

Self and moral responsibility

Experience, Human Nature



We exist as a human being. As a human being we are different from animals. Since we are more rational, can ponder upon our past and manipulate our present and future.

But is it sufficient to be human? To have a “ self” is one of the most important elements of realizing human existence. This self has been called differently by different traditions according to the way they interpret it to be. For instance, in Indian philosophy it is taken as atman, and most of them make distinction between self (atman) and mind (chit).

But this distinction does not exist in western philosophy.

For most of them, mind or self or soul means one and the same, that is they do not make distinction between these. When we focus on individuals as sources of decisions, the ultimate locus of responsibility, the unity of thought and action, we come to think of them as self. A consideration of the concept of “ self” involves an analysis of other concepts related to it, such as, “ body,” “ responsibility,” “ agent” and “ freedom. ” The self can be defined as consisting of such qualities which make a person distinct from other persons.

The self refers to the conscious, reflective, active personality of an individual.

The self is both, physical and mental, public and private, directly perceived and indirectly imagined. Moreover, self as an agent is responsible for both its thoughts and actions. By assuming self as an agent enduring through time, we attribute thoughts and actions that occur at different moments to the same self rather than different selves. Self-awareness is the understanding

that one exists as an individual, separate from other selves. This awareness is a personal understanding is important for one's own identity.

Personal understanding refers to the mental and conceptual awareness and persistent regard that sentient beings hold with regard their own being.

Ulric Neisser, in his essay “ The Five Kinds of Self Knowledge,” has focused on the following aspects while characterizing the self: The ecological self: is the self perceived with respect to the physical environment: I am the person here in this place, engaged in this particular activity. The interpersonal self: appears from earliest infancy just as the ecological self does, is specified by species- specific of emotional rapport and communication.

The extended self: is based primarily on our personal memories and anticipations: I am the person who had certain specific experiences, who regularly engages in certain specific and familiar routines The private self: appears when children first notice that some of their experiences are not directly shared with other people: I am, in principle, the only person who can feel this unique and particular pain Conceptual self: or the self concept draws meaning from the network of assumption and theories in which it is embedded.

Though Neisser talked about only five type of self but, this list is inexhaustible. Our role of selves keeps on changing with respect to the situations.

It does not mean that the self does not have stability but that it accommodates itself with the change. That is when “ A” is a father to his kid,

brother, husband, friend, son, boss, employ etc. So the person is same but playing different roles and in doing so even his self changes. But if he is an honest person, will remain so but the way he will deal with them will change.

These selves are not experienced in isolation from each other but rather as coherent and unitary experience. Experience helps us knowing ourselves. We are different entities as we conceive ourselves enlightened by various views. Our actions, our relation, our properties, our characteristic, our success and our defeats, our conception of society etc. vary with conception of ourselves or vice versa.

Whatever we think influences our actions, our action in turn, the society we live in. Since our actions affect the society so it makes us responsible towards the society.

As this self is not something imposed wholly by someone else on us, we also participate in its formation. So we are responsible for it. Having a sense of identity is an individual's self comprehension of one's self as a discrete, distinct entity separate from others.

As we grow from infancy to adulthood, we change in our physical appearance as well as the way we perceive and think about the world. Still we remain the same person, in the sense that we are the same baby who becomes an adult. There is continuity in our development from infancy to youth and from youth to old age.

For person, identity forms an important part of life, to the extent that they not only go to save their identities, in life but also at time take their life when not been able to overcome the identity crises.

This identity is important to the person because it is through this self identity that they are known in their society. Individual identity reflects certain perspective of human agency. Since we play a part in formation of self, we must be free beings, as we can make choices and be held responsible for our actions. So what one becomes is, one's own responsibility.

But the above view of self is not accepted by all the philosophers.

We think of self as something within us, as essential to who we are. But what is the nature of this “ Self? ” What features characterize it? Is our body part of ourselves? Do we have any responsibility towards it? Different answers are given to these questions by different philosophers. Since, they perceive the problem from different perspectives, there are different answers as well. I will be discussing in my dissertation the different views taken by different philosophers but with a main focus on what this self is.

How is it morally responsible? What is the role of freedom in it? Why has the self of the women been perceived differently than men? There are several such questions that can be raised.

The dissertation is comprised of three main chapters in addition to the introduction and the conclusion. In the Chapter One, an endeavor is made to understand Descartes' view on self. Self is disembodied for him. An analysis

has been made about how he reached to the conclusion that self is independent and body is dependent.

The monadic view of the self has been criticized by many philosophers but I have taken phenomenologist point of view. How and why are they against disembodied view of the self? The second section of the chapter deals with the view of phenomenologist like Husserl, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty. How have they understood self and its' relationship with consciousness? How through the method of bracketing phenomenologist tries to reach self? What role does perception play in it? Role of experience is always directed towards an object. The intentionality is also being directed toward an object or consciousness.

Experience involves what Husserl called “ intentionality,” that is, the directedness of experience toward things in the world, the property of consciousness that is a consciousness about something. In third section, I have tried to establish relationship between self and being responsible.

Sartre talks about absolute freedom and how this freedom given to self comes along with responsibilities. How does concrete human existence influence the existence of the other individuals in society? The focus has also been given to how responsibility, freedom and anxiety are related.

In the Chapter Two, “ Engendering of Self,” an attempt has been made to understand the self from feministic perspective. A study has been done to analysis how the different waves of feminism deal with the women.

What is feminism? Feministic movement helped woman to give voice to their grievances and problems. They not only raised issues related to them but also fought for their right. It takes in consideration all the three ways. The problems with which feminist mainly dealt. In First wave I have taken Mary Wollstonecraft, for whom the right to education was the most important right.

This right will have women to even get right to vote, which was the focus of the wave.

Education was important not only for getting woman right to vote but also to make them a more enlighten human being. To raise the position of women, educated women have the responsibility to change many of the stereotypes associated with woman. Education can be considered to a large extent like a pill which can cure almost all our pains. Education spreads more awareness, can access more things, can get better jobs, can know what one's rights are.

I am not saying that it is an end in itself, but surely it provides an edge over others.

Of course, the full usage of it can be along with freedom and other rights. This was one of the reasons behind my taking Wollstonecraft among the other first wave feminists. In the Second wave, I have taken Simone de Beauvoir, the one who changed the concept of women. Through her books *The Second Sex* and *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, she tried to change the frame of woman, which has been considered as fixed.

This is due to the stereotyping thinking about woman. It is not that their position has been snatched but that she is not treated as having self only. According to her “ one is not born but become women. How does female become woman? Why has she been given the status of the “ other? ” How did she incorporate the three different forms – biological, phenomenological and historical materialism? While defining self she also tries to deal with myths related to woman, which helped in further subjection of women by the society. For instance, men are considered as stronger than woman and this has been so much inculcate in our psyche that even when daughter goes outside, she is being asked to take her brother along with her. This may be in spite the fact that the brother is less strong than her.

These myths have become so much the part of our life that it is no more perceived as entrenching their freedom and rights. Due to feminist movement there has been persistent urge to come out of this subjection. In the Third wave feminism talks of their differences with their counterparts. Since they are different, they claim to enjoy different rights as well.

This wave was even against the sexist image of woman. This wave of feminism is sometimes against the Second wave, and sometimes they to answer Second wave. It focused on all types of inequalities rather than just gender based.

But there is nothing fixed as such, different feminists address different problems.

The binding line was that all feminists were continuing the movement started along back for the upliftment of woman. The Chapter Three is on how Simone de Beauvoir discusses the way through which woman came into being. Simone de Beauvoir's trenchant observation in her book *The Second Sex* "He is the subject, he is the absolute – she is the other," sums up why the self as an important issue from the feminist perspective. To be other is to be the non-subject, the non-person, the non agent – in short, the mere body.

In law and customary practice, women's selfhood has been systematically subordinated, diminished, and belittled, when it has not been outrightly denied, in cultural stereotypes. Women have been cast as lesser or inferior forms of the masculine individual. Therefore, the question of woman's self become an important question in feminism because in a male dominated world, women are treated as if they are without the self, i. e. as others. A hidden masculinist conception of the self, though seemingly gender neutral, contributes to the valorization of the masculine and the stigmatization of the feminine.

The masculine realm of rational selfhood is projected as a realm of moral decency – principled respect for others and conscientious fidelity to duty. Although cultural norms uphold the values of equality and tolerance, culture practices continue to transmit camouflaged messages of the inferiority of woman through stereotype thinking. One of the masculinized views about woman is that she is consigned to selflessness – that is, subservient, passive, and self-sacrificial altruism. Thus, man defines woman not in herself but in relation to him; she is not regarded as autonomous being.

Simone de Beauvoir is concerned with the problem of oppression and embodiment.

Being oppressed is the status of an object (thereby regarding the oppressed as pure facticity), and it also excludes the oppressed from the community of those regarded as having the capacity and the authority to make meanings and establish values. Beauvoir saw the society as the necessary medium for revealing an individual's fundamental freedom. Freedom was not a license to act according to impulsive desires, but implied the ability to make conscious choices about how to act, or whether to act at all or not.

Freedom occurred when an individual takes responsibility for himself or herself, thereby transcending the restrictions and oppressions imposed by the objective world. Self deception is one of the reasons behind identity crises in women and also responsible for restriction on her freedom.

Simone de Beauvoir used word “ bad faith” for self deception. In her book, *The Second Sex*, she shows that women fail to take responsibility of their freedom because of being trapped in bad faith and patriarchal society. There is nothing natural or inherent about woman or femininity.

She examines the myth about woman in society which is categorized on woman by man. She analyzed feminine being-in-the-world and that the females are not born but become women. One becomes a woman through interaction with the world, through lived experience.

Lived experience may make one's experience of femininity as “ real” in the sense that there are actual expectations. Beauvoir investigates how this

radically unequal relationship emerged as well as what structures, attitudes and presuppositions continue to maintain its social power.

The world become bleak if one rejects or ignores one's responsibilities. Life has meaning but it is up to us to reveal it or not.

Along with revealing, at times, we also create meaning. Individuals must and always do choose for themselves, but choices are always made in social context. Women must take responsibility for themselves, their bodies and their lives. The ends and goals of our actions must never be set up as absolutes, separate from who choose them. In this sense, Beauvoir sets limits to freedom.

To be free is not to have free license to do whatever one wants.

Rather, to be free entails the conscious assumption of this freedom through projects which are chosen at each moment. The meaning of actions is thus given not from some external source of values (the society), but in the existent's spontaneous act of choosing them. According to Beauvoir, "freedom is situated, subject not only to the whims of embodiment but also to those of historical, social location." Each individual must positively assume responsibility for his or her action and not to escape from it. Thus, we act ethically only insofar as we accept the weight of our choices and the consequences and responsibilities of our action.

Although we certainly cannot claim that woman's role as the other is her fault, we also cannot say that she is always entirely innocent in her subjection. Beauvoir believes that there are many possible attitudes of bad

faith where the existent flees his or her responsibility into prefabricated values and beliefs. Many women living in a patriarchal culture are guilty of the same action and thus are in some ways complicitous in their own subjugation because of the seeming benefits it can bring as well as the respite from responsibility it promises.

The feminist philosophical work on the self has taken three main tasks: (1) critique of established views of the self, (2) reclamation of women's selfhood, and (3) reconceptualization of the self to incorporate women's experience.

Chapter1 UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE OF SELF The problem of self has been one of the most debatable philosophical topics in almost all traditions of philosophy. When we focus on individual as a source of decisions, the ultimate locus of responsibility, the unity of thoughts and actions, we come to think of them as self.

Having a self is what makes us different from other existing things in the world.

As it is, this self thinks, acts, perceives, etc. in the world. Self is considered to be in one way the core of human existence. To save the identity of this self, humans at times take their life (i. e.

commit suicide) and at times others life (i. e. murder). But the most important question is what this self is.

What are the features that characterized it? Is our body part of this self? Do we have responsibility towards it? Different philosophers gave different

answers to these questions. For some, self is disembodied, and for some others it is embodied and yet for some it is engendered self.

In this chapter we will see that in Cartesian tradition the concept of self was developed under the strategy of searching for the indubitable and certain knowledge, and which showed the “ self” in its absolute separation from the external world, it can be called as “ monad view of self. ” But there is a problem in Descartes’ writing of the self, that we cannot avoid the presence of the external world and our physical bodies as well. On this score, many philosophers reject the Cartesian legacy of the self, and try to develop a new idea of the self along with the perceptual world in the concern of the specific discrimination of human being.

In the critique of the Cartesian legacy, a new idea of “ self” develops in existential way, that agrees there is a connection of the self with the body and external world.

They try to show that there cannot be a self without body. There is an embodied self for them. But the matter is not solved here only, as there is third view to it as well. The Feminist were not satisfied as they see that this self is taken as different for both men and women, this can be drawn on the basis of the way they are treated in the society.

Since, they are being treated as different so there has to be different self, i. . engendered self, according to Simone de Beauvoir. This self is the one who is bearing the responsibility of its acts.

Since there are different selves, that there are different responsibility to different selves. We will discuss in the end that it is important to know that how a human agent [self] is responsible for its act. In this sense, the self gets its meaning by getting responsibility for whatever it does. In this chapter, we will talk about the responsibility in the scheme of making the self understood in context of having an existence of a being.

I.

Critique of Cartesian Legacy of Self Descartes, draws the picture of the self in search for certain, indubitable propositions. For him, this indubitable truth was something absolutely certain, beyond the slightest doubt, foundation for knowledge. He was of the view that all our knowledge must begin with some self evident beliefs which can be constituted as genuine knowledge.

In the process of searching for indubitable knowledge, he began by doubting everything which can be doubted. Descartes conceived that there is nothing in the world which cannot be self-examined, that he can and cannot doubt.

He investigates indubitable knowledge by doubting three principles of belief, that are first, his own existence, second, doubting mathematical calculation (which he earlier thought cannot go wrong), and third, the existence of god. He doubted that all these believe as they can be the creation of evil genius. But for Descartes there is something he cannot doubt in the light of the evil genius: the fact that he can doubt implies that he must be a thinking thing, regardless of any attempt by the evil genius to deceive him into what he is thinking; he is still a thinking thing.

One cannot doubt that one is doubting, while one is doubting.

He couldn't doubt his act of thinking (i. e. realm of mental states). It follows that just by virtue of being a thinking thing one exists necessarily. Therefore, Descartes accepted, " Cogito Ergo Sum" (i.

e. I think, therefore I am) as the only clear and distinct idea which is self-evident. In his search for this self evident truth, having a body was not essential for understanding of the self as a thinking being. According to Descartes, Next I examined attentively what I was.

I saw that while I could pretend that I had no body and that there was no world and no place for me to be in, I could not for all that pretend I did not exist. I saw on the contrary that from the mere fact that I thought of doubting the truth of the other things, it followed quite evidently and certainly that I existed; whereas if I had merely ceased thinking, even if everything else I had ever imagined had been true, I should have had no reason to believe that I existed...I knew I was substance whose essence or nature is simply to think, and which does not require any place, or depend on any material thing, in order to exist.

Accordingly this ' I ' – that is, the soul by which I am what I am – is entirely distinct from the body, and indeed is easier to know than the body, and would not fail to be whatever it is, even if the body did not exist. In doubting whether one is existing or not leads one to believe that human essence is thinking. Descartes sees mind as a substance whose essence is consciousness or thinking. Therefore, he argues that he knows infallibly that

he exists as a thinking being, but he doesn't know infallibly what this thinking thing is.

Since he is sure that he is thinking then he must be existing. Where does this mind exist? So there must be a place where this self exists and through which it acts. Body is the place where mind resides in and body is dependent on self for its existence. Hence the body is separate from what is essential to thinking being, i. e. self.

For him, self is essentially mind, and as mind only. Though mind resides in body still mind is not dependent on body but body is on mind. Descartes made a radical separation of the mind from the body.

Mind knows itself directly and with absolute certainty, while knowledge of the external world is at least theoretically doubtful. The self exists as a distinct substance, as “ thinking being,” and it enjoys a supreme independence from the world of “ extended matter,” i. e.

from the body. The self is a non-material entity that lacks extension and motion, and that operates through body. Body is a material entity and possesses both extension and motion. The certainties of one's own mental states entail the certain existence of a self that possesses them and that remains identical through their changes.

This self is taken to be within the body and “ behind” each mental act.

Since this self is a substance, it is self-sufficient and unaltered. The self is conceived to be prior to experience and to have a special relation to its own

experience. This relation of self with its own experiences and that of another's ties each mental act to single person. The self is the essence of a person, the Cartesian picture will be framed, " the monad view of the self. " This is a monad view because this self is something which is complete in it and does not need anything external to it for its existence.

Other things in the world are in a way due to this self.

Descartes doubt convinced that the self as " thinking thing" is different from all extended things of the world. For Descartes experience ...in and of themselves, signs or phenomenological objects and as such as meaning or signification, quite independent of the experiencing self on the one hand and the existence of the external world on other. But how can a disembodied self be related to the physical environment or physical world? According to Descartes, this interaction between soul and body takes place through pineal gland.

According to Descartes, the mind is joined to the body in one specific place: the pineal gland, a single gland in the centre of the brain, between the two lobes.

This is the spot in which interaction takes place. The mind has the ability to move the pineal gland, and by doing so, interacting with the body. The above view on self doesn't seem satisfactory. Descartes was criticized for his mind body dualism argument as he could not provide a satisfactory account of the interaction between mind and body. Can mind or self exist without the body?

The mere fact that I can think of the self as distinct from the body does not show that the self is separable from the body. It has been criticized by philosophers like Hegel, Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

All of them tried to show that there cannot be a self without body and that there is an embodied self. There is a relationship between them. Husserl respected Descartes for challenging the epistemological assumption, that we can have knowledge about the external world directly through experience and agreed with him that experience alone can't prove the existence of external world.

But he criticized Descartes, for ignoring an essential feature of experience, i. e. "intending" while making reference to the external world. For self is always related to the world. As whatever we think, is in relation to this world. Even when we talk or think about past, present and future, heaven or universe, we do so because we know about them through this world.

And there is some reason, intention due to which we are thinking about a particular thing. Therefore, our thinking has to be intentional, and if it is intentional it must exist as there has to be some physical body through which we can have intentions.

According to Descartes, the mind interacts with the body at the pineal gland. This form of dualism or duality proposes that the mind controls the body; and the body just obeys the orders. But the body can also influence the

otherwise rational mind, such as when we do a particular act and later on think about it.

For example, if A is in a bad mood, and if A sees or meets B who is smiling that at times helps in changing the mood of A. In this case body first feels the sensations and then the mind interprets them. So mind cannot be said to be always ordering body.

In fact, both act in relation to each other and there cannot be mind independent of body. Descartes, according to Husserl speaks of the “ excess of falsity.

” Descartes denied sensory perception as valid mean. He gives special prominence to the possibilities of deception that are always inherent in external experience. Husserl points out that the familiar observation through the senses along with the deception caused by senses deceive about the world or particular objects, there appearance, differently ought not to be taken as grounds for the negation of the world.

They can taken as a clue to the essential and legitimate sense of sensuous experience as open-ended, always subject to further conformation and correction, as the relative and presumptive presentation of something showing itself. From the experience of deception the insight is won that sense experience is in principle inadequate. However, to leap from there to the conclusion that sense experience is false and its object does not exist, only on the basis of element of doubt.

Husserl did not accept in this or any of the subsequent arguments is a proof for the illusory character of the senses and the non-being of the world.

To argue the world out of existence and then back in again by appeal to the veracity of God is, for him, nonsense. What Husserl will at times emphasize is the insight that given the inadequacy of world experience, the possibility of the non-existence of the world is never excluded. The proposition, “The world exists,” must remain a contingent assertion.

Hegel opposes Cartesian’s central “monad view of the self.” Hegel’s central assertion is that consciousness of the self makes being as a person, which requires the existence of others in order to become actualized. He takes self in two ways, i. . a primitive sense of self which is possible without others and a rich developed self which requires the existence and recognition of the external world. For Hegel, the aim of inter-personal relation is recognition, and the kind of recognition one achieves is depended on one’s orientation to others.

The central implication of Hegel’s position is that Cartesian self-examination will be insufficient to fully clarify the structure of mental life because those structures keep changing and we have new changes in them. “Recognition” alters the nature of one’s experience.

Thus Cartesian approach that was performed prior to recognition would fail to elucidate. This challenge emerges from his contention that each form of conscious life breaks down and develops into another because when self seriously evaluates its experience with its own standard of adequacy.

Although each form of consciousness begins with an immediate certainty that it satisfies its standard, it gradually discovers its mistake.

Hegel's another criticism to Cartesian self is that through self-externalization a self-conscious being come to understand itself.

One learns about one's nature only through actions and interactions with others. And the way in which self-consciousness comes to understand itself is not different from the way it understand others. Heidegger's challenge to the Cartesian picture is quite different. He seeks to clarify the nature of being; in order highlight to this he examines human being.

He does not show interest in proving the existence of the other. Instead he shows that others are one of the necessary conditions of the existence of human being have.

He claims that even when one is alone, one experiences other's absence and thus relates to them. His claims are not merely that others (influence) effect one, they take over through the function of one's self. Thus others are present at the very core of the self. Descartes does not talk about others existence, as if it's not important.

But the other is also as important for one's existence as the introspection about one's self. Sartre also challenges the Cartesian picture of self like Hegel and Heidegger.

Sartre disagrees with Cartesian picture in his contention that the mind is parasitic on the world to be conscious of. And it is quite essential if

consciousness exist, something other consciousness must exist. Sartre's point is that in Cartesian picture and many of our common sense beliefs about us are false because when consciousness seek to know itself, it must reflect on and objectify itself.

And in this process, the consciousness reflects on itself sometime as subject and some time as object. Sartre challenges Cartesian because he neglects the effect of this difference in reflection.

Sartre believes the experience of sense of self derives from an awareness of a particular mode of others created a definition, a nature or character for one. He thinks ... that the essential relation between the existence of the other and that of oneself is asymmetrical that is other's subjectivity emerges only across one's own objectivity and the others objectivity is experienced as long as one retains one's own subjectivity.

Sartre notes that one can objectify others, hence one conceals their subjectivity.

Even if one has experienced other's subjectivity, it will not influence one's conception because they are usually clarified in the frame of mind that excludes that subjectivity. Thus, Sartre concludes that the Cartesian picture is not doing justice to the experience of the other's subjectivity. His self, so involved with itself, that it considered others as merely objects. For Sartre, we cannot take other as merely object.

Since, other-as-subject is identical to the social self and all social selves are distinct. And in other words the other is the very being of the social life.

It means the upsurge of the other and self-experience of social self are one unity, they cannot even be conceived of separately. The other, other-as-subject is absolutely present to self and Sartre claims that he wholly transcends one's world. And by "transcendent" here Sartre means only "capable of limiting the organization of one's world, one's freedom and one's existence.

"In so far as the other is a subject, he uses one's self for its purposes, and one's social self emerges necessarily as a result, it is "me-as-an-object-for-him. Sartre admits but one must exist and encounter other in order for him to use one's self. This social self requires the existence of both one's self and others. For the existence of this self there is also need for the existence of the world.

According to Merleau-Ponty, the natural world is present as existing itself irrespective of its existence for us; the act of transcendence where the humans as subject are presented within it. So we are always in the nature, which exist independent of our existence of to be perceived. So it's not that this world exist because "I exist" as Descartes.

The moment we are alive we are in the world and not in some vacuum, without this world. How can they we doubt the existence of this world? Even to doubt this we should have some idea of what it is. As we know that something is absent when we know that what that thing is? Therefore, in order to have an idea about whether the world exist or not first we should know what this world is? Thus Picture of knowledge through which we arrived in ascribing the subject as situated in the world, we must, it seems,

substitute second, according to which construct or constitute of this world exist.

Merleau-Ponty also points out that how could one know that there are others who exist? The whole experience of self is through introspection within itself. Awareness of Other is possible without the junction of “ for itself” and the “ in itself. ” It is impossible to have knowledge about others without being in contact with them. The plurality of others is not possible is we have absolute consciousness of oneself.

The monadic view of self given by Descartes does not allow one to interact without outside world, as it is complete in itself. II.

Phenomenological Understanding of Self Phenomenology is the study of structure of consciousness as experienced from first person point of view. The central structure of an experience is its “ intentionality.

” It is “ directedness” of the consciousness towards something, as it is an experience of or about some object. An experience is directed towards an object by virtue of its content or meaning (which represents the object) together with appropriate enabling conditions. It studies “ phenomena,” that is, appearance of things to our consciousness through experience.

Experience involves what Husserl called “ intentionality,” that is, the directedness of experience towards things in the world, the property of consciousness about something. It gives account of self-awareness. Self performs different roles, as thinking or acting self, self as embodied action that includes kinesthetic awareness of one’s movement, self with purpose or

intention of action, self having awareness of others in empathy, intersubjectivity and collectivity.

Husserl is viewed as the founder of phenomenology, whose aim is to study how external things or, in other words, objects of consciousness, such as natural phenomena in the world, other people, our thoughts and feelings, appear to human consciousness. According to phenomenology, by the process of “bracketing off” our assumptions about the status of existence of these “appearances,” we are able to perceive the pure phenomena of the things “in themselves” or the objects of consciousness as we experience them. Phenomenology is concerned with analyzing the perceptual interaction between people and the world. It focuses on how we know and what we know about the world, through analyzing our respective lived experiences of the world?

One of the truths revealed by the phenomenological method, according to Husserl, is that consciousness is intentional, and it means that consciousness is always towards something or is of something.

In this way Husserl differentiates between acts of consciousness and objects of consciousness. According to Husserl, when someone is conscious of something such as a book on the table, a collection of sense data and experience are unified in an act of intentional consciousness related to the book or any object outside from him.

But the act of consciousness is directed to or “intends.” Husserl’s aim was to expose the presupposition and structures of experience and to discover an

absolute foundation of knowledge in the shape of the transcendental ego. Husserl proposed that the world of objects and ways in which we direct ourselves toward them, and perceive those objects, is normally conceived of in what he called the “ natural standpoint,” which is characterized by a belief that objects materially exist and exhibit properties that we see as emanating from them.

Husserl proposed a radical new phenomenological way of looking at objects by examining how we, in our many ways of being intentionally directed toward them, actually “ constitute” them (to be distinguished from materially creating objects or objects merely being figments of the imagination); in the Phenomenological standpoint, the object ceases to be something simply “ external” and ceases to be seen as providing indicators about what it is, and becomes a grouping of perceptual and functional aspects that imply one another under the idea of a particular object or “ type. The notion of objects as real is not expelled by phenomenology, but “ bracketed” as a way in which we regard objects instead of a feature that inheres in an object’s essence founded in the relation between the object and the perceiver. In order to better understand the world of appearances and objects, phenomenology attempts to identify the invariant features of how objects are perceived and pushes attributions of reality into their role as an attribution about the things we perceive For Husserl the truth exists as a fact in the world even if there is no one to comprehend it or it is unknown to anyone.

Which means, meaning is in the object itself and does not come into being when someone has asserted it; it possesses independent existence and validity.

Knowledge in basic sense is a kind of “ seeing,” which is given with evidence and insight. Evidence is “ immediate becoming aware of truth itself. ” It is something which is not verified further but something that can seek confirmation of original truth. For Husserl evidence was: ... ongoing, everyday ‘ production’ or achievement in all cognition where object is given in a satisfactory form, with ‘ intuitive fullness’ or as Husserl prefers to say, where the object is given in itself.

Evidence is, to experience and an experience is intentional.

To experience this intentionality we have to go back to “ things themselves,” that is, the intuited essential of consciousness. The intuitive here means immediate or direct, and not indirect, inference or supposed inference. The object should be presented to the consciousness with all the external factors intact, required by the consciousness to perceive an object. It is gaining insight into the essence of the things as concepts.

To know an object is to know “ the relationship between the subjectivity of the knowing and the objectivity of the content known. ” This unity of both subjectivity and objectivity is the essence of phenomenology. It focuses on meaning-intending act. “ Meaning is identical, self-identical unities which do not come into being and pass away...” Meaning could be different from mental image that it has. That’s why different expressions may reach to

same object and same expression may reach to individual objects but can also lead to more complex intentional contents.

According Husserl sensation themselves are not intentional rather they accompany intentional act. That is why there is ... difference in the contents of experience and the properties of mind transcend object. When I see an object, I only ever see it from one side, in certain kind of light, from certain angle and so on. When we perceive an object we can only look at the single side of the object that is present to us.

The other sides remain comparatively away from our direct perception. Here we perceive the whole object with the help of direct perception and inference.

The inference that we make about the other sides of the object of knowledge after perceiving presented side is called “ adumbration. ” This presentation is not the thing itself, but its manner of presence, described in terms of how the presence of the thing unfolds in a lived experience.

For Husserl, body is involved in all conscious functions. Through immediate intuition, sensuous feelings – sensations of pleasure and pain, bodily well-being, or being ill or at ease in body – are localized, and their relatedness to the body grounded in that localization.

Among these sensations are included groups of sensations which play for the valuing acts (for the intentional mental processes of the sphere of feeling) or, more precisely, for the constitution of values (as the intentional correlates of those feelings) a role as stuff which is analogous to the role played in the

constitution of spatially real objects by primary sensations for the intentional mental processes of the sphere of experience.

Thus, phenomenology develops a complex account of temporal awareness, spatial awareness, awareness of one's own experience (self-conscious, in one sense, self-awareness), the self in different roles (as thinking, acting), awareness of other persons (in empathy, inter-subjectivity, collectivity), social interaction (including collective action), and everyday activity in our surrounding life-world (in a particular culture).

Consciousness experienced by us have unique feature: we experience them, we live through them or perform them.

Other things in the world we may observe and engage. But we do not experience them, in the sense of living through or performing them. The intentional process (i.

e. subjectivity) of consciousness is called the noesis, while its ideal content (i. e. objectivity) is called noema. As an ideal meaning and as “ the object as intended. ” Nomena does not exist apart from act.

Sartre started a new tradition in phenomenology as existential phenomenology.

Existential phenomenology have included description of the meaning, of Heidegger; the role of the lived-body in perception, of Merleau-Ponty; Sartre's account of bad faith and our concrete relations with others; Simone de Beauvoir's description of sex and aging. Existential phenomenologist

shows phenomena to the one who is involved with the world. In existential phenomenology the things in the world are structured by the ways that they are related to other things, bodies and activities. Existential phenomenology is concerned with the human existence as embodied existence and not with disembodied pure consciousness.

They are constituted by such relations that, to be an object of perception or to be used, is to belong to the world. Existing entities are thus independent of any particular thoughts or conscious experience. What we have of them, only to the extent, that the world is not itself an identical entity, something that only exists for thought. The phenomenal world shows that the constituted world entails more than vision conceived as a mental act; it requires an embodied subject. For Sartre, being is of two kinds; one is being-for-itself or consciousness and other is being-in-itself.

The latter includes everything other than consciousness; i. e. includes the material world, the past, and the body as organism and so on. Consciousness is consciousness of itself, hence it is essential “for-itself” – free, mobile and spontaneous. Everything else lacking this self-consciousness is just what it is “in-itself”; it is solid and lacks the freedom. Consciousness is always engaged in the world of which it is conscious and is in relationships with other consciousness.

Being is not known to us as it is, we can only know about being as it appears to us.

It is through consciousness that the world is endowed with temporality, spatiality and other qualities, such as usefulness. Being-for-itself is the nihilation of being-in-itself. Nihilation does not mean annihilation but rather the special type of negation, it is the nihilation of being-for-itself of what it is and seeking for what it is not. For Sartre being-for-itself is the being that is involved in the world and humanizes the things in the world by using them as an instrument.

Being-for-itself is the being who is a projecting being, who keeps on projecting a new project for its being.

Through this process of projecting his being in the future he evolves in the society. Being-in-itself is complete in itself, so it does not strive for achieving anything. It is the being-for-itself who feels the “lack” and strives for the completeness.

Being-for-itself is always engaged in the ever failing pursuit of achieving being-in-itself-being-for-itself. The in-itself has nothing secret; it is “solid” and there is not the slightest emptiness in being, not the tiniest crack through which nothingness might slip in.

In contrast to the for-itself, or consciousness, has no such fullness of existence, because it is no-thing. For-itself generates desire to exist with fullness of being of an existing thing, but without contingency and without any loss of consciousness. Merleau-Ponty was also a phenomenological existentialist, who also advocates the idea of embodied self rather than disembodied self. Being an embodied self, we try to bring into existence, for

ourselves, or take a hold upon, space, the object or the instrument, and to describe the body as the place where all these annexation take place.

He assumes the body as subjective, the one which is experiencing and the objects of our experience like the perception of space and time, language, art, politics, sexuality are experienced in relation to our body as the experiencing subject. Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology addressed the role of attention in the phenomenal field, the experience of the body, the spatiality of the body, and the motility of the body. Merleau-Ponty succinctly captures embodied self, through existential form of phenomenology. He emphasized on the role of the body in human experience.

Address the role of attention on the phenomenal field, the experience of the body, the spatiality of the body. According to Merleau-Ponty, Insofar as, when I reflect on the essence of subjectivity, I find it bound up with that of the body and that of the world, this is because my experience as subjectivity (consciousness) is merely one with my existence as a body and with the existence of the world, and become the subject that I am, when taken concretely, is inseparable from this body and this world. Merleau-Ponty argues that knowledge is always derivative in relation to the more practical exigencies of the body's exposure to the world.

There is no aspect of his phenomenology which does not implicate the body, or what he terms the body-subject (which is later considered in terms of his more general notion of the flesh), and significantly, his descriptions allow us to reconceived the problem of embodiment in terms of the body's practical capacity to act, rather than in terms of any essential trait.

He argues that the starting point for understanding ourselves is the lived body, which, as the “ vehicle of being in the world” is an existing being in its own right.

Our ability to understand a world that can't be fully grasped in through requires that we ourselves are not simply representing minds. Because the existing world is never presented to us as a whole, as completely determined and available for thought, Merleau-Ponty argues, the world “ does not require, and even rules out, a constituting subjects” we encounter the world, in other words, not as subject thinking thoughts of the world, but as ourselves a kind of “ open and indefinite unity of subjectivity. For Merleau-Ponty, unity of an experience being is like the unity of the world, it is not something one experiences directly, but rather it is the background against which a particular experience stands out.

He conceives the unity of the self as something that is not itself fully given in experience. It is a possibility of situation, a field which encounters the world in a unified way, but which is not itself fully explicit and understandable to it. We understand ourselves as we understand the world, progressively manifesting ourselves as we unfold our existence in the temporal world.

The subject itself is existential phenomena. It is so because it has its existence in being in a world, which means, in acting and experiencing and responding to the meaningful things and people and situation it encounters in the world.

He emphasized on the role of the body in human experience, our experience our own body and its significance in our activities. According to him, the main structure of an experience is in its intentionality, its being directed towards an object by virtue of its content or meaning (which represents the object) together with appropriate enabling conditions.

Intentionality refers to the notion that consciousness is always directed towards something. Whether that something towards which consciousness is directed is indirect perception or is in fantasy, is in consequential to the concept of intentionality itself.

Consciousness is not only directed to physical object apprehended in perception; but it can be a fantasy or a memory as well. For Merleau-Ponty, people are both bodies and subjects of thoughts. The acts of self-contemplation are not the same as the traditional dualism of mind-body. The body-self relationship cannot be severed, yet two are not the one thing.

Ponty's view is that one must exist physically before one can think about what it means to exist. Self recognizes first physical body and brain before creating an "essence" that is "oneself."

"According to Ponty phenomenology is concerned primary with the physical existence. The human body and its perceptions is the way we relate to and understand existence. But this understanding of the nature of subject (i. e. self) is incomplete. According to the above view self is embodied self, .

i. e. gender neutral. There is no difference between man and woman.

But that's not the case.

As when we look around we also perceive that man and woman are considered as different and not identical with each other. If they are different they owe different responsibilities and also have different self then their counterpart, i. e. man. Since they are different from each other so must be having different self as well.

That is why Simone de Beauvoir correctly says that the concept of self is not gender neutral, but it is engendered. Since there is difference between man and woman self, so is in their responsibilities. III. Self and Responsibility

The notion of responsibility is bound up with the conception of self. Only a thing having a self can be held responsible for action performed by it.

Therefore it is significant to know how a human agent [self] is responsible for its decisions or actions.

Sartre takes up the notion of human subject that he is not just de facto, a kind of being, with certain given desires, but it is somehow “ up to” him what kind of being he is going to be. This freedom to choose puts responsibility on human subject for the way he is. This is responsibility is essential to our notion of self.

That is so because this sense of responsibility makes us different from other living things. This also helps us in having a better concept about oneself.

The person having fulfilled one's responsibility have more confidence in him/her then one who doesn't. In a sense, the self gets its meaning by

getting responsibility for whatever he does. Naturally, we think of the agent as responsible, for what he does. And we can say that the state of being responsible is accountable and answerable as for a trust, debt or obligations as a person himself is taking his responsibility for his all doings, choosing and making decisions.

A person is fully free to be a responsible because he is set to be free to make choices. I like having responsibility because it means that I don't want to depend on someone else, and I have an intuition that my independence will come through my taking of responsibility of my doing.

By being responsible, not only I want to show to other people that one can be independent, but also to show oneself. The one who is not being responsible, others will never take him serious, and if one follows his commitments as responsible being, people will off course take him seriously.

Therefore, it is important to enquire how we are to understand responsibility. " What is it to be responsible? " We regard ourselves and others as sources of their actions.

Since they are aware of what they have done or doing. And it is this awareness which gives us a sense of responsibility for our actions. The awareness of freedom to make choice, having capability in the sense that we could do otherwise and we are capable of doing that, but this was our choice. It makes us responsible towards our decisions.

The notion of " self" or " agent" is central to the concept of " responsibility" in the sense that ascriptions of beliefs, values and ethics presuppose self-

conscious beings that are capable of knowing implications of such ascriptions and that they can deny or affirm them as well. To regard oneself as a “ self” is to hold one to be autonomous in making one’s choices, and to regard oneself as capable of changing and developing oneself.

Being capable of change and development is actually meant to be an autonomous. However, in asking “ What is it to be responsible? we might have a concern in mind, we often praise some people as responsible, and criticize others as irresponsible. Here responsibility names a virtue – a morally valuable character trait, holding responsibility is best understood as resting on an independent decision about being responsible. As just indicated, we can weight degrees of responsibility, both with regard to the sort of prospective responsibilities a person should bear and a person’s liability to blame or penalties. Responsibility represents a virtue that people (and organizations) may exhibit in one area of their conduct, or perhaps exemplify in their entire lives.

The irresponsible person is not one who lacks prospective responsibilities, nor is she one who may not be held responsible retrospectively.

It is only when one does not take or fulfill the responsibilities seriously. The more responsible someone is, the more we will be inclined to entrust her with demanding roles and responsibilities. Looking at the matter positively, we can also say that a person who exhibits the virtue of responsibility lives up to the three other aspects of responsibility in an exemplary way. First, she exercises the capacities of responsible moral agency to a model degree.

Second, she approaches her previous actions and omissions with all due concern, being prepared to take responsibility for any failings she may have shown. And third, she takes her prospective responsibilities seriously, being both a capable judge of what she should do, and willing to act accordingly. Existentialist philosophers like Sartre would deny that self has any essence. Yet most of the philosophers tend to characterize persons as the sort of beings who can think, remember, believe, perceive, feel, wish, want, choose, intend and decide. Existentialist thinkers focus on the question of concrete human existence and the conditions of this existence rather than hypothesizing a human essence. In fact, through this concrete human existence is how self gets its meaning in proper way. A central proposition of existentialism is that existence precedes essence, which means that the actual life of the individual is what constitutes, what could be called their “essence.” Instead of there being a predetermined essence that is defined only as what it is to be a human. Although it was Sartre who explicitly coined the phrase, similar notions can be found in the thought of many existentialist philosophers.

It is often claimed in this context that a person defines himself, which is often perceived as stating that we can “wish” to be something – anything, a bird, for instance – and then be it. According to most existentialist philosophers, however, this would be an inauthentic existence. What is meant by the statement is that a person is (i) insofar as they act and (ii) that they are responsible for their actions. For example, someone who acts cruelly towards other people is, by that act, defined as a cruel person.

Furthermore, by this action of cruelty they themselves are responsible for their identity (as a cruel person).

So the self does not mean the basic nature of a human being, it has the potentiality to make changes in it with the changes in his surroundings. Thus we can talk about the being and becoming of a human being. Becoming of a human is closely related to the self he has, as we are talking about. Sartre puts it in Existentialism is Humanism: “ man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world – and defines himself afterwards. ” Of course, the more positive aspect of this is also implied: You can choose to act in a different way, and to be a good person instead of a cruel person.

Here it is clear that since man can choose to be either cruel or good, he is, in fact, neither of these essentially. When a person is not able to carry out his responsibilities in the desired manner, he might experience anxiety within himself. The term anxiety or even anguish is common to many existentialist thinkers. It is generally held to be the experience of our freedom and responsibility. The archetypal example is the experience one has when standing on a cliff where one not only fears falling off it, but also dreads the possibility of throwing oneself off. In this experience that “ nothing is holding me back,” one senses the lack of anything that predetermines you to either throw yourself off or to stand still, the one experience one’s own freedom. This is significant to say what an existentialist says that anxiety comes with the feel of freedom. When a being feel free for his doings he is also aware to his responsibilities, this awareness of responsibility produces anxiety in a being. This feeling of anxiety is different from the feeling of fear, because

anxiety is before nothing, but the fear has an object. In the case of fear, one can take definitive measures to remove the object of fear, in the case of angst; no such “constructive” measures are possible.

The use of the word “nothing” in this context relates both to the inherent insecurity about the consequences of one’s actions, and to the fact that, in experiencing one’s freedom as angst, one also realizes that one will be fully responsible for these consequences; there is no thing in one (one’s genes, for instance) that acts in one’s stead, and that one can “blame” if something goes wrong. Not every choice is perceived as having dreadful possible consequences (and, it can be claimed), but that doesn’t change the fact that freedom remains a condition of every action.

As such, existentialist freedom is not situated in some kind of abstract space where anything and everything is possible. Since people are free, and since they already exist in the world, it is implied that their freedom is to be understood in this world, and that it, too, is restricted by it. What is not implied in this account of existential freedom, however, is that one’s values are immutable; a consideration of one’s values may cause one to reconsider and change them. A consequence of this fact is that one is not only responsible for one’s actions, but also for the values one holds.

This entails that a reference to common values doesn’t excuse the individual’s actions: Even though these are the values of the society the individual is part of, they are also his own in the sense that she/he could choose them to be different at any time. Thus, the focus on freedom in existentialism is related to the limits of the responsibility one bears as a

result of one's freedom: the relationship between freedom and responsibility is one of interdependency, and a clarification of freedom also clarifies what one is responsible for.

The theme of authentic existence is common to many existentialist thinkers. It is often taken to mean that one has to "find oneself" and then live in accordance with this self. But in one sense, if one considers the self to be substantial or "fixed," that the self truly is something you can find if you look hard enough, this is a misunderstanding. What is meant by authenticity is that in acting, one should act as oneself, not as one, one's genes or any other essence. The authentic act is one that is in one's freedom.

Of course, as a condition of freedom is facticity, this includes one's facticity, but not to the degree that this facticity can in any way determine one's choices (in the sense that one could then blame one's background for making the choice one made). The role of facticity in relation to authenticity involves letting one's actual values come into play when one makes a choice. In "choosing" randomly, so that one also takes responsibility for the act instead of choosing either-or without allowing the options to have different values. In contrast to this, the inauthentic is the denial to live in accordance with one's freedom.

This can take many forms, from pretending choices, to a sort of "mimicry" where one acts as "one should." Human freedom operates against a background of facticity and situation. Facticity is about the facts that cannot be changed like one's place of birth, age, and family one is born, etc. but

situation can be changed by exercising freedom through making decision.
This freedom is not absolute It is always within a given set of circumstances,
after a particular past and against the expectation of bo