forms of theoretical understanding are derivative of this primordial structure of understanding. In other words, *theoria* is just *praxis* and *praxis* is theoretical. All doing is interpretative and intelligent and all understanding is practical because understanding and action are both grounded in possibility, which is to say freedom.

“Perception”	Theoria & Praxis	Freedom
moods	Understanding / interpretation	<i>Transcendence</i>
Thownness ( <i>Geworfenheit</i> )	Projection ( <i>entworfen</i> )	<i>Truth as Disclosure</i>
		<i>Understanding of Being</i>
		<i>Ontological Difference</i>

## Metaphysical Underpinnings of Being-in-the-World

At this point, we’re going to shift into the much more metaphysical arguments found in the 1928 lecture course. This brings us back to the question of transcendence. What is essential, here is the claim that the world is never given to me as pure actuality. It is always given to me as a possibility. And, as such, there is never any brute perception or interaction with the world. The way in which the world has appeared for me, and the framework within which I can make decisions, was only *one* possibility of many/several. Heidegger puts this in a nutshell in the following quote.

[...] the **mode of possible objectivity** by which objects are grasped is completely left open and variable; there are different stages of possibility by which things themselves are discoverable in the way they are in themselves. [G26 213/166]

This amounts to saying that transcendence does not give us objects in a positive, invariable pure objective intuition. Rather, the objectivity of the object, the way in which the object is an object for us, is variable and there are many possible ways for Dasein to encounter it. As we will say, what conditions the way that entities manifest themselves (or the objectivity of the object) is Dasein's choice.

Entities are not given in a static actuality present at hand, as would be said by a concept of transcendence that consisted merely in the subject-object relation. Rather, every entity has multiple possibilities of manifestation; there are several ways in which the entity can be shown to us. To use the tired example, a hammer can manifest itself as a useful tool when it is in a toolbox or as an object of antiquity if it is in an archeological museum. A knife can be a handy piece of equipment in the kitchen, or a life-threatening device of death in the hand of a mugger.

The question arises as to what exactly determines the possibilities that are actualised. The answer is Dasein's choice. Freedom. These possibilities are not arbitrary or free-floating objective options that belong to the object in and of itself. They are the possibilities given to Dasein according to what it has chosen to do. "Possibilities of objective manifestation" are taken up according to the activity of Dasein as being-in-the-world.

As such, the activity of choice and the passivity of knowledge are co-constitutional of transcendence. *theoria* and *praxis* are not two separate features of the subject, but are the twin aspects of being-in-the-world. We can already see, however, that there is no simple divide, as "understanding", which would be traditionally sided with passivity and *theoria* is placed with activity and *praxis*. Each implies the other and cannot be taken away from it.

Now, if the traditional question of freedom is about the compatibility of the activity of the will and the passive mechanism of nature, we could almost say that Heidegger was a compatibilist. Being-in-the-world means both activity and choice and passivity and limitation. However, the opposition between the human being and nature has shifted massively from the traditional mind and body problem implicit in the traditional problem of freedom, as we see from the following quote.

Dasein is thrown, *facital*[ly], thoroughly amidst nature through its bodiliness, and transcendence lies in the fact that these beings, among which Dasein is and to which Dasein belongs, are surpassed by Dasein. In other words, as transcending, Dasein is beyond nature, although, as *factical*, it remains environed [*umschlungen*] by nature. As transcending, i.e., as free, Dasein is something alien to nature. [G26 212/166]

So, while Dasein is different or alien to nature, understood as the totality of entities, because it is beyond them, it is still "environed" by them. Dasein's freedom is not transcendental in the sense of Kant, which means it is forever beyond the world and cannot be manifest within it, but in that Dasein is ontologically different from other entities. But, as environed, Dasein does not have unlimited freedom. Its freedom is limited by the possibilities given by the entities within the world. Dasein does

not choose to be free and it does not choose what it can do. Although different to the things in the world, Dasein is among them and committed to its world as the thing that makes its choice possible. We do not here have will versus nature as an opposition or war of forces, but as the co-constitution of each other. Activity and passivity do not conflict with each other, they create each other.

## The Sun

As discussed briefly beforehand, the way that Dasein's choice conditions how the world appears to us is in the "for the sake of which" that I am working. Am I building an IKEA bookshelf, or am I working in a museum of antique tools. The answer to this question determines how I will interpret the hammer. In the context of this more metaphysical discussion of transcendence, Heidegger introduces the concept of the for the sake of which that orders the world [*umwillen*] with reference to Plato. This gives important historical context that he does not provide in *Being and Time*. In order to appreciate it fully, it is worth turning to the passage in Plato's *Republic* that Heidegger invokes: the simile of the sun.

The simile of the sun is one of three crucial analogies presented in the *Republic*, the other two being the simile of the line and the infamous allegory of the cave. While the line, broadly speaking, gives us an epistemology and the cave is mediation on education, the simile of the sun is a consideration of how anything becomes meaningful at all. In some ways, this makes it an answer to a more basic problem than the other two.

The question of the meaning of the world is one that has rarely been taken up since Plato, especially since the advent of modern philosophy. Typically, when approaching the question of how we understand the world, this is limited to a concern with the possibility of perception and how what we perceive is rendered intelligible by concepts. So, there is one question about how the coffee cup is able to enter into my mind through the senses, and another question about how my understanding is able to identify the sense-object as a coffee cup by applying the concept of coffee-cup-ness to it.

Now, the question of the possibility of perception could not be a problem for Plato as it is a by-product of the mind and body problem. However, the question of how the coffee cup is recognised as a coffee cup is perhaps the central problem of Platonic philosophy. For Plato, the coffee cup partakes of the form of coffee cup, a form which is not of this world, but which my soul recalls from before it was born.

And yet, Plato is not satisfied here. There is something else that needs to be explained: how the coffee cup is meaningful at all. My interaction with the world of objects is in no way a matter of simply identifying objects as the objects they are. Objects are significant to me, they matter. Plato attempts to provide some explanation of this mattering of objects through the form of the good. The coffee cup stands out as significant because it corresponds to the form of the good. The world is given meaning with reference to the good.

In the *Republic*, although the good is given this pivotal responsibility, Socrates claims that it is impossible to speak about, he calls it *hyper echon*, “beyond our having”. However, he claims we can get some indirect knowledge of it by looking at the Sun in an analogy.

The way this analogy operates is by opposing the world given to vision (*to horaton*) to the world given to the intellect (*to noeton*). In other words, the world of the visible and the world of the intelligible. The role that the Sun plays in vision is said to be analogous to the role the good plays in intellection. The Sun does not create the world of objects. If there was no light, the world of objects would be there, but it would be inaccessible to our sight. Even though all the beings in the world would have their being, we would be unaware of them. They would sit, neither significant nor insignificant, in no relation to humanity whatsoever.

However, the Sun brings out the things in the world and renders them accessible to sight. By shining light on them, they stand forth and we are able to encounter them. It does not give them their appearance, but it allows their appearance to appear. If the Sun allows the appearance of things to appear, the good allows the form or idea of things to appear to the intellect; it allows ideas to be thought. Or, to bring in the Heideggerian terminology, it allows the being of beings to be understood just as the Sun allows the appearance of beings to appear.

What Heidegger does with this Platonic argument can be said to be quite violent; although, as he says many times, true philosophical engagement with the history of philosophy is always violent. In a nutshell Heidegger radicalises the concept of the good to be *my* good, rather than a universal, common good. In the terminology of *Being and Time*, the good is the *Umwillen*, the “for-the-sake-of-which” I am working, it is what I am heading towards.

Now, the interpretation of the good as the for-the-sake-of-which is not actually that radical since it is not too far the Aristotelean definition of the good as “that towards which all things aim”. The axis of the transformation is not the definition of the good, but the move from a common good towards which *all* things aim to an existential good, towards which *I* aim.

This cuts into the discussion of equipmentality (all the stuff about hammers) in *Being and Time* from a different angle. In *SZ*, Heidegger’s starting point is the question of the being of “things”, within the horizon of a question about the nature of the world. Here, we have a question of the structure of transcendence, leading us to being-in-the-world. The basic argument remains the same. It is the for-the-sake-of-which (*Umwillen*) that conditions how the beings within the world manifest themselves.

To return to the examples above, it is the *Umwillen* that determines the objectivity of the object, e.g. whether or not an old, rusty hammer manifests as an antique or an unusable, worn out tool. If the *Umwillen* is needing to nail something together, then the old hammer would be a source of irritation as it is not fit for purposes. If the *Umwillen* is ensuring my museum of workshop antiquities has plenty of exhibits, then the hammer manifests as more or less rare and interesting.

## Thrownness

In this way, as said above, Heidegger begins to sound like a voluntarist. As Davis points out, it is not at all incidental that the word *Umwillen* has *Will* in it. One could, perhaps, translate it literally as “the willed-at”. This would make it seem as though, contrary to what I want to establish, Heidegger puts the will at the heart of his concept of freedom. Some preliminary reasons to hesitate before calling Heidegger a voluntarist however are that Heidegger deliberately avoids using the term “will” to talk about this phenomenon, instead preferring the terms “concern” (*Besorgen*) and “care” (*Sorge*). Further, the *Umwillen* is not actually a basic phenomenon. It is conditional on the futural aspect of Dasein’s temporality as ahead-of-itself.

However, one does not even need to go that far to realise that Heidegger cannot be embracing the will. Heidegger describes human being as something that has been thrown into a situation and that projects itself out of situations. ((*Entwurf*)(*Geworfenheit*)). This is a structure called thrown projection. Projection is active and is how Heidegger describes existential choice. To choose is to project a goal ahead of myself that conditions how the world is interpreted, we project the *Umwillen*, the for the sake of which.

In thrownness, which corresponds more to the idea of perception, Heidegger is pointing out that although I have a set of possibilities to choose between, I cannot create new possibilities, and am not responsible for them. I am also not responsible for the fact that I have access to possibilities. I did not choose to be free. I am thrown into my freedom, I am thrown into the world, I am thrown into a set of possibilities and only then am I able to choose. It does not choose the time and context it finds itself in, it just gets dumped there. As Heidegger puts it, we have always “got roped into a set of definite possibilities” that we have to deal with and among which we can make choices.

This contrasts with the idea of finding freedom in control and in the will because, if we were to understand freedom in this way, then we couldn’t agree with Heidegger. We would rather say that we cannot choose the possibilities unavailable to us *yet*. If there are possibilities not open to us, this is just a matter of technical insufficiency. Technology constantly opens up more possibilities until we will one day be able to do anything. But, for Heidegger this is not true. Not out of technical insufficiency, but because freedom is essential finite. Taking up one possibility precludes us taking up others. Opening one door closes another. The reason only certain possibilities are available to human is not because of some sort of *lack*, but is an intrinsic characteristic of the sort of being humans are: they are necessarily finite and necessarily only have access to certain possibilities at certain times.

For this reason, freedom is out of our control, from the Heideggerian perspective. We do not choose to be free (as Sartre puts it, we are condemned to be free). And, within that freedom, we do get to choose what options are available to us but only those. Further, choosing possibilities always involves denying others, making other things impossible. For example, because my choice of career and lifestyle, I have almost certainly precluded the possibility of being a rock star (if such a thing had ever been achievable for me in the first place). We cannot just be what we want to be, and that is not

just because opportunities aren't equally available to everyone (which is politically true and a bad thing), but because it is necessarily the case that our freedom is finite.

## Conclusion

- Heidegger's concept of freedom synthesises
  - Understanding (*theoria*)
  - Action (*praxis*)
  - Perception (*state-of-mind*, thrownness)
- Although each of these things can be described separately, they are all the phenomenon of being-in-the-world, which is the structure of our transcendence, which is freedom
- All of this, I think, can be summed up in Section 9 of *SZ*, where the main argument of the book begins.
  - What is distinctive of us, is that being is an issue for us
  - This means
    - 1) that we are not indifferent to our nature.
      - That understanding is not a matter of passively perceiving inert properties in the world
      - Being matters to me, it is a source of concern, care, and bother.
      - I am bothered by being
    - 2) My being is not just given to me as a perception
      - It is mine to be one way or another
      - And being can only be an issue to us, because we are free, because we are committed to making choices.
      - Otherwise, it would indeed be a matter of indifference and I wouldn't have to worry. If I were determined, I would never worry, which is ultimately why Heidegger says the being of Dasein is *Sorge*, worry, care.
  - But, even though it is down to me to make decisions, my existence is not fully under my control. History deals us with possibilities to choose from, which we are thrown into, and only on the basis of these can I make choices
  - Further, each choice I make precludes another. Every decision contains a death.
  - We are free. Not because I have a will, not because I am in control. Because freedom is the destiny of human being.