

# Primary and secondary reflection examples



1. This lecture is started by Marcel after discussing about truth as a value, the setting of any kind of thought but there is this distinctive character of philosophical thought that is reflection. It is about not just the meaning of something at first glance but by probing more deeply to the meaning of things and experiences that we encounter.
2. Marcel is going to illustrate how reflection is rooted in daily life by giving examples that show the importance of probing more deeply into thought.
3. Reflection happens due to an occurrence of a phenomenon that is a break from the daily normal life. If the phenomenon involves something that is valuable to me then, the reflection becomes a personal act where no one can reflect for oneself but oneself. If the watch was not valuable to me in the first place no reflection would have occurred for it would just have been something that occurred and not something that one would call as an experience.
4. The lie that I made in the example was the occurrence that was a break from the normal everyday life. I considered myself as trustworthy and honest therefore telling the lie was indeed a phenomenon for me. The same things can be said for this situation just like in the previous one. The phenomenon has led me to reflect for myself and probe deeply to the lie that I made. I reach such questions as who I really am for I was already not the man who I thought he was.
5. This example is about being disappointed to someone for something that they did and then, remembering a memory where I have done a similar thing. Being disappointed to someone was the break from normal everyday

life because disappointments only happen when your expectations do not meet with the reality. This has led to the question of who I really am because I am disappointed at someone who was exactly just like me before. I am not the man who I really thought I was anymore. This conclusion comes from the reflection for oneself where one explores deeply into the meaning of one phenomenon. The reflection can leave me in anguish but I am liberated.

6. In the last example, realizations come to me from the things I have explored to more deeply. I am already a better communicator to myself and to my friend for I have destroyed the barrier that once stood there to block our communication. This is the liberating part of reflection. Where I was once anguished by the thoughts that I had because of what I reflected yet it brought something liberating to my life.

7. The third example as I stated was about communication. This clearly shows the importance of the notion of intercourse. This shows that I need others and that other people need me. I need people who need me to make me assure myself of my awareness that I am aware of myself.

8. Life is one with reflection yet there seems to be an objection that differentiates life with reflection. Life is hot while reflection is cold. Life is like a fire burning with voices and experiences waiting to happen. Bursts of energy come from never-ending sources of emotions of joy and sadness. Reflection tends to make this thought as something that one would only analyze and not experience. Just like a car broken into pieces and analyzed.

9. The reflection in the intoxicated young man comes to him when he realizes things that are important to him like his future. This is the something that is

valuable to him that makes him reflect upon his actions. The rash things he said due to his intoxication was the phenomenon that made him reflect. His life was the thing that was at stake so then he had to reflect upon the things that he did and explore more deeply the consequences one action of his might do to his life. The other examples like the prisoner and the mother make me ask myself questions like “ What am I really living for? ” “ Who am I living for? ” “ What things do I live by? ” These are questions whose answers make a great impact upon my life for these are the things that fuel my everyday life. I have to know what I live for and know for sure that is something that is valuable to me. It has to be something worth living and dying for so I can say to myself that I have lived my life to the fullest every day.

10. Reflection should be one with my life. It is not the bad guy in the movie anymore but the one that saves the day. Reflection makes us probe deeply into things and liberate us from our narrow thinking. But if we use reflection to reduce life to animalism, then this makes reflection the antagonist and as something that is an unintelligible concept.

11. Experience and reflection are analogous. One goes with the other. Experience is not just a passive memory but an active participation of the other. We can say therefore that one is more reflective if one has more experience and vice versa. But there are two levels of reflection that we need to differentiate. The first is primary reflection. Our immediate consciousness of what happens in our experience is our primary reflection. We must further break this down in order to come up with a deeper understanding. From this point, we reconstruct the experience while

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integrating what we have discovered from it, thus a transcendence of knowledge through reflection on experience. This is our secondary reflection or a reflection upon our reflection. Through this process, we become aware of our awareness. We experience exclamatory awareness. This is when we feel truly alive.

12. The question who am I still hangs and yet remains to be the most important one we must answer. Through primary and secondary reflection we might be able this question finally.

13. Because of the secondary reflection I am able to realize that I am like this person wearing someone else's clothes. I have this feeling that I am not who I am now and who I was before. These realizations of mine makes me uneasy because I cannot myself of the question " Who really am I? "

14. The civil servant asking the question are you Mr. so and so may think that I am insane if I answer " Certainly not" but this is how I feel. I think that I am not the man who I was anymore. I am not the person I have written myself to be. My name already sounds different to me because of the realizations it brings to me. Who really am I?

15. The uneasy feeling that I am not who I am anymore leads me to the question again of who I really am.

16. I have realized that am a not a definite somebody. I am just this non-somebody linked in a profoundly obscure fashion, with a somebody about who I am being questioned about and about whom I am certainly not free to

answer just what I like at the moment because I am not the person that the civil servant is describing anymore.

17. The uneasy feeling leads us to realizations that I am not a definite somebody. We have to explore deeply and probe deeply to this problem and hopefully answer this question.

18. I have to recognize the fact that I am not a definite somebody and therefore accept the facts that there is another sense in which I am somebody and that other somebodies also exist.

19. Marcel criticizes the relationship that I have with myself because of the paradox of how I appear to myself - as a definite somebody and not a somebody. I could be anybody who I think I could be. A master, a friend, a teacher, a servant. This paradox is in relation to myself as a subject. It is in relation of myself as these definite characteristics are contingent.

20. The questions come whether we can consider this not being a definite somebody exists. Exists in a way that I have something to define myself, something I live for and something I live by. Definitely the answer to this question is negative. But this does not mean that I am imaginary, for it does not mean that what is not actual is imaginary.

21. Now I come to ask myself. Does anything really exist? Do I know of anything to prove that I myself exist? These questions ask for a centrally significant existence without which I cannot possibly judge anything else to exist. We should however expound and probe more into this statement of

existential indubitability otherwise we might have a collision with total or modified skepticism.

22. Total skepticism doubts the existence of anything. In the phenomenological level, total skepticism is meaningless. Our day to day experiences prove to us what exists and what does not. Experiences that we reflect upon further makes us aware of the existence of other people and objects. There is a clear distinction of what really exists or not through reflection.

23. Relative skepticism on the other hand makes me ask myself if I do really exist since I am the one questioning about existence of other things I should be able to answer my own existence. The separation of I and exist in the question “ Do I really exist? ” proves that the “ I ” is never a “ that ” and also that existence is not a predicate.

24. The “ I exist ” is an indubitable touchstone of experience therefore it cannot be separated. Marcel points out that “ I exist ” lies in another level. It is not something that one can infer so quickly for “ I exist ” lies in the banks of every possible current of inference. Therefore the substitution made by modern philosophers could be criticized since “ Sentio, ergo sum ” still hides a Cogito because of the ‘ ergo ’.

25. To say that you exist cannot be separated from the fact that you are existing, that is, others are aware of your existence as well, to truly exist is to manifest. With it, doubting oneself cannot be avoided and by doing so we become more aware of ourselves as likened that a child’s expressions.

26. To exist and the awareness of existence cannot be separated because that is the character of the self that cannot be doubted. It is inherent to the self that he exists for himself and for others and that cannot be apart from the datum that is my body.

27. The author talks about applying primary and secondary reflection on “my body”. Primary and secondary reflection means to look at my body the same way as all other bodies, subject to destruction and non privileged. It is detaching this body from the thought that is mine.

28. Secondary reflection is reuniting the ideas set apart by primary reflection and that is to unite the body back with the center.

29. There is difficulty in proceeding to secondary reflection without contradicting what was proposed in the primary reflection that both body and soul are distinct.

30. It is a matter of perspective that we proceed in reflection by considering that body and soul are distinct but interrelated. If we should reflect on what makes up my body then, we should reject the distinction that both are things.

31. To refer to my body as the “my” that I mean it to be then, I must reject a psycho-physical parallelism belief that me and my body are mere things but rather have an intimacy of relationship with each other. This intimacy manifests through the actual real life experiences of the body and the real thing from which we should get implications from and not put ideal meanings to it. These experiences can cause us either to behave as a master of our

body or a salve to it but either way, it is the “ my” in my body that I own it to be.

32. The author relates a person’s ownership of the “ my” of “ my body” as the same with saying that “ the dog is mine” for such dog to be really mine, there must exist a positive relationship like accepting that I have claim and allresponsibilityto it and it too will give the same positivity by responding to me.

33. It cannot be argues that you are the owner of your body as you are the owner of the dog in the previous analogy but in slave very, such is not the case for the master of a slave who claims to have ownership of his slave’s body but a slave cannot help but persist that his body is his especially after the injustices of slavery.

34. I have a responsibility to look after my body by providing for it the same as I do for my dog. But we must be aware of an upper limit of a situation that we are in, that we are now capable of dissociating ourselves from our lives saying “ that this body is not mine” or “ looking after this body is not my responsibility.

35. My body is mine to a point where I am capable of controlling it like your dog’s obedience, but there is this time where an inner limit has to be considered as in the case of illness where you don’t have the same control of your body as you used to have. This is expressed in the phrase “ I am no longer myself”.

36. The likeness of “ my dog” as well as other objects that are mine is distinct from the spatio-terminal being that I am but here exists a link between us that we could be associated with each other.

37. There must be a link between me and my body from which is the means for me to relate all other ownerships and at every single ownership that there is. There is also that desire to personally experience that my body is mine.

38. To own something requires oneself to claim it and take care of it , therefore some one who owns things cannot be reduces to a dematerialized ego who cannot claim nor care for something.

39. Another observation made that when I become too attached with what I possess, it tends to become a part of my body. And when such possessions are threatened like in the case of being lost, it feels as if my body has also been affected.

40. The strength of possession is as reliant with how united you are with your body, but as of external possessions, when they get lost. it leaves the owner at vulnerable state form being affected with the loss leaving him to want more to possess things that are not identical or that do not define him, most especially, a person from which the very idea cannot be owned.

41. The link between me and my body cannot be asserted to be independent from each other but once that link breaks as by means of death, no experience could ever tell us now what we can still become.

42. Looking at the previous situation at a different view by means of secondary reflection.

43. My body can be thought of as being an instrument from which I can act what I intend to manifest myself into the world, this requires us to think what being an instrument would imply and under that conditions would that be.

44. An instrument could be understood as something that would increase the efficiency of an existing power that is present in the person using the instrument like an optical apparatus for seeing. Therefore my body can be seen as a united body with a group of powers.

45. I have to understand that my body is mine to avoid narrowing my body as an object. Also that I am my body is an instrument, an extension of another body's powers. Such infinite reverses could be avoided by claiming my body as mine and not an instrument.

46. In claiming that I am my body, care must be observed so as not to reduce me as an object but rather as a subject, a being that has a relationship. Sympathetic meditation was a term used by Marcel to describe how my body was at first in accordance with my feelings.

47. Using my body to feel my body is using it as an instrument and it has been described in the previous numbers that my body should not be reduced to an apparatus and in this case just to view my feelings.

48. Marcel ends it by introducing the inquiry to feelings that in doing so we do not begin with searching for explanations but rather look into how we get to feel in an everyday set up and how we represent it.