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## THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF INTERSUBJECTIVITY: A RECOMMENCE

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**Abstract:** In this paper I have attempted to present Man's existence of being man from the standpoint of intersubjectivity of phenomenology. The traditional theory of dualism negates any kind of relation between mind and body of a subject. I have here tried to make a comparative study of Descartes's Cartesian dualism and intersubjectivity of Existential Phenomenology. The essence of man consists his being a conscious-being-in-the-world such that man is a unity of reciprocal implication of subjectivity and world. There should, in this sense, be no misunderstanding about the ontological status of the world. This world is radically human and it is impossible to speak a world-without-man. A world-without-man is a contradiction. And once this is understood that the world is out and out human, it should also be clear that there is not one world-in-itself, but many human worlds. So if the man I am a conscious-being-in-the-world, I am not alone or an isolated existence. I encounter other human beings who interact with me conscious-being-in-the-world by their words, looks, gestures etc. but I cannot fully assimilate the other in mu cultural world because the other is not a worldly thing which receives its meaning from my project.

*Keywords: Intersubjectivity, Phenomenology, Subjectivity, Cartesian dualism, essence of man, conscious-being, mind and body.*

The question whether man's existence on the level of his being-man has an intersubjective dimension or whether as a subject he is absolutely "alone" has troubled the mind of the philosophers over the ages. The traditional dualism between the subject and his body renders it impossible to conceive any direct contact between one conscious "I" and another conscious "I". For in this dialectic mind-set the subject was conceived as remaining hidden in the machine to which the body was reduced. And though I can know my own soul better than my own body, as Descartes said, I can know only the body of the other. Naturally this gives rise to what is commonly known as the problem of other mind. How can I know that the human bodies which people of my known world are conscious subjects like me? How in other words, can I know that these humanoid figures are conscious beings? The usual argument from analogy as an answer to this problem is not acceptable to the phenomenologists because it cannot explain the presence of, and contact with the other subject as a subject. The problem as it has been stated, demands that there must be a passage from the statement about objects encountered in the natural world to the statement about conscious beings for our knowledge of other minds. The phenomenologists reject out right that one can ever pass from objects to persons. The problem, the phenomenologists and specially the existential phenomenologists hold, would ever defy effective solution so long as we maintain the 'Cartesian' type of dualism.

Before attempting to deal with the problem of other subjects it must be emphasized that the crucial point in this connection is to know who the man I am. Is the man I am unique – a pure Cogito divorced from the world

– an isolated existence? Thus before going into the problem of intersubjectivity, one must first be clear as to who the man is. In their answer to this question the existential phenomenologists strikes a balance between the materialist and the spiritualist views of man. Man is not a mere thing amongst other things of the world, a result of blind natural forces, a moment in the endless evolution of the cosmos as the materialists thought. Nor again is he a pure consciousness an absolute subject for whom the material world has any meaning as the spiritualists supposed. Man is neither a thing nor an absolute consciousness. Man is no doubt a subject but not an absolute subject. He is rather an existent subject. Man is a conscious being but not divorced from his body and the world, as a conscious being he is existent. What this means is that he is a being-in-the world. Being-man includes both consciousness and the world – or rather, it is a consciousness always open to the world. Without world there would be no consciousness and without consciousness there would be no world. The essence of man consists his being a conscious-being-in-the world such that man is a unity of reciprocal implication of subjectivity and world. There should, in this sense, be no misunderstanding about the ontological status of the world. The world is radically human and it is impossible to speak a world-without-man. A world-without-man is a contradiction. And once this is understood that the world is out and out human, it should also be clear that there is not one world-in-itself, but many human worlds.

Now if the man I am a conscious-being-in-the world, I am not alone or an isolated existence. I encounter other human beings who interact with me by their words, looks, gestures etc. but I cannot fully assimilate the other in my cultural world because the other, as Levin as says, is not a worldly thing which receives its meaning from my project. How, then, am I related to the other?

The existential phenomenologists try to answer this question by saying that existence is coexistence. No aspect of one's being-man is what it is without the presence of other men in it. When I consider, for example, the various aspects of my being-man, I realise that my being-man is a being through others. Regarding the mythical first man whose being-man cannot be a being through others, it is said that he was not man on the authentic level of being-man. There is question of man only on this level. If, however, he is called man this is because he contains the possibility of rising to this level.

That man's existence is coexistence can be easily shown in three aspects of his existence – cogito, volo, and ago. In the three levels of the cogito – the prescientific, the scientific and the philosophical level – man's existence reveals his made of coexistence. In the perception of a common object, e.g. an umbrella, I am able to perceive it because of others' behaviour with respect to it and also of the identifying name given to it by others. Even as the perceiving subject I am what I am because the behaviour and speech of others are present in me as cogito.

The same is true of cogito and the scientific level. Scientists possess peculiar type of looking at the world. But his looking presupposes a tradition which has been made by others.

Similarly, philosopher's thinking also presupposes a tradition and is, in fact, built-up by the tradition left over by predecessors. The philosopher may not be explicitly aware of the influence of the tradition in his thinking, but it cannot be discounted.

On the affective level also I am what I am because of a long history which has built up a mood in me proper to our time.

On the level of work we feel more clearly the presence of others in us. For the tools used in work reflect the contribution of preceding generation. Man is tied to the past and dependent upon it. His work at present will also have on in the future, and it will leave some method of production for the posterity. So far then our existence as ago is concerned, we are not alone, but we base ourselves on meanings established by others.

Not only does the different aspect of his existence, but as an integrated whole also man makes man is. Thus whatever I am – father, brother, teacher, friend, an Indian, a baldhead – it is only through others. Apart from other's presence in me all these sound meaningless.

It may, however, be said that man is nothing but the product of social processes as the doctrine of sociology prefers to argue. It is simply the realisation that man makes man think, act and be which leads one to conclude that man is nothing but the product of social processes and forces. It cannot be denied, however, that my dealing with others leaves impressions on all levels of my existence and there occurs in me, in and through the process of sedimentation, a social facility which is my social body. Although this social body has an impact upon me, this impact is not to be regarded in the sense of a process in which the action of a thing upon another is a process. Social body is never fully the effect of my togetherness with others; I can and, in fact, to give meanings sit. As an existent subject I can still do all kinds of things with it and this is why it is my social body.

If the social body fully determines me, there would no longer be any subjectivity, and the emergence of new meaning in the prevailing context of my social facility would be wholly unintelligible. The novelty presupposes spontaneity, the creative predominance of the subject and this newness can never follow blindly from the presence of the social body. The past is present no doubt in the new thought of a philosopher and without this past, newness in thinking would not have reached a particular level. But this newness cannot be reduced to the effect of the past social body. Sociology practically does away with the very concept of the subjectivity of man.

The other subject is not concealed from me but accessible to me since in my day-to-day dealings, I take the other subject into account, and this does not pose any problem. This is accepted as a matter of course. However, the other subject is not fully transparent to me, nor am I to him. But this does not mean that I cannot see the other as a subject.

It is only to the philosophers initiated in the certain dualistic frame of thinking that the existence of other subject poses a problem. The argument from analogy as a way out of this problem proves otiose because instead of explaining how one can have the experience of the other as subject and in the process have any contact with him, it presupposes the very presence of the other as subject as also the direct contact between one subject and the other. It has been said that when I perceive in the other the same expressive movements through which I express my interior world, I perceive him as a subject like me. But why I do take his bodily movements as expressive of his exteriority? Why not as purely mechanical movements? Because I presuppose that the other is not a machine but a subject. The argument from analogy presupposes the very thing which it intends to justify.

The unconsciousness of the other is a fact of experience and his body is not a thing, but the other in person. When the other subject looks at me his eye is not something composed of lens, cornea, retina and the like, rather his eye is "he who looks at me". His body is not an object, but a subject, it is he himself. If his body be a thing, his presence to me would be similar to that of things. But the way in which a rolling rock comes towards me in a mountain tar is quite different from the way an attacker comes towards me. The other's presence to me, his unconsciousness, I must accept as something given at the very first moment. Any proof based upon the dualism of subject and his body is bound to be superfluous.

Here one thing needs to be said, when we say that the separation between the man as subject and his body be rejected and that man is his body, this is not true without qualification. It is true, as Marcel said, that does not "have" a body because the relation of having implies a certain distance between the owner and the object owned by him and there is no such distance between me and my body. When I say that I have a car, I can do away with, or dispose of the car without affecting my existence, but I cannot dispose of my body or do away with it. For the same reason my body is not an instrument, for any instrument used by us is inserted in the scheme of our body and ultimately acts as the extended part of our body. But if the body is also an instrument, of which body would it be an extension?

My body, however, is not fully identical with me as subject, although its gestures, postures, attitudes and the like are nothing other than me. Even when the Cartesian dividing line between subject and his body is blotted out, there still remains a certain non-identity between the two. If it is said that I am my body without qualification, I would be fully locked up in the world of mere things. There would then be no subject, no 'I' which throws light on the world of things. I cannot ever say that I am my body because the word "my" would lose all meaning. My body stands midway between my being without qualification and my having without qualification. In this sense then I am not fully identical with my body considered as mere things, nor again am I fully distant from it.

Since, again the body stands midway between being and having, it acts as an intermediary in the encounter between human beings. I am my body because I remain unconcealed in my body as to, when I am, and I am also distant from my body because I can conceal myself, I can simulate, pretend, lie in my relation with my fellow men. It is in the twin sense of revelation and concealment of me as subject that the body acts as an intermediary. It is to be noted in this connection that the idea of concealing on self and his world from another person follows from the primordial unconcealed-ness in the body. Self-concealment is possible only on the basis primordial unconcealed-ness.

Here in lies the intentionality of the body. Human body is always a disclosure of the world, and project of the world is already writ on the body itself so much so that I can in direct contact with the other and his world by simply looking at his bodily schema.

The presence of the other to me thus reveals him to me as 'not a thing' but as existence, i.e. as an origin of meaning. We have stated earlier that man as existence as co-existence. But the concept of co-existence has not yet been brought out in sufficient relief to explain the phenomenon of intersubjectivity. Co-existence here means companionship. Since the other is not a thing, since he reveals himself to me as a meaning distinct from that of a thing, his presence to me is a kind of accompanying me. He is my companion which a thing can never be. The encounter with the other reveals him as one "like-me-in-the world" and as such he is "companion-in-the world". And not only the other is a companion to me, to him I am also a companion-in-the world. It in this sense that the word "we" is used in common parlance.

There are many forms of accompanying relation of which the principal forms are hatred, indifference, love and justice. The relations of companionship are variegated e.g. working together, travelling together, and living together in a hostel another like. But they all are not alike. The "we" as indicative of companionship of a labour union, of patients in a hospital, of students in a class are different from each other. Manifoldness of accompanying is another lies on different levels. But hatred, indifference, love and justice are primary in the sense that they are always realities in the concrete man.

Hatred is an inevitable trait of the intersubjective relation according to Jean Paul Sartre. The other as subject is not accessible to me when I look at him; rather he is accessible to me only when I am under his look. To perceive someone's look is not to perceive a quality of the other as an in itself, it means only the awareness of the perceiver that he is being looked at. Being looked at or being the victim of other's stare means – the death of my subjectivity. Other's gaze reduces me to a thing, destroying myself – transcending movement which in fact, I am. As a living subject I am for ever transcending myself towards a future – I am transcendence as such and as a result I can never put into strait jacket I am absolutely free. But when others look at me, they identify me as this or that and ossify me into a thing like existence, denying my freedom, my ever renewing movement of transcendence. I am conscious of being crushed under the weight of subjectivity.

As subject, I am the source of the system of meanings which the world is for me. All things and beings are around me organise themselves before me in terms of the project which I am. I am the creator and the centre of this world. But under the stare of other subject my freedom as transcendence because immobile and frozen. I have been made a thing with all the characters showered upon me by the other. Here he dominates over me.



He is the master and I have been made a slave of him under his crushing look. This is, according to Sartre, the source of hatred.

But the feeling of being crushed as subject implies that I steal rear my subjectivity, although not in fullness and in the spontaneity of authentic subjectivity. To liberate me from my state of being-an-object, I will rise and try to reduce the other to an object by my counter stare. Under my stare his subjectivity degenerates simply into a quality of his eyes, no longer having the power to make me an object. He now becomes the slave and I, the master. Subjectivity in the subject to subject relationship is inconceivable for Sartre. The essence of inter human relationship is never a “being-with”, a harmonious relationship, but a conflict.

But that does not mean that men will not strive for such a relationship. Love, masochism, desire, hatred, sadism are all different attempts to realise the intersubjectivity of which man dreams. For Sartre, there will be forever remain a tension, a conflict in the inter human relationship.

Even when there is a feeling of “us” amongst different individuals or in a group of individuals, that feeling is not indicative of harmonious relation, the conflict still remains. There is here a third party who looks at “us” and makes us as “object”. In the absence of a third party we fight with each other, and in his presence we fight together against him. In this fight against the third party we try recover ourselves from the spell of “us” object and rise to the “we” subject making the third party a mere object. This is true of the relation existing between the ruling class and the ruled, oppressors and the oppressed and so on.

Hatred means that I cannot accept that my fellow man is a subject, which he realises himself as a person and brings about his own personal history. Hatred means a refusal to dwell together in our world and bring about our history.

To guard against possible misunderstanding it must not be said that when I make the other an object by my looking, the other as subject remains in accessible to me. I am certainly conscious of the subjectivity of other. The other’s being an object under mu look is an answer to my consciousness of his subjectivity.

Love is exactly the opposite of hatred. It is also a made of companionship. But in between the schema love-hatred, there lies a way of relating to fallowness which occurs frequently viz. the way of indifference.

I encounter many people in my world to whom I am indifferent. Still they are not like objects to me; I recognize their subjectivity immediately. Even in my attitude of indifference I deal with them in a manner quite different from the way in which I deal with things. There is a sense of an accompanying relation or that of togetherness involved here which a kind of intersubjective domain of human relations is. Thus the travellers behind ticket counter have a feeling of “we” and express themselves as “we” in their encounter with the booking clerk, but this “we” is a “we” of indifference because nobody in the queue cares much for others as to who stands before or after him. The term “you” addressed to the booking clerk as the “you” of indifference because it matters little to the traveller if some other person takes his place. Here togetherness is nothing but a mere meeting of functions and nothing else.

It may be said in the way of indifference there is virtually no encounter, no sense of togetherness. Truly speaking the term ‘encounter’ is loaded with affectivity but there is no such thing involved in the “we” of indifference. If there is nothing more involved in the “we” indifference than a mere bumping into one another of certain thing – like qualities or existences, then nothing world really pass between them. If in an overcrowded bus I bump into one of the fellow passengers and he makes way for me and I greet him with an apologetic look, is there not anything like encounter between us although all these take place in an attitude of indifference? For he is not very much concerned about me and my whereabouts nor am I about him. If nothing passes between us, how can recognize him when I meet him accidentally in a bus again and say- ‘oh! You are also here’. The “we” of indifference is felt badly when something wrong happens to a co-passenger, although none of them is specifically aware of the other and also having any concern for the other.

Apart from hatred and indifference, there is another possibility, and perhaps the predominant one, of treating on another as subjects, called love. Love is the paradigm mode of accompanying one another.

Intersubjectivity finds its full play in the mode of accompanying one another called 'love'. Loving encounter is based upon the other's appeal to my subjectivity. This appeal may be in the form of gesture, look, blushing and so on. The appeal virtually means an invitation addressed to me to step out of myself – of my personal preoccupations and be with him. The appeal does not present itself as a demand for it is too humble to demand anything. This is why the appeal may go unnoticed or be refused. Love appeal is not based upon the physical, spiritual or another attractiveness of other's existence. For in that case there would be no love where there is no attractiveness of the beloved, or when attractiveness no longer remains. Attractiveness no doubt sends a signal to me alluring me to be near him. Love is much more than this attractiveness. Whatever Qualities the other has, they are nothing but his facticity. In real love these tactical characters matter little or nothing, in fact, these qualities fall to the background giving roan for what the other really is over and above his facticity.

As a matter of fact, if the other has any appeal in his gesture, look, smile etc. to me, it is not because of any of his facticity which lies sediment in his existence e.g. name, fame, physical and spiritual qualities. It is rather the other's subjectivity itself which addressed to me an invitation to share it, to accept, support and aggrandise it. In Marcel's words, it can be expressed as the appeal: Be with me.

The appearance of the other's subjectivity as an appeal to me, if recognised, reveals a new dimension of my existence. For the recognition of the appeal, I must, as already point out. Break away with my personal preoccupations. But who am I? I am nothingness, as Sartre says; I am more than my objective qualities, more than my facticity as a "filled-out file card". I am a movement, a force being always transcending my facticity towards a never finished future in my attempt to build my nest in the world. But all this is done in my own way as freedom. Other's appeal puts my freedom, my secure world at stake. Other's appeal reveals to me a dimension – a dimension of my destiny for the other. I am called to realize myself, not in my exclusively own world, as an egoist but in the world for the other. This then implies conversion – a change in my mode of self-realisation. I am asked by the very appeal itself to conquer my world in a manner that the other can simultaneously exist as subject for me.

Love is nothing but my saying 'yes' to his appeal – to offer him a possibility to exist wherein he can realize himself as freedom. Love, however, has nothing to do with sentimentality which follows from the Cartesian concept of interiority and which Marx calls "religious nonsense". Since the subject is immersed in the body and the world, affirmation of other's subjectivity by the beloved implies taking care of other's material needs and his world.

In loving relation, not only is the other concerned, there is also the question of the person responding to the appeal of love. Love as active turning to the other is concerned with the beloved also. Since genuine love is based upon the freedom of the subjects involved in love, love is defenceless. While responding to love-appeal of the other, the beloved accepts the freedom of the other and as such her love is not secure. The beloved reposes infinite trust in the other and by this very fact surrenders her to the other. This self-surrender contains an appeal of the beloved to the other.

But what is this appeal? This appeal means that the other world nor extract any advantage from this self-surrender, nor does he try to dominate, force or possess. The beloved, love is always founded on freedom. If the beloved is made to go through a particular way which is good and secure for her, love is not satisfied because there is no freedom. For true love, the beloved must choose herself that way.

There is another moment of self-surrender. I associate my destiny with that of the other with the vague realisation that in doing this, I am also on my way to self-fulfilment as "having to be". It is to be noted here that though have as active turning to the other is simultaneously the fulfilment of my own being, it does not imply that love aims at this fulfilment. Self-fulfilment is not the motive. Where there is such motive there is no love.

If however, there is any motive in love that is “you” and nothing else. I love you because of you. I love you because you are lovable and you are lovable because you are who you are. This “you” are none but the “you” when I care”. Objectivistic outlook cannot provide us with the idea of this “you” because it gives us only facticity, not his subjectivity. Nor again is it a subjective judgement concerning the beloved which outlooks the imperfections. Love always refuses to reduce the beloved to a series of predicates. Love as active turning to the other is creative. It is a kind of “making be” building a new meaning. In my encounter with the other in spheres other than “love”, “making be” is a “making be” of facticity, - of a cluster determinations. But love does not make other be facticity, but subjectivity. Love creates the subject. The lover by his active turning to the beloved makes her subject be in so far as through his affection for the beloved, he participates in her subjectivity in a manner that the no longer feels alone in projecting her world and making ahead to his destiny but now does so together. Love creates a “we” – a “being together” different from all other kinds of “we” witnessed in other spheres of life.

Love conceived as humanism par excellence leads inevitably to the concept of justice. But we shall not go into the entire spectrum of the phenomenology of justice. We shall consider only that aspect of it which is demanded by the loving encounter. Love, as we have stated, founds a “we” or a kind of being together where no one bound by the relation of love undermines the subjectivity of others. Rather by mutually participating in the subjectivity of one another, each makes other be as subject – each one helps other’s self-realisation in loving encounter. Now justice in love means each one should help other’s self-realisation by supporting and accepting other’s subjectivity, where there is any kind of suppression of subjectivity – any kind of curtailment of freedom, there is no justice and love is at stake. The main pillar on which the concept the justice is based is to accept, support and enhance other’s subjectivity – other’s freedom. In doing so one leads to self-realisation of the other and in the process realises his own destiny as “having to be”. The root of all conflict – all tension, all antagonism – whether amongst individuals or amongst groups of individuals or even amongst different nations, lies in the violation of this primordial condition of intersubjective relation involved in love.

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