

**What I am to Myself:
A Philosophical Analysis of Self-Awareness and Subjectivity**

**Thesis submitted for the degree of
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at
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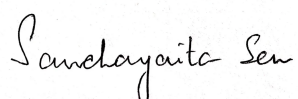
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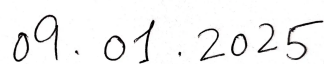
What I am to Myself: A Philosophical Analysis of Self-Awareness and Subjectivity submitted by me for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Arts at Jadavpur University is based upon my work carried out under the supervision of Professor Madhucchanda Sen. And that neither this thesis nor any part of it has been submitted before for any degree or diploma anywhere/ elsewhere.

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Introduction

“Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom”.

~ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* (350 BC)

The notion of self-awareness has always been a central topic of discussion and it is increasingly so. There are so many fundamental philosophical questions regarding the nature of self-awareness and its relation to the world. Self-awareness standardly refers to the knowledge of the self. Some would argue that this knowledge would be confined to understanding the mental states of a subject. Is it really so? It seems like self-awareness points towards something more expansive. Let us take a closer look at the issue. It may be the case that my mind, my body, my life, my lived experiences, my consciousness, my conscience, my knowledge, everything together creates my awareness of myself. The summation of all these factors yields the completeness of my self-awareness. However, in this thesis, I shall try to investigate how the awareness of the self is built. Is it only the mental states that contribute to the self-awareness? Or, is it the particularly concerned physical body? Or, is it the subject's world-embeddedness that has an important role to play?

Across different research, most of the times, it has been accepted to a great extent that there may be two broad categories or kinds of self-awareness. The first may be described as an inward or internal awareness of the self that happens within the subject. The second category may be considered as external self-awareness where other subjects know themselves through external information. I think that the notion of self-awareness clasps the totality of these two categories

of awareness, namely, inward awareness and external awareness of world-embeddedness. I shall be defining inward self-awareness as a constant-mindedness regarding the constant conscious existence that emerges just by virtue of being a subject. However, in the second category, outward self-awareness is built from external sources. It emerges from the point of view of how others perceive us. Sometimes philosophers distinguish between the notions of self-awareness or self-consciousness and self-knowledge. Self-knowledge may convey a sense of dense knowledge of a subject's identity and personality. Self-awareness on the contrary includes both these senses, namely the inward-minded-ness and the public personality of the self. In this thesis, I shall prefer to investigate the nature of self-awareness which also includes the repertoire of self-knowledge as well.

A. Research Questions

The phenomenon of self-awareness and its subjectivity call for an explanation. In this thesis, it will be gradually revealed that I shall try not to take any metaphysical stand about the self, right now. I shall be focusing on the experience of the awareness of the self. Even if we want to explore the notion of self, we do not have any path other than reaching it through the discussion of self-awareness. The moment we realize that the most convenient way of talking about the self is by carefully exploring self-awareness more; the discourse regarding self-awareness becomes of primary significance to us. However, in my thesis specifically, self-awareness is the more crucial factor. In order to explore the nature of the self-awareness that is given to us in our experience, we are going to address a few questions in this thesis, such as:

1. What is self-awareness?
2. In how many ways self-awareness can be perceived and understood?
3. How is the awareness of the self constituted or built in us?
4. Are there different layers of self-awareness?
5. What is the nature of the pre-reflective layer of self-awareness?
6. What is the nature of the reflective layer of self-awareness?
7. What is *for-me-ness* in self-awareness?
8. How significant is the sense of *for-me-ness* in self-awareness?
9. What is the nature of the indexical 'I' ?
10. What is the function of indexical 'I' while referring to self-awareness?
11. Can the indexical 'I' be used both in the sense of a subject and in the sense of an object?
12. What is it like to use the indexical 'I' in the sense of a subject?
13. What is it like to use the indexical 'I' in the sense of an object?
14. Which one between the subject use and the object use of indexical 'I' is more ubiquitous?
15. Does the meaning of indexical 'I' carry a sense of privacy?
16. What is the role of emotion in constituting self-awareness?
17. What is the nature of Subjectivity?
18. What notion of subjectivity can we develop based on the idea of self-awareness we are discussing here?
19. How is the subjectivity of a subject constituted?
20. Does subjectivity imply privacy?

B. Summary of the Chapters

The main discussion starts with the first chapter. The name of the first chapter is 'An Overview of Different Accounts of Self-awareness'. In this chapter, I have attempted to show that there are various possible ways of apprehending self-awareness. It may be apprehended in at least four possible ways. Firstly, we can talk about the knowledge of the real nature of the self. Emancipatory discourses always assign great importance to the knowledge of the real ontological status of the self, for example in classical Indian Philosophy. Secondly, there can be a stream of discussion regarding the momentary awareness of the current mental state of a subject. Thirdly, there can be a discussion regarding the theoretical knowledge about who I am or what sort of entity I am, along with ontological commitments. Lastly, there is self-experience, i.e., the immediate awareness of self-hood within oneself. I have proceeded with clarifying that in this thesis, I am only concerned about the fourth alternative for now. I have also explained that this 'me'-awareness may be felt in different layers of awareness. One can be named as the explicit layer and the other one can be named as the implicit layer of self-awareness. In the explicit layer of self-awareness, we become aware of our public identity. However, there may be another layer of implicit self-awareness where a conscious subject is merely represented to herself just as a conscious experiencer. However, in all these different layers of self-awareness, there is a quality of '*for-me-ness*' that makes the self-awareness exclusively represented to the individual. After that, I have talked about the notion of *for-me-ness* in this chapter and how I think this is an extremely significant aspect of self-awareness.

The name of the second chapter is ‘The Constitution of Self-Awareness’. This chapter attempts to understand how our self-awareness is constituted. In this chapter, I have proposed that there should be certain criteria that any account of self-awareness should abide by. For example, an account of self-awareness should be able to explain its representational nature as it is a firm possibility that self-awareness represents both our object of experience and itself. The explanation of representational mechanism should not be bereft of the aspect of consciousness. Lastly, the explanation of self-awareness should point towards an entity that we get in our experience. It should not lead us to believe that self is some mystical and unexplainable entity. I have also discussed that self-awareness is something that automatically gets revealed to us and it makes us aware of the fact that we exist. Now, how does this kind of self-awareness get constructed in us? How is it constituted? I have tried to endorse that the experience of self-awareness can happen on two levels, namely, pre-reflective and reflective. However, in both these states of self-awareness, there is a concurrence of constant-mindedness and an intervention of the other. This mindedness is also called the *for-me-ness* by many philosophers. The awareness of the self, conveys a sense of being a subject. The term ‘self-awareness’ carries a sense of felt aspect and quale factor. This is considered as the *for-me-ness* by many philosophers, about which we shall have a discussion later in this thesis. Now, what it precisely means is that the nature of my self-awareness would be determined in two ways. At some level, it is largely dependent on how I see myself from the third-person perspective. My personality, character, and all the information that describes me are basically descriptions of me, seen from the other’s perspective. Nevertheless, at a very basic level, in my self-awareness,

every experience of mine is marked with the quality of *for-me-ness*. So, I shall try to establish that *for-me-ness* is a significant aspect of my self-awareness. Furthermore, I have also discussed that the body and the world-embeddedness of a subject also play vital roles in the constitution of self-awareness.

The name of the third chapter is 'Understanding Indexical I'. The indexical 'I', when used in our language, refers to one single entity, that is the individual herself. Moreover, it is always the awareness of the self that we paradigmatically refer to when we use the indexical 'I'. The referent of indexical 'I' commonly seems to be the object of self-awareness. 'I' is a peculiar word and it seems to fit a peculiar entity in my life, that is me, myself. We have seen in the history of philosophy that the indexical 'I' has been linked with its referent, that is the individual self. An individual's peculiar position or relation to herself is believed to be reflected in the peculiarity of the word 'I'. Hence, the analytic philosophers have obsessed over the meaning and use of the indexical 'I', with the hope that an analysis of indexical 'I', would enlighten us about our relation with ourselves. As a result, a vast literature has proliferated on the indexical 'I'. Each of us has a thirst for knowing and exploring the nature of this 'I'. I have started the chapter discussing some important parts of the history of the philosophy of language, tracing the gradual development of the discourse regarding the meaning of the indexical 'I'. In the beginning, I have tried to find out what makes the indexical 'I', a purely referring expression. I have discussed whether 'I' can be categorized as a proper name or a referential term. Does the indexical 'I' refer to anything at all? If 'I' does refer to something then what is the nature of its referent? It is followed by the discussion of Elizabeth Anscombe's view in detail, in order to explore more about the referring nature of 'I'. After that, I have

discussed that the indexical 'I' can be used in two different senses. Firstly, it can be used in the sense of being a subject. Secondly, it can be used in the sense of being an object. I have attempted to establish that the use of indexical 'I' in the sense of a subject is comparatively more primary than the use of indexical 'I' in the sense of an object. I have also attempted to answer the question, are the uses of indexical 'I' as subject or as an object hold some sort of description? I have also discussed John Perry's view on the indexical 'I' and tried to explain how the shift of meaning or referent of 'I' is possible from context to context. How is it possible for us to use the indexical 'I' perfectly meaningfully in a statement despite the shift of references? After that I have also discussed whether the meaning of indexical 'I' should be considered as private or intersubjectively accessible.

The name of the fourth chapter is 'The Role of Emotions in Constituting Self-awareness'. In this chapter, I have tried to establish that emotions play a very important role in constituting self-awareness. I have discussed that usually, psychologists and some philosophers admit two main groups of emotions, i.e. basic and non-basic. The basic emotions are said to be biologically and psychologically basic, they happen to an individual without much cognitive processing, such as anger and love. The non-basic emotions are comparatively more complex sets of emotions like embarrassment, guilt, shame, etc. which require self-reflection and self-evaluation. In my thesis, I have proposed that there might be some distinction between basic and non-basic emotions on the basis of their nature and origination, from a biological and psychological perspective. However, in my opinion, self-awareness or self-experience is given shape by both these kinds of emotions. The role of the non-basic, self-conscious,

complex emotions in the constitution of self-awareness seems extremely evident because they influence the actions of the self as an agent. They also make recognizable changes in our public personality and behaviour. Nevertheless, basic emotions also contribute to shaping our self-awareness in a different manner. The contribution of basic emotions may seem comparatively less recognizable and implicit. However, the basic emotions become identical with the conscious existence of the subject and create the repertoire of self-awareness. I have referred to Jean Paul Sartre's theory of emotions, in order to establish that basic emotions also play an important role in constituting self-awareness.

The name of the fifth chapter is 'Subjectivity Reassessed'. In this chapter, I have attempted to develop a notion of subjectivity based on my understanding of the notion of self-awareness. In this chapter, I am trying to establish that, it is important to discuss subjectivity while discussing self-awareness because subjectivity is that factor that makes the self-awareness of an individual exclusive and unique to herself. Usually, the concept of subjectivity is allied with the concept of privacy under the impression of Cartesian philosophy. However, it is important to note that I want to retain the notion of subjectivity without retaining the notion of privacy. In this chapter, I have discussed that our physical bodies and our world-embeddedness do play an important role in constituting our subjectivity because the body is the medium by means of which we experience the outer world. I have also discussed the role of reflexivity of self-awareness in constituting subjectivity as my conviction is that being reflexive about own self-experience also shapes the essence of subjectivity of an individual. I have also tried to explain that the subjectivity of an individual incorporates both first-person and third-person perspectives at the same time,

and there occurs a continuous collapse of these two perspectives. This is what construes the uniqueness of the subjectivity of an individual.

In order to explore the nature of self-awareness, I am going to freely adopt ideas discussed by many renowned philosophers belonging to analytic philosophy, phenomenology, and existentialist trends, throughout this whole thesis. The analytic method of philosophy emphasizes explaining philosophical problems by logically analysing the language that is used for philosophizing. It characteristically conducts a linguistic conceptual analysis of the concepts that are involved in the issue. While discussing the indexical 'I', our philosophizing method will be analytic. However, I shall not stick to this one method. I believe, the best possible method of discussing the essence of self-awareness and its subjectivity, its constitution, its givenness in experience, and the role of mental phenomena like emotions in constituting self-awareness, is to discuss it from as many perspectives as we can. So, I have also borrowed ideas from phenomenology and existentialist philosophy while discussing the experience of self-awareness and the role of emotion in constituting that experience. The reason behind this is that any conclusion regarding the ontological status of the self at this point would be questionable. As a consequence, the existence of the self methodically may appear as an unreal phenomenon. However, accepting the radical unreality of the self is also not beyond uncertainty because the sense of the self is a phenomenon that every subject is constantly experiencing. Hence, the finest possible way to inspect the essence of the self is to inspect the essence of the experience of the self that is immediately given to a subject. Since the phenomenological method avoids all sorts of dogmatic commitments regarding the ontological stance about the object, paying more attention to the experience

of the phenomenon under study; hence I shall also discuss certain aspects of self-awareness within the framework of phenomenology.

I am hoping that through all these discussions, at the end of this thesis, we are going to have a clear understanding of the notion of self-awareness and subjectivity that encompasses all their aspects comprehensively.

Chapter 1

An Overview of Different Accounts of Self-Awareness

A. Introduction

Numerous theories exist concerning the development of self-awareness in individuals. I may think, act, desire, feel happy, feel sad, listen to music, and so on and so forth. Some may say that I am absorbed in that act so much that I do not have a distinct sense of 'I' while having that experience. In other words, while experiencing something it could well be the case that what stays with me is just the experience. For example, I may listen to a song and be so deeply engrossed in the aesthetic enjoyment that my entire being may be taken over by just the tune. I am in a state where I lose myself, one could say. I do not get represented as the uniquely experiencing subject of that experience in that episode. Contrary to this view, one may say that in each of my experiences, my experience appears to me, and along with that every experience of mine gets uniquely marked as 'mine'. It means that in every experience, no matter how mild or overpowering that experience may be, there always exists a sense of 'I', or a sense of '*experience for me*'. What I would like to say is that, for any conscious subject, while undergoing any experience, becomes necessarily aware of both the experience and herself as the subject of that experience. This sort of awareness also forms a synchronic and diachronic unity of self-consciousness. In this awareness, two sorts of depictions take place. Firstly, here I am represented as the owner of *my experiences* and secondly, *what I am to myself*

also gets represented to me. In this thesis, I shall aim to illustrate, this particular type of construction of *self-awareness*. I shall argue that the manifestation of an individual to herself as the uniquely experiencing subject is a fundamental characteristic of every conscious experience of the subject. It depicts that there is a subjective aspect (*for-me-ness*) of self-awareness for the individual in possessing the experience that makes the individual distinct from other subjects. This self-awareness also encompasses the entirety of the sense of self that is referred by the indexical 'I' ¹.

This thesis, as its title suggests, is going to have a detailed discussion regarding the nature of self-awareness and subjectivity. In this chapter, we shall be starting with an elaborate discussion regarding various forms of self-awareness and their nature. In order to do that we are primarily, to an extent, going to adopt a phenomenological method. Later on in this thesis, we shall also be discussing the meaning of the term 'I' , because the indexical 'I' is the word that we use to refer to our own self-awareness. For that, we shall be having a philosophical and linguistic analysis of the term 'I' , and that is an analytic method of philosophizing. However, in order to explain the notion of self-awareness and subjectivity that is immediately given to the subject's experience, we shall have to adopt a phenomenological method. So, in my thesis, I am going to adopt both phenomenological and analytic methods, varying from context to context.

In Section A, we shall be discussing four broad categorizations regarding the ideas of self-awareness. I shall be talking about four possible ways in which

¹ I shall try to discuss this in details in Chapter 3.

self-awareness can be understood. Firstly, we can consider the self as an ontological category, the awareness of which leads us to the path of liberation. This kind of self-knowledge is widely discussed in Indian philosophical traditions and other emancipatory discourses. Secondly, we can consider self-awareness to be merely the momentary awareness of our occurrent mental states. As if, self-awareness is nothing over and above the awareness of the occurrences in the mental sphere of an individual. Thirdly, we can have a theoretical knowledge of self to apprehend what sort of an entity it is. Fourthly, we can perceive self-awareness as a form of self-experience or self-hood or *self-ishness*. It is not momentary, nor does it confine itself to only the mental repertoire of an individual, nor is it an ontological category whose manifestation leads us to the path of *mokṣa*. This form of self-awareness is the awareness that builds my identity to myself. It also helps to qualify or characterize all my experiences as exclusively mine. Investigating this kind of self-awareness will help us understand how I am represented to myself, and when I say that I am self-aware, what is it that I experience? How is the 'Me' is represented to 'Myself' is the crucial point that I am trying to explore. In this section, I shall try to show that I am only concerned about the fourth alternative of self-awareness for now. In this same section, I shall also clarify that there are predominant metaphysical theories regarding the ontology of the self in both Indian and Western traditions of philosophy. However, right now I shall avoid taking any metaphysical stance and I shall be investigating more about the awareness of the self that is given to me in my experience. In other words, what I wish to investigate is the nature of the self-experience.

In Section B, I shall be presenting some arguments to establish the necessity of accepting the notion of the particular form of self-awareness that I am talking about. I shall be arguing that the uniqueness of this self-awareness that is given to us in our experience is important and it demands a proper explanation because this kind of self-awareness by the virtue of its essence, fundamentally marks the distinction between myself and other subjects. This form of self-awareness builds our self-hood and it makes us what we are as subjects, as well as agents. Consequently, for me, understanding the phenomenon of self-awareness is more important than taking a metaphysical stance regarding the nature of self.

At the conclusion of this chapter, I shall summarise the nature of the self-awareness that I am concerned about. I shall also briefly state the importance of it, so as to explain why this form of self-awareness needs to be talked about. I shall also refer to the technique I am going to adopt for discussing this form of self-awareness.

B. General Understanding of Self-awareness

Throughout the history of the investigation of the mind, various disciplines have made significant attempts to explore the nature of self and self-awareness. Neuroscience, psychology, and philosophy, each discipline has its own perspective from which the explanation of self-awareness has been given. Now, all of these approaches are certainly required to understand self, self-awareness, agency, and self-identity. This is so because worthy explanations coming from these perspectives along with the phenomenological insights have the prospect of reforming the central philosophical quest about the self. Let us now briefly

discuss, maybe not all theories, but at least the predominant ones to comprehend how we can try to understand the nature of self-awareness.

I believe that self-awareness can be understood at least in four possible ways.

1. Self-realization, i.e. knowledge about the real nature of the self that leads to liberation. This discussion has a metaphysical inclination.
2. Awareness of the occurrent mental state of a subject. This discussion is somewhat an epistemological one.
3. Theoretical knowledge of who I am or what sort of entity I am, along with ontological commitments.
4. Self-experience, i.e., the immediate awareness of self-hood within oneself. This is to an extent a phenomenological quest.

The discussion of the first type of self-awareness is specifically important and significant in Indian Philosophy as it is believed to be required for the attainment of liberation.² Indian Philosophical schools have overall never dealt with the discussion of self only theoretically. Almost all Indian philosophical schools had a practical goal of self-emancipation, i.e., *mokṣa*. It means freedom from all kinds of sufferings. Now, almost all Indian philosophical schools, except Cārvāka, have claimed that the only way to attain freedom from suffering is to gain self-knowledge. In this context, the importance of the discussion regarding self and self-awareness arises in Indian philosophy. In fact, this kind

² However, Indian philosophical schools have only dealt with the liberation of the self. The other alternatives or forms of self-awareness are also discussed in several heterodox schools of Indian philosophy. However, since the practical goal of attaining liberation has always been the ultimate motive of Indian philosophy, this form of self-awareness seems to be the most important one in their discourse.

of self-knowledge which helps a person to attain *mokṣa* is the most important one in Indian philosophical traditions. For most systems of thought *mokṣa* is defined as the non-erroneous awareness of the real nature of the self³ which leads to the cessation of suffering. It is also known as self-realization. The realists about the self in Indian philosophical tradition, such as Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Mīmāṃsā philosophers define the self as *jñānāśraya* or *jñānādhikaraṇa* and self as something that is subject to bondage and liberation because of its bodily attachments and mental properties like desire, aversion, etc. According to them, the self is the one who suffers from the bondage of worldly attachments. Realising the essence of the real self helps the individual attain liberation from the bondage and all the contingent mental properties.

Here, I think it is important to note that my research is not aimed at the unveiling of the true metaphysical nature of the self. In this sense, my research is not a part of any emancipatory discourse. I am here more concerned with knowing the nature of this empirical self, as I feel that is a part of what I would like to call one's self-experience. The self that is liberated, has a distinct ontology about which this research would not be able to shed any significant light. Hence, in my thesis, we shall attempt to have a more comprehensive understanding of the exact nature of the self through exploring the empirical self, the self as we get to know in our experience, i.e. the mundane self.

Usually the expression 'self-realization' is linked with a kind of soteriological enterprise, where knowledge of the true nature of the self is linked

³ Some parts of this discussion in this section are inspired by an article named "The Self and the Self-knowledge in Indian Tradition", by Srilekha Datta (2005).

with a kind of spiritual well-being and development of an individual. However, even if we are not discussing about spiritual development, there is indeed a need for the development of a notion of oneself in order to gain personhood. So, even if we are not talking about spiritual self-realization, we may talk about a realization about who we are or what our identity lies in, which is required for our development in general. We shall be talking about this later in this chapter while discussing the fourth alternative from the given list in the beginning of this chapter.

The second form of self-awareness refers to the knowledge of the currently occurring mental state of a subject. Self-awareness is primarily a mental state. But there are other mental states like beliefs, desires, hopes, fears, perceptions, so on and so forth. For any mental property to be instantiated and felt, there must be a bearer who experiences all of them. So, self-awareness for some people may solely refer to the present awareness of the currently occurring mental state in an individual. In that case, the idea of self-awareness confines itself to the sphere of conscious mental states only. A believer of this point of view would claim that the fact that an individual becomes immediately aware of the currently occurring thoughts and feelings, is sufficient to make a subject self-aware. However, while talking about one's awareness of one's own mind or mental state we usually call it "self-knowledge". Here particular states of mind are apprehended and not necessarily the person whose states these are, is apprehended. This pertains to a kind of epistemological discussion regarding the nature of our knowledge of our own mental states.

In the third alternative, we can explore the knowledge of the self with ontological commitments. These ontological commitments are a bit different

from the first alternative that we were discussing previously. We may perceive ourselves as mere physical entities residing in this world. We may consider ourselves as biological beings having certain identities. We can see ourselves as a conglomeration of a mental being and a physical being. This approach also delves into the ontology of selfhood. This discussion of ontology is not inherently tied to spiritual discourse. It could be a theoretical discussion regarding what kind of an entity we are.

Now, let us come to the fourth alternative or form of self-awareness that is constituted by a constant experience of self-hood. It may be interpreted as self-experience. There is an ever-present experiencing subject who has a continual awareness of a stream of experiences. This type of self-awareness is experienced by all the subjects within themselves, no matter whether they believe in the ontology of a self or not, no matter whether they have even considered philosophical questions regarding the self or not. This is a constant experience of an inner presence. This is the constantly felt inwardness of every experience. Each of my experiences takes place, I realize that the experience is mine. All my lived experiences that I can think of that have occurred to me, are all mine. Each of those experiences is distinctively marked with the quality of 'for-me-ness'⁴. This 'for-me-ness' is a significant factor of self-awareness that we refer to as the sense of the indexical 'I'. This is the self-awareness that we get in our continuous inward anchoring of our experiences. It is not to be confused that this self-awareness is unconnected from the mental states of thoughts, desires, and feelings of an individual. It is also not unrelated to the self-knowledge that I have regarding my body, identity, and personality. The form of self-awareness that I

⁴ Zahavi 2019: 635–653

shall be focusing on is an emerged realisation of 'I' , 'Me', and 'Mine'. This sense of 'I' appears to us sometimes as the abstract/conceptual basis and sometimes as pre-conceptual basis, of the description of my identity, all of my experiences, all of my felt aspects, and my mental states. This form of self-awareness makes me the subject of experiences.

Now, we have to keep in mind that we are talking about the awareness of the self. Some may claim that one's chosen ontology of self may determine the type of self-awareness theory they accept. However, I believe that if at all one feels it is necessary to discuss the ontology of the self, then it may indeed work the other way around. In that case, a series of questions will inevitably emerge:

- a. Is there a self at all? If there is, then what kind of self-awareness theory will I have?
- b. Is the self a pure ego? If so, then what sort of theory of self-awareness will I have?
- c. Is the empirical ego the only reality? If so, then what would be the nature of self-awareness?

At this juncture, it is crucial to recognize that within the history of the philosophy of mind, two radically opposing points of view have persistently emerged. There have been philosophers who firmly claimed that the self is an ego-pole having a substantive ontological status. In addition, there also have been philosophers who upheld that self is an illusion. There is no such thing called self. Let us briefly discuss these two polar opposite theories. The acceptability of the existence of the self itself has always been a questionable idea for some scholars, throughout the history of philosophy. There are

renowned philosophers like David Hume who upheld that there is no existence of a conscious self with a separate ontological status.⁵ According to Hume, if we correctly pay attention to what is given to us then we do not find any substantive conscious self as such. So, it is rather possible to categorize the self as a conceptual or linguistic entity, but the self is definitely not a substantive experiential reality.

A similar view is found in phenomenology as well. It has been supported by Husserl in his *Logical Investigations*. Husserl says that there is no pure ego-pole that conditions the unity of all our experiences. He claims that he is incapable of finding this pure-ego, that is primitively a necessary component of relations.⁶ This theory of Husserl is known as the non-egological theory of consciousness. According to this theory, experiences are not properties of a conscious subject. Mental occurrences occur without a subject. We are capable of distinguishing the experience and the object of experience but we are not able to locate the third element called a pure ego which is supposedly the substratum of the experiences.

Later on, Sartre also adopted a similar view in *The Transcendence of the Ego*⁷, saying that we do not have to admit a substantive ego or self as an exterior principle that binds all our experiences together. Self-consciousness is by nature a flowing entity, and it is temporality by which the consciousness unifies itself. According to Sartre, in our phenomenological inquiry we never get to experience the ego, we rather get absorbed in the self-experience or the self-awareness. The

⁵ David Hume talked about this issue elaborately in the text *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding* which was originally published in 1748.

⁶ Husserl 2001a: II/92

⁷ Sartre 1957: 40

ego emerges as a conceptual abstraction when we distance ourselves from our experiences and objectify them. As if I am adopting the perspective of the other on myself.

This sort of phenomenological scepticism has influenced neuroscepticism regarding the self and one of the prominent advocates of such theory is Thomas Metzinger. In *Being No one*⁸, Metzinger claims that no self exists in the world. For all sorts of scientific and philosophical investigations, the concept of self as such can be safely eliminated. The self is a misrepresentational construct. The notion of a self as an ontological category is an illusion.

In contrast to these, the supporters of the traditional view that the self is real and self has substantive ontology have come up with arguments and they claim that individuals have plenty of experiences. These experiences arise and succumb in the stream of consciousness, but they are lived through as one and the same identical subject. That self who experiences remains the same throughout all the lived experiences. So, the self here is seen as a distinct entity apart from and over and above the stream of changing experiences, as if the self is the substratum where those experiences occur. We can always infer the existence of such a self, but the problem is that we never experience it. So, in the end, it seems to be more like a presupposition rather than a concept coming from actual experiential data. Self may be understood as a substantive entity. Some scholars would argue that from the very nature of self-consciousness, it can be concluded that there is indeed a substantive self. We can find such views in Plato, Descartes, and in many of the contemporary philosophers' theses. In fact, the

⁸ Metzinger 2003: 332

Cartesian notion of the self makes exactly the same point. However, whether this substantive self is what is revealed in self-awareness in its true guise is debatable. Other scholars have argued that the kind of self-awareness we have does not permit us to accept a substantive self. Whatever our view might be regarding the nature of the self, it seems to be clear that this view is intensely influenced by our understanding of self-awareness.

However, no matter what metaphysical stance we may take about the notion of self we cannot deny that we all have some sort of self-awareness or sense of the self. So, we should rather begin with the discussion of this self-awareness.⁹ Now, it is definitely possible to talk about the self in the way that both the no-self theorists and the substantive self theorists have done, but I find both these stances equally radical. The problem with these theories is that while denying or accepting the existence of the self they have also presupposed a particular idea of self which by default indicates an ontological self. However, we need to keep in mind that it is not clear to us what precisely a self is. Hence, I think, at this point in my research it would be better for me not to take a radical metaphysical stance about the self. I would rather hope that a proper explanation of the awareness of the self that is given to our experience may lead us to a plausible ontological account of the self. So, at this point, we should rather pay sincere attention to exploring the notion of self-awareness and let us see what sort of ontology it indicates, later on.

I am going to understand the nature of self-awareness here is in the form of the most basic and fundamental sense of selfhood. It is the most intrinsic

⁹ This exact methodology is adopted in phenomenology for investigating the concept of self.

feature of my stream of self-experiences. My selfhood or the sense of mine-ness yields from this aspect. This self-awareness constitutes the mine-ness of the stream of experiences and associates them with a first-personal given-ness. This form of self-awareness makes my experiences belong to me. It definitely does not represent a self, detached and isolated from the experiences. Rather, this form of self-awareness represents my experiences in a first-personal mode of presentation. All my beliefs, desires, thoughts, lived experiences, the experience of my body as mine, my identity as an individual, everything is related to this sense of 'I' . This sense of 'I' itself is basic, primitive, and fundamental. Nevertheless, the whole narration of all my lived experiences throughout my life span is related to this self-awareness in the sense that this sense of 'I' makes the narrative belong to me. As long as life goes on, we keep gathering experiences, and the narration of the self keeps developing.

As a consequence, there is no final self-understanding as such. The self is not something that is given to us once and for all. Self is not an unchangeable fixed entity. Knowledge of the self is a story that keeps evolving throughout the whole lifespan of an individual. The self is constructed on several narrations of self-interpretations. When we ask ourselves the question, 'Who am I?', we answer it with a story of recognition and approval about ourselves¹⁰¹¹. This

¹⁰ Ricoeur 1988 : 246

¹¹ Some may argue that accepting a narrative account of the self does not diminish the possibility of the substantive nature of the self. The narrative self may be a given entity or a constructed entity, however, both of them may have a specific metaphysical status. Nevertheless, the kind of narrative self I am referring to does not necessarily point towards a substantial self. At this moment, I prefer not to delve into the debate over whether the self possesses substantive status or not.

narrative is definitely not a description of a pre-existing substantive self, because there might be no such thing.

The narrative of the self is a temporal account of self-hood. Experiences that happen to us in different phases of time, get united and incorporated in one single narrative. This Narrative self also has a social dimension. Selfhood indeed is a social process that gets initiated in early childhood and continues throughout the rest of the life. My self-understanding comes in a more enhanced form when I become a part of a linguistic community and I become able to express my thoughts and understand others. The more I talk about my selfhood, the more it comes to the public domain and eventually how my selfhood should be like and how it should not be is shaped by the cultural background of which I am a part¹². One does not become a self on her own, she becomes one by interacting with the other. When I make a narration about my selfhood, I might be the central character but I am definitely not the only author. However, the important point is to recognize that despite the role of the other in building the narration of my self-identity, at the end of the process, I remain as central and immediate bearer or experiencer of the whole process like a monolith. It is like a constant sense of the 'I' which is an indispensable part of one's conscious life.

Moreover, self-awareness is often seen as having different layers. Antonio Damasio differentiates between two layers of self. One layer is defined as the core foundational layer of self-consciousness. Besides, there is another layer of the self which is more complex and he has called it the extended version of consciousness. Core self-consciousness remains fixed, stable, and unchanged throughout the lifetime. At the same time, the complex layer of self-

¹² Bruner 2002: 65

consciousness keeps evolving with time. It evolves with memories, emotions, reasoning, and language. It is the autobiographical self¹³ that can be deployed as the public persona.¹⁴ Sartre in this context has also accepted a fundamental self-appearance, which has been named *Iipseity*¹⁵. In fact, whenever Sartre speaks about the self he talks about a basic phenomenal consciousness. He calls it the pre-reflective consciousness. This layer of self-consciousness may not be articulated but we can never fail to be it.

In my thesis, I would also like to endorse the view that self-consciousness or awareness of the self can be experienced in at least two different layers, if not more. One layer of self-awareness is *implicit* the other one is *explicit*. The former does not involve perspectival differentiation whereas the latter has it. Explicit self-awareness is comparatively more substantial, meaty, and complex as it requires social interaction (which by nature is cognitively complex), and awareness of other minds and other subjects. However, implicit self-awareness does not involve any of these features, because it is the simplest and most basic form of self-awareness as it does not involve any awareness of other minds or any perspectival differentiation. This self-awareness is equivalent to the mode of being of the subject. It is the implicit conscious mode of being that can only be experienced by the subject herself. Nevertheless, contrary to this, there is an elaborate sense of 'I' that is conceptual. It is that explicit self-awareness that is constituted by involving a third person's perspective. In this layer of self-awareness, I evaluate myself, and I try to understand what I am and how I am to others. The concepts that I apply in this sort of self-awareness are not only

¹³ Damasio 1999: 16-17,127

¹⁴ Damasio 1999: 16-17,127

¹⁵ Sartre 1956: 103

constituted within the subject but they are constructed socially in a major part. This is the self-awareness that is not only accessible by the subject, it is mostly expressible through language. The information that constitutes this self-awareness, is the information about me that other subjects can also have access to. Things that I know and believe about myself in my explicit self-awareness can also be known by other people as that information is conceptual and propositional.¹⁶

However, I am specifically claiming that the self-awareness that is manifested immediately in a subject's experience has two layers within itself, namely implicit and explicit. Both the implicit and explicit kinds of self-awareness have a first-personal givenness, towards which a subject has peculiar epistemic access. It is a most elementary form of selfhood. This is the kind of sense of 'I' that I am talking about. This self-awareness distinctively marks my stream of experiences as mine and makes me the '*Self*'.

I shall not claim that it is private in the strict sense of the term because since every subject has it, so every subject can assume what it is like to be a subject and what this fundamental selfhood is like. But a subject definitely has a peculiar and immediate access to it because the way I experience being myself cannot be apprehended in the exact same way by another subject. This experience of the sense of 'mine' is peculiar and exclusive for only the subject itself. It is not propositional, so it cannot be expressed linguistically. It is intrinsic and rudimentary. It is not something that can be articulated by language. Rather it is something to be felt. There is a unique and immediate sense 'I' that

¹⁶ In the following chapters of this thesis, on several occasions, this layered view of the self is accepted and discussed.

represents my layers (explicit and implicit) of self, the narration of my lived experiences, my body, as mine. All of these are represented to me with a quality of *for-me-ness*.

Now, a question may arise: does the form of self-awareness that I am talking about in this thesis, emerge from an aggregate of my body, *for-me-ness* and mental states, and all other phenomena that I just mentioned? This question will be discussed elaborately in the next chapter to understand how this sense of ‘I’ emerges in a subject.

C. Why is the Self-awareness qualified with an aspect of *for-me-ness* important?

On the basis of the discussion so far, it is clear that I am accepting a form of self-awareness that makes a subject an ‘I’ to her own self, meaning, it appears as a continuous presence of self-hood qualified with the aspect of *for-me-ness*. The phrase *for-me-ness* carries some potential controversy. It is true that there might be a price to pay for accepting the essential *for-me-ness* of experience and it comes with its own explanatory baggage, however, its denial also comes with a price. One objection that might arise against my proposal is the following: To claim that our experiences are first-personally manifested in the form of ‘*for-me-ness*’, is fundamentally mistaken because there is in fact no such *for-me-ness* in real or phenomenal consciousness or what-it-likeness. In fact, there is "nothing that it is like to have qualitative experience"¹⁷. As an answer to this objection, I

¹⁷ Garfield 2016: 73

would claim that accepting this 'for-me-ness' sense of 'I' is necessary because I believe that this unique sense of 'I' is a logical prerequisite for uniquely distinguishing my subjectivity to myself by myself. To deny the existence of this for-me-ness is to deny that we have a markedly different acquaintance with our own experiential life. This acquaintance is not there between me and the experiential life of others. The fact that this difference or asymmetry obtains, not only when we introspect or reflect, but already by virtue of having experiences, should be recognized as an essential aspect of experience.

Someone might also object that we can just equate the notion of for-me-ness with the notion of pre-reflective self-consciousness. In this regard, I would like to address that phenomenologists have acknowledged two different strata of consciousness, namely, pre-reflective and reflective. Pre-reflective self-awareness is defined as the most basic and preliminary form of consciousness. It is often compared to the very mode of conscious existence. The reflective consciousness is defined by phenomenologists as the secondary layer of consciousness. On one hand, just as a layer of consciousness is said to be pre-reflectively given, on the other hand, consciousness can also be aware of itself. The second stratum is called the reflective self-consciousness or the reflexivity of the self. Here I would like to clarify that for-me-ness is best understood as a marker for the uniqueness of self-awareness that the subject has in the experience she is undergoing.

Now, both pre-reflective and reflective self-consciousness can be labelled with the quality of for-me-ness. Hence, pre-reflective self-consciousness and for-me-ness cannot be synonymous because for-me-ness is a quality of the pre-reflective state just as it is a quality of reflective state. I should mention at this

point, that no exponent of the notion of for-me-ness currently under consideration, would claim that it is an exhaustive account of selfhood. There are definitely other significant factors that constitute the content of self-awareness and we shall discuss about them in the next chapter of this thesis. However, the label of for-me-ness needs to be highlighted in order to have an account for the full-fledged human self¹⁸, although there is surely more to embracing self-awareness and being an experiential self. My claim is merely that the for-me-ness in self-awareness is a necessary precondition, not only for a self-conscious subject possessing the capacity of thinking and first-person self-referencing but also for her complete selfhood¹⁹. The *for-me-ness* of my experience makes my self-awareness, peculiarly mine. If we want to do justice to the subjective character of the episodes of our self-experience, we should acknowledge that every experience that builds our self-awareness is also characterized by the "what-it-is-like-for-me-ness". Moreover, this '*for-me-ness*' seems important, also because it is the root from which the sense of ownership and agency arises in a subject. This for-me-ness is a universal feature of experience.

Some philosophers have claimed that this for-me-ness is a philosophical myth, with no psychological and metaphysical reality whatsoever. Some philosophers accept the existence of for-me-ness but they think that it is not an essential or even universal characteristic feature of consciousness. I believe that

¹⁸ Zahavi 2014: 50

¹⁹ Grünbaum & Zahavi 2013: 221-239

for-me-ness is crucially important, universal, and essential aspect of self-awareness²⁰.

There may arise some explanatory objections against the notion of for-me-ness. Someone might say that there is an explanatory vacuity in the notion because the notion does not actually refer to anything experiential. In this context, my response suggests that the justification for the reality of "for-me-ness" will not be warranted if it is compared to the way we refer to our other experiences. The idea of for-me-ness unifies our conscious identity. Actually, in our everyday life, we are so overtly preoccupied with the outer world, its objects, and our world embeddedness that we are never mindful of our inward mindfulness. If we carefully reflect upon our internal experiential lives and we consciously refuse to be mind-blind then we shall notice that the experiential for-me-ness actually determines the entire sphere of our self-awareness. Therefore, we must admit that it is real phenomenon as an epistemic datum. This for-me-ness is a kind of pre-requisite epistemic datum. This epistemic datum comes from the minimum sense of self-hood experience. In fact, our first-person authority is also explained to a great extent with the notion of for-me-ness. When we speak about our conscious experiences and conscious mental states, we speak of them with a first-personal authority, as if I own them. We do not speak about our unconscious states with such authority²¹. It is because conscious experiences are constantly lived through a sense of 'I' . This sense of 'I' is marked with 'for-me-ness'. So, naturally, the notion of experiential for-me-ness provides us with

²⁰ Similar views have been upheld by Kriegel 2009 and 2017; Zahavi 2000, 2005, 2011, and 2014.

²¹ Zahavi 2019: 635–653

a ready explanation of first-person authoritativeness. At this point, I should also clarify that in my thesis, I am not only going to talk about the notion of 'for-me-ness', but also about the form of self-awareness as a whole that is given to our experience, the one that I have named as self-experience in the beginning of the chapter (fourth alternative). This would include discussing its structural constitution, pre-reflective and reflective state of self-awareness as well. However, as I believe that this kind of self-awareness is always marked with for-me-ness, the notion of for-me-ness, mine-ness appear to be very significant throughout my entire thesis.

In the introduction of this chapter, I have said that, I am going to adopt both phenomenological method and analytic method varying from context to context. At this point I should mention that I have freely borrowed ideas and insights from the phenomenologists, the analytic philosophers, Sartre's existentialism, Husserlean phenomenology, John Perry's linguistic analysis, and so on and so forth. The reason behind this is that the way I am trying to understand the constitution of the inward appearance of self-awareness to a subject herself, requires a versatile discussion from every possible aspect. I am not taking a metaphysical stance regarding the existence of self, so I am trying to investigate self-awareness by bracketing out the metaphysical questions aside. I am trying to understand the nature of self that emanates from the sense of the self. We are trying to explore the awareness of the self that is given to our experience. From this perspective, it is going to be a phenomenological discussion.²² However, I shall also attempt to understand the nature of the

²² Although I do not intend to do any phenomenological reduction that is usually seen in traditional phenomenology.

reference of indexical 'I' because we use the term 'I' to refer to our self-awareness. In this part of the discussion, I have taken significant references from Elizabeth Anscombe, John Perry, Shoemaker, Bermudez's work, which is considered to be completely analytic. Without this analytic method, I shall not be able to understand the nature of 'I'. Now, this discussion of indexical comes from our phenomenological sensibilities through which our self-awareness appears to us. Hence, I have referred to the insights of various traditions of philosophy to enhance my understanding of the phenomenon of self-awareness.

D. Conclusion

Let us now conclude the chapter with a summary of our understanding regarding the various possible ways of apprehending self-awareness. Self-awareness can be apprehended in at least four possible ways. The first one is the theoretical knowledge about the real nature of the self along with an ontological inclination which is discussed in the context of attaining liberation, especially in Indian Philosophy. The second one is the momentary awareness of the current mental state of a subject, The third one, again deals with some other kind of ontological inclination to explore what kind of entity self is. The fourth alternative is what I have called Self-experience, i.e., the immediate awareness of self-hood within oneself. In my thesis, I shall be mainly discussing the fourth alternative related to the notion self-awareness. We shall be discussing how this kind of self-awareness emerges or is given to the experience of a subject. Here, I have explained that there may be different layers of self-awareness. One is the explicit layer and the other is the implicit layer of self-awareness. In the explicit layer of self-awareness, we become aware of our public identity, and the whole

narration of our lived experiences. On the contrary, there may be a layer of implicit self-awareness where a conscious subject is merely represented to herself just as an experiencer. This classification is also often named as reflective self-awareness and pre-reflective self-awareness respectively, by many phenomenologists. However, in all these different layers of self-awareness, there is a quality of 'for-me-ness' that makes the self-awareness exclusively represented to the individual. All the conscious experiences that a subject goes through, be it implicit or explicit, be it pre-reflective or reflective, are manifested immediately as the subject's own experience by virtue of the *for-me-ness* of those experiences. Furthermore, I have also claimed that the notion of 'for-me-ness' of self-awareness unifies all experiences of an individual and marks them as 'mine'. So, the notion of 'for-me-ness' is a logical and epistemic pre-requisite for the immediacy, exclusivity, first-person authority, and ownership that a subject enjoys over her own self-experiences and self-hood. After that, I have also mentioned that in order to investigate the self-awareness that is given to our immediate experience, the methodology that I am going to adopt is going to be phenomenological methodology. Along with that, there will be discussions from other traditions of philosophy like analytic philosophy and existentialist philosophy as well.

Chapter 2

The Constitution of Self –Awareness

A. Introduction

This chapter tries to understand how our experienced self-awareness is constituted. We might also refer to it as the existential foundation of self-awareness, as in we shall try to make an attempt to understand what kind of an entity self-awareness is. There are five sections in this chapter. After the introductory discussion, I put forward certain criteria which I think are extremely important for any in depth account of self-awareness to fulfil. In this regard, I have claimed that any commendable account of self-awareness should be able to explain both the reflexive and the representational nature of self-conscious mental states. I also think that it is not necessary to have a theory of self in order to develop an account of self -awareness. Our concept or the sense of the self-awareness can very well be formed without any inclination towards any theory of self. Then, I have attempted to describe the internal, constitutional, and structural aspects of self-awareness. To be precise, I have tried to explain how the self-awareness of a subject inwardly appears to the subject herself. We can also call it the phenomenal awareness of self. In the description of this constitutional process of self-awareness, I shall refer to the ideas of pre-reflective and reflective self-awareness from the phenomenological theories of self-awareness. Then I shall try to exhibit that an individual may have a pre-reflective state of self-awareness, and the same individual may also have a reflective state

of self-awareness. However, in both these layers of self-awareness, there exists a salient and implicit mindedness or *for-me-ness*. There is a kind of distinctive sense of mine-ness which makes the subject feel like herself and makes her awareness feel like hers. However, in the construction of self-awareness for an individual, it is not only this sense of mine-ness that exhausts the character of self-awareness. The intervention of the other subjects has a very important role to play in the constitution of self-awareness in an individual. After that, I have talked about the significant role that our uniquely identifiable body plays in the constitution of our self-awareness. I think the composition of self-awareness for a subject is not possible without referring to a particular body as 'mine'. Hence, the embodiment aspect of self-awareness seems to be very important if we want to explain how self-awareness is constituted for an individual. In the conclusion I have made an attempt to evaluate whether the account of self-awareness that I am trying to provide in this chapter matches up to the desiderata I have set in the beginning of the chapter or not.

B. Fundamental questions and desiderata regarding the nature of Self-Awareness

One of the central topics discussed throughout the history of philosophy has been the discussion of the self. In the ancient and traditional philosophical discourses, the problem of self was discussed with the aim of providing an ontological explanation of the self. In such discourses, at least two kinds of views were available. On the one hand, there are philosophers who advocate that the self must be given a separate ontological status. According to this view, just like the other usual real entities residing in this universe, we need to admit the self as

a separate ontological category. This is a view that claims that the self as a category could not be reduced to any other category. On the other hand, some philosophers denied this view and refused to admit the self as a substantive entity or as a distinct ontological category. Some would claim that the required substratum of conscious experience is not some immaterial ontological entity. The substratum of conscious experience is just the physical body. Some others would argue that all that really exists are the conscious experiences, and to assume the existence of a substantive substratum that holds those experiences together is completely illusive and wrong.

I, however, think that before getting into the metaphysical/ontological discussion, we need to think about why the discussion of self seems so important to us in the first place. A little scrutiny will reveal that of all the phenomena with which we are acquainted, the self is the most important one. The self-experience seems to be at the center of our entire existence. We are not as confident about the experience of any other thing in the same way as we are confident about the experience of ourselves. We get to know about the self because there is a salient *sense of the self* that we all possess. We may deny that ontological theory about the self but we can never deny that we have a *sense of the self*. Hence, just as every experienced phenomenon demands a proper explanation in philosophical discourse, this unique sense of self also demands a full explanation. Maybe we need to start our discussion from this sense of self and then it will show us the path to all the more considerable ontological things we need to or want to know about the self.

Thus, what I am claiming is that our concern with the self emanates from our sense of self or what we call self-awareness. The self-phenomenon, I feel,

calls for explanation. Having decided that I shall not take any metaphysical stand right now, I do not have any concrete ground for discussing the self, other than reaching it through the discussion of self-awareness. The moment we realize that the most convenient way of talking about the self is by carefully exploring self-awareness more; the discourse regarding self-awareness becomes of primary significance to us. Some scholars have even gone as far as claiming that an explanation of the notion of self-awareness alone can provide us with a proper explanation of this *self*. Thus, answering the metaphysical problem regarding the self has become dependent upon answering the phenomenological questions about self-awareness. It is called phenomenological because the subject matter of this discussion is the self that we get in our experience, that self that is phenomenologically given to us in our consciousness. In this chapter, I am going to discuss how I think self-awareness is constituted and presented to us. In that case, some major questions will arise, which are:

- Do I want to accept a real substantial self, like some sort of an ontological entity that many ancient Indian philosophical schools and some Western philosophers like Descartes had predominantly admitted? Do I want to establish that the ever-present awareness of self that we feel is the awareness of that real permanent self?²³
- Do I want to accept a no-self theory like the Buddhists or David Hume?

²³ In Indian traditions, supporters of such a substantive notion of the self are called the *Ātmavādins*. They refer to the self as the realist views or reifying views of *ātmā*, *jīva*, *subject*, and *person*. For example, the Nyāya scholars, and Mīmāṃsā scholars speak of an embodied self.

- What happens if I do not want to admit such a real, substantive self and still want to admit the existence of the awareness of the Self? How can I do that? Is there any problem or inconsistency in admitting the awareness of the self that is phenomenally given to us and yet rejecting the proposed existence of any such entity as the real Self?
- How do I want to describe the nature of the self-awareness, if I am neither willing to subscribe to the view of real and substantive self nor the no-self theory? What would then be the nature of the self that we know?

I think I shall be able to answer these questions and deliver my standpoint about this issue with some clarity, after the discussion of this chapter.

The main concern of my thesis is self-awareness. Now, if I accept the existence of something, then I also need to have a clear impression of what sort of ontological status I believe is applicable to it. So, naturally, the same question arises in the case of both the self and its awareness. There are several metaphysical theories which have attempted to explore the issue. I shall try to provide a brief introduction to most of the proposed and famously known theories of self-consciousness and then I will try to put forward my view regarding how I apprehend the nature of self-awareness.

There are three predominant views regarding consciousness that account for self-awareness in their own ways. One is the representational model, that upholds that a conscious state is a representational state. Every experience involves a kind of self-awareness where it is represented that the subject herself is having the experience. It sees consciousness as representational in nature. Then it further understands this representation in terms of a causal relation between intentional objects and the mental states of the subject.

The second one is the Higher-Order Monitoring (HOM) theory²⁴, which claims that a conscious state is by default a state that is monitored by a higher-order mental state. According to this theory²⁵, a conscious state is by default a state that is monitored by a higher-order mental state. If I have a conscious experience of a tree, then it implies that it is accompanied by a suitable second-order state representing it. According to David Rosenthal (1990), the second order state must be concurrent with the first-order state. Also, the second-order state must be formed non-inferentially. The HOM theorists are also divided on the issue of the nature of the second-order state. The Higher-order perception theorists would say that it is a state of perception. The Higher-order thought theorists would say that it is a thought.

The third one is the Brentanian model²⁶. According to Brentanian model, the experience of say for example a tree, not only represents the experience but also its own occurrence in the self. Consciousness is like a self-monitoring device. The consciousness represents not only the world to the subject but also itself to itself. It is a *same-order monitoring*. If it is a conscious experience of a tree, the primary content is the tree, and the secondary content is the experience of the tree by the experiencer. The conscious experience primarily reveals the tree, secondarily itself. These two representations get wrapped up in a single mental content. Brentanian model²⁷ also claims that an experience involves a self-awareness that represents the subject herself as having a corresponding experience secondarily or incidentally or peripherally.

²⁴ Rosenthal 1990 : 744-745

²⁵ Rosenthal 1990 : 744-745

²⁶ Brentano 1973

²⁷ Brentano 1973

Each of these views suffers from severe shortcomings. For example, Representationalists would say that a conscious state is a representational state. This theory talks about a two-step reduction of conscious states. Firstly, the conscious state is reduced to a mental representation. Secondly, that mental representation is again reduced to a causal relation between mental states and worldly states. Now, according to me this sort of reduction seems problematic because in that case the qualitative felt aspect of a conscious state is somewhat disregarded in the process and the only focus is given on the functional aspect of a mental state. The HOM theorists on the other hand claim that neither the monitoring state nor the monitored state is conscious in itself. This also causes certain further questions to arise, is it at all logically conceivable that consciousness just emerges from a combination of two absolutely non-conscious elements? The objection against the third theory which is the Brentanian model is that the Brentanian model presumably fails to explain the exact mechanism that underlies the capacity of self-awareness to represent itself. Every state of experience in the self, monitors itself, but how? That is the question that remains unanswered.

So, it feels like there is a serious requirement for an adequate account of self-awareness which will successfully enlighten us more about the constitutional structure of²⁸ self-awareness. It seems like there indeed is a locus of all our experiences. Having the sense of the self that we all possess, which is called self-awareness feels like having a locus inside which binds all my mental phenomena such as memory, emotions, experiences, and qualia together. That is an ineliminable structural feature of cognitive awareness. Now, what conception

²⁸ I would also like to name it the existential structure.

of self-awareness can be supported on experiential grounds? Self-awareness seems to be a slippery concept so far, but still, if we do want to explore it more in terms of its existential structure then we get to see certain fundamental qualities.²⁹

1. Subjective experience – we are primarily aware of ourselves
2. Subjective knowledge – our awareness gives our consciousness a reflexive character.

These two essential qualities are unavoidable when defining self-awareness. Nevertheless, before establishing a conclusive definition of self-awareness, we must determine the constraints that should guide its formulation.

What are the fundamental desiderata that I think, an account of self-awareness should have? I would like to answer it by taking some reference from Uriah Kriegel's ideas³⁰ :

1. Any credible account of self-awareness should be able to explain self-awareness in a representational term where the mechanism of the representation is well explained since it is a fact that is experientially given to all of us that self-awareness truly is self-representational where the self, for a fact, does reveal its content to itself. Now, we need to explore how it happens.
2. It should ground its representational mechanism on the conscious state because explaining awareness on the basis of intrinsically non-conscious states leads us to logical and metaphysical inconsistencies.

²⁹ Coseru 2019: 47

³⁰ Kriegel 2002: 531

3. It must elude mysterious and unintelligible explanations. An account of self-awareness should avoid describing the self as some mysterious, non-verifiable, spiritual entity with absolutely no evidence in support of it. It should ground its representational mechanism on the conscious state.

C. Pre-reflective and Reflective Awareness

In the introduction of the thesis and in the first chapter I have clarified that I would like to accept that there are two ways of experiencing self-consciousness or self-awareness, namely, pre-reflective self-awareness and reflective self-awareness, just like most of the major figures in phenomenology have accepted. Having said that, now I shall make an attempt at providing my idea of how self-awareness for every subject gets structured.

In order to understand the nature of these different kinds of self-awareness, let me start with a hypothetical situation. Suppose, I had a long day at my workplace. I finish all my due tasks in the evening and make my way to my house. I think to myself that I have finished so many pending tasks today, and I feel relieved. I also think that since I have uploaded all the grades for this semester, for some time I will not have to do this hideous task again. I do not really like doing it as it gives me so much anxiety to constantly think about what will happen to the student if I mistakenly upload wrong grades. I keep checking the grades a hundred times. I also grudgingly think about the strain I endured by taking four classes consecutively right after that. I tell myself that I should not have agreed to take consecutive classes without a break. I note how my voice gets choked after the classes. I tell myself that I should not agree to take

consecutive classes from next semester. Then suddenly I realize to my dismay that I had forgotten to talk about how Gilbert Ryle wrote a polemic book to raise objections against Mind-body Interactionism while teaching the third-semester students about Descartes. I then decide that I would begin the next class with the objection. All these thoughts go inside my head as I realize quickly that I have reached my home. Actually, now when I think of it, I hardly remember taking the bus and making the trip to my place as if I was in an auto-pilot mode. However, my success in reaching home involved conscious decisions of taking a particular route or at least moving my body in a particular way. I have however no recollection of all of that.

The situation I just described here is similar to the ‘Long-distance truck driver’ problem mentioned by David M. Armstrong.³¹ When I was on my way to my home, so many thoughts were racing through my mind. All of them were discrete thoughts, in the sense that most of them were seemingly unrelated to each other. They at least seemed as if they were just random pieces of thoughts, unrelated to each other, making room in my mind. It happened continuously throughout the period when I was returning home from college. Despite being unrelated to each other, what was common amongst all those thoughts was that they were all mine. I am the subject and all of them exclusively belong to me. I am the one who was thinking about all of those. However, I was not consciously aware of the fact that these are my thoughts and I am thinking about them and not any other subject. So, I was not consciously, intentionally reflecting upon all those thoughts to make myself aware of the fact that those thoughts are mine. However, I was constantly experiencing them as mine, without putting any effort

³¹ Armstrong 1981: 722

into thinking of them as mine. This constant salient sense of self-awareness is called the Pre-reflective self-awareness. When I consciously reflect upon some thought then it would be the reflective self-awareness. This is how all the major figures in phenomenology have defended a view upholding that there is a minimal form of self-awareness in every individual subject, namely, the pre-reflective state of awareness. Now, a question can be raised in this context. One might think that the example I took is a singularly self-conscious one. Almost each of them involves my acute awareness of what my duty is. Are they really the cases of pre-reflective self-awareness? However, let me clarify here that the instances where I am consciously considering myself as an agent of an action and I am evaluating what my duty is and what I should do, are definitely not the cases pre-reflective self-awareness. They are reflective self-awareness. The pre-reflective self-awareness on the contrary is that underlying implicit sense of the self that was constantly there without me being aware of it, which unifies all my reflective, conscious unrelated thoughts together as mine. I become that one experiencer without even consciously reflecting upon the fact constantly. We perform several actions as an agent throughout the day, where I conceptualize myself as an agent and I become reflexively aware of myself. Nonetheless, at the end of the day, there is a continuously underlying sense of the 'I' who has always been present in all my actions and experiences, but I hardly have become aware of its existence, yet its obliviousness does not imply its nonexistence. That tacit, underlying sense of 'I' which is continuously present in me, is the pre-reflective self-awareness.

It is a constant structural feature of every conscious experience. Experiences take place for the experiencing subject and it is revealed to the

subject in an immediate manner. Then, as soon as it occurs it gets marked as 'mine'. There is an effortless first-personal givenness in such experiences. This layer of self-awareness is named pre-reflective³² self-awareness by phenomenologists. In this pre-reflective self-awareness, something about me is given to myself without me being attentively aware of it. Pre-reflective self-awareness is a pre-linguistic, pre-conceptualized, pre-observational, pre-objectifying state of self-awareness. Pre-reflective self-awareness can be understood as an intrinsic feature of the primary self-experience of a subject. It is not thematic. A subject does not become aware of it by being voluntarily and attentively aware of it. It is just given to a subject by virtue of being a subject of experience. I can choose to reflect upon it voluntarily and make it a theme of my attention. However, even before reflecting upon it. I was not self-blind. In fact, my ability to know what to reflect upon proves this. The experience was still present to me and there was a sense of mine-ness in that experience.

Now let us come to the discussion of *reflective* self-awareness. Reflective self-awareness is the exact opposite of pre-reflective self-awareness. Pre-reflective self-awareness was implicit, tacit, non-conceptual, and non-objectifying. Reflective self-awareness on the other hand is explicit, conceptual, and objectifying awareness of a subject³³ by the subject. Reflective self-awareness takes some part of the awareness as its attentional theme and the subject of the experience becomes the object of the reflective awareness. In reflective self-awareness, there occurs a kind of self-fission and inner pluralization. Here a subject can make a perception of his awareness and the

³² Gallagher and Zahavi 2008: 46

³³ Gallagher and Zahavi 2008: 61

object of his awareness from a distance. For example, pre-reflective self-awareness is present when I am perceiving a red car. However reflective self-awareness will occur when I attentively conceptualize that it is my awareness of the red car or it is me who is watching the red car. Reflective self-awareness can be considered to be more articulated and intensified awareness of the subject herself.

At this point a question might arise, do I want to consider two different orders or layers of awareness here? Do I want to make a structure of the self-awareness as having a primary awareness called pre-reflective and then there is a secondary awareness called reflective awareness, and the reflective awareness is a higher order awareness which takes the pre-reflective awareness as its object? My answer to such questions will be in the negative. I believe that we do not have to accept a higher-order layer of self-awareness in order to explain the reflexive nature of self-awareness. I think this aspect can also be explained through same-order reflexivity.³⁴ The idea of reflective self-awareness does not necessarily require a higher-order mental state. We can justifiably claim that all awareness involves the awareness of itself in the same order. On the 'awareness of awareness' issue, G. Strawson in his book *The Subject of Experience* (2017) claimed this and I would like to endorse the same claim that every awareness has an awareness of itself. However, it also seems to be not so logically viable to claim that the awareness of awareness is not a higher-order awareness. Such a claim will lead us to an infinite regress. So, let us just say that every awareness has an awareness of itself but in the same order. We can also simply reformulate it as all awareness is awareness. For every episode of awareness of A on the part

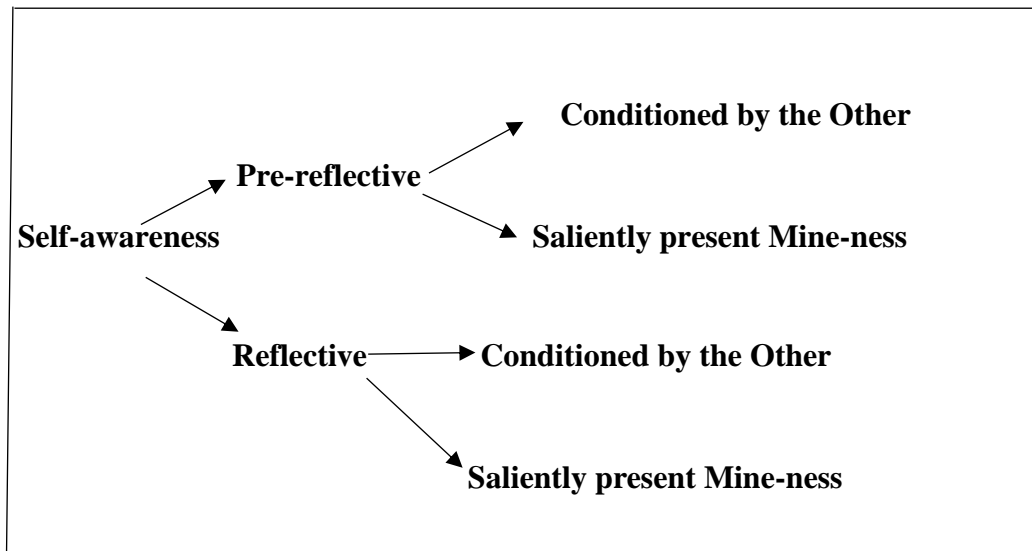
³⁴ Strawson 2017: 145

of any subject S, the existence of A entails S's awareness of A, otherwise, if S is not even aware of the fact that he has A, then the very existence of A gets negated. So, what all awareness basically has is reflexivity. Every state of self-awareness is potentially reflexively aware of itself. Whenever we experience self-awareness, we become self-reflexively aware of ourselves. *I* am the knower of the content and the content of the awareness is also *mine*. All consciousness has a consciousness of that very consciousness. All experience involves experiencing that very experience. It might be a tautology, but that is not a problem. The nature of self-awareness might be such that it is best explained through a tautology. Self-awareness is self-sprung in a fundamental way. All awareness comports awareness of itself and they are necessarily self-intimated. Galen Strawson calls this the *self-intimation* thesis. A state of awareness intimates or makes it known to the subject. To have a state of awareness is to know the state of awareness. Consciousness cognizes itself.

So, precisely what I am trying to establish here is that the structure of self-awareness is to be understood in the following manner:

Think of the existence of a conscious individual. The individual subject is speculated to possess self-awareness. This self-awareness has two facets. One is the pre-reflective side and the other is the reflective side. Both take place in the same order. None of them have a priority over the other. The pre-reflective self-awareness is saliently present to all human beings irrespective of whether the individual is attentively thinking about herself or not. Whenever the individual experiences something, the individual immediately becomes reflexively aware of the object of her experience and at the same time, she also becomes attentively aware of the fact that the experience is her's.

Now, what is the exact nature of this pre-reflective and reflective awareness? According to me, in both pre-reflective and reflective states of self-awareness, there is a co-existence of a tacit mine-ness, for-me-ness, also known as mindedness which I would like to claim is pre-conceptual, pre-linguistic, pre-observational. In addition to that both these states also require an intervention of the other (the world). Someone may ask, how is the intervention of the other possible in the pre-reflective layer? My answer to this question would be that the 'me' in any form of for-me-ness comes with the otherness from the 'other' built into it. So, any form of for-me-ness, be it pre-reflective or reflective, presupposes the recognition of the other. There is an immediate for-me-ness in both the pre-reflective and reflective self-awareness. This mindedness or mine-ness is inexplicable. This is only felt by the subject herself. However, I think this mindedness also does not need to be expressed to the other subjects. This is so because the need to express this 'mindedness' in the pre-reflective layer is never felt. Moreover, it seems that it does not reveal anything about my mental state. My mental state can be communicated with the other. However, the tacit felt aspect that I experience just by virtue of being a subject does not have to be communicated with the other. It would not create any practical difficulty like solipsism like what happened in Cartesian theory. Besides, there is also an important role of the other, which moulds our self-awareness in various significant ways.



So, both in pre-reflective and reflective self-awareness the mine-ness is saliently pervasive. This mine-ness is the exclusive feeling which makes an ‘I’ the ‘I’ to myself. This is something that makes me feel to be me and not the other. How both kinds of self-awareness are constituted largely by the intervention of the other will be discussed in the third section of this chapter. Let me elaborate on what I mean to say by this ‘For-me-ness’. I think that this idea is very close to the idea of ‘experiential minimalism’. This is a view that has been defended by Dan Zahavi since the late nineties (Zahavi 1999³⁵, 2000³⁶, 2005³⁷, 2009³⁸, 2011³⁹, 2014⁴⁰). Somewhat comparable views can also be found in the writings of, for instance, Galen Strawson (1994, 2009, 2011, 2017), Uriah

³⁵ Zahavi 1999

³⁶ Zahavi 2000: 55-74

³⁷ Zahavi 2005

³⁸ Zahavi 2009: 551-573

³⁹ Zahavi 2011: 56-78

⁴⁰ Zahavi 2014

Kriegel (2009⁴¹, 2017⁴²), and Martine Nida-Rümelin (2016⁴³).⁴⁴ The idea is basically that if we want to do proper justice to the subjective character of experiential episodes, we should recognize that those episodes are characterized by a subjective what-it-is-likeness and they are not merely episodes that happen to take place in a subject, regardless of whether the subject is aware of them or not. The what-it-is-likeness of phenomenal states indicates a what-it-is-like-for-me-ness as well. On this view, experiential processes are intrinsically conscious and hence self-revealing. They are characterized by an inherent reflexive. They are like something for the subject, i.e., in virtue of their mere existence, they are phenomenally manifested to the subject of those experiences. Some philosophers might also prefer to call it the 'I-Quale'⁴⁵.

I also want to emphasize the reflexive nature of self-awareness. While talking about the reflexive nature of self-awareness, I would like to talk about another kind of reflexivity. John Perry had given a lecture named “The Complexity of Self-knowledge”. In this lecture, he talked about what is known as the *self-notion*. He says that we construct *self-notion* when we combine the information that we get from self-informative ways (introspection, perception, proprioception) and other informative ways (from other people, mirrors, books, etc). What is that self of ‘self-notion’? Self-notion is the realization that the self is a person described in terms of relations. In self-notion we describe the self as ‘myself’ and this holds the *relation of identity*. What does this relation of identity reveal to us? It reveals that the information about the self that I have gathered

⁴¹ Kriegel 2009

⁴² Kriegel 2017

⁴³ Rümelin 2016

⁴⁴ Zahavi 2019 : 635–653

⁴⁵ Zahavi 2019 : 2

from other informative ways and the self that I have known from self-informative ways are basically about the same person. This self-notion is expressed through the indexical 'I'. So, what happens here is that, at one level I am a biological being and a physical object. From this perspective, there is not much difference between us. We are just a set of individuals. But where exactly does every single individual get acquainted with this distinct sense of individuation? How exactly do I become 'me' to me? How do I acquire the unique sense of 'I' ? We have several moments of self-awareness, where I am being presented to myself as a conglomeration of a mental entity and also a physical entity. While having this presentation of myself, it is dawning upon me that the presence of which I feel is nothing but 'Me'. I think that we can bring John Perry's concept of self-notion and explain what exactly happens in self-representation is that, the sense of identity of minimal self-perception and self-notion gets established in me or realized by me. Here, a reflection is happening on the fact that whatever information I have gathered about my public persona from both external informative sources and introspective sources, they are about the same person, that is 'me' and gets referred to by 'I'. This exactly is what it is for me to be 'me'! I keep track of these moments of reflexive self-awareness and realize that this is what I call 'me' or 'myself'. This presence that I feel is identical to me. One might think that the public persona, later on, enters into our rudimentary self-awareness in the sense that it is always there whenever we are self-aware. I think it may also occur at times that our rudimentary self-awareness is also getting shaped by the public persona we have which is basically conditioned by external factors like the other. However, I would add something to this view and would like to claim that even if the rudimentary self-awareness

at times gets influenced by the complex layer of self-awareness, but still, no matter how important contribution the 'other' has in shaping our self-awareness, we must admit there is always a primary, minimal *for-me-ness* in every instance of my own self-experience. The *for-me-ness* of my experience makes my self-awareness, peculiarly mine. If we want to do justice to the subjective character of the episodes of our self-experience, we should acknowledge that every experience that builds our self-awareness is also characterized by the "what-it-is-like-for-me-ness". This '*for-me-ness*' is extremely important because it is the root from which the sense of ownership and agency arises in a subject. So, it is never the case that the rudimentary self-awareness has nothing exclusive left in it apart from the influence that it gets from the complex layer of self-awareness. Rudimentary self-awareness would also remain an exclusive layer of self-awareness because there is always an exclusively experienced subjective dimension in it.

How is this 'being' that we call 'self', constituted? One plausible answer is that the reflexive relation that holds a sense of identity actually is that very component that constitutes the being that we call 'self'. The reflexive self-awareness is what makes the 'I' an 'I'. Wherever this reflection does not happen we do not have the striking explicit sense of 'I' either.

This is why I want to claim that, reflexivity of self-awareness is that component of our self-experience that constitutes the complete sense of 'I' or self-awareness. The reflexivity of the same order holds a different sort of significance in self-awareness in the sense. It makes the notion of self-awareness very justifiably more immediate than the second-order reflexive awareness.

D. Bodily Self and the Other

One of the leading approaches regarding the nature of the self is to say, if we borrow Galen Strawson's expression, that self is a 'mental thing'⁴⁶. In fact, if we look at the history of philosophy then we would see that this notion of self is accepted by major figures of Western philosophy like Descartes, Locke, and Berkeley in spite of significant differences in their explanations of their standpoints. It is the self that we get to know when we look within. So, in this sense, the 'I' of our self-awareness refers to the inner mental presence. By 'mental thing' what is meant here is that when we get the immediate awareness of the self from within, we never feel it to be physical, it is rather an inward mental presence of the self.⁴⁷ This aspect of the self represents the self-conscious nature. Nonetheless, on this view where the self is considered to be a mental hence conscious entity, a problem arises, that is, one may become unconscious due to several reasons like epileptic attacks, brain damage, anesthesia, etc. Then can we say that the human being continued to exist during the period when she was unconscious? What makes us think that the person is the same self as she was before losing consciousness? In fact, Dainton said "It seems to most of us that we lose consciousness completely at least once every twenty-four hours when we slide off into dreamless sleep. Then if the self is only a conscious thing then a typical person can expect to have several thousand distinct streams of consciousness during the course of their life."⁴⁸ But Barry Dainton also tried to provide a solution of this problem. He believed in the phenomenon of *felt continuity*. He said that the phenomena; the self that we get to experience is to

⁴⁶ Galen Strawson 2005: 10

⁴⁷ Galen Strawson 2005 : 68

⁴⁸ Dainton 2004: 379

be seen as a potentially conscious entity. Thus, he provides a definition when he says, "A self is a thing whose nature is to be capable of being conscious; a self has the capacity for consciousness at every moment at which it exists, and it possesses this capacity essentially. A self can lose consciousness provided it retains the potential to be conscious"⁴⁹. However, when we talk about self-awareness, what we refer to actually is a plurality of self-conceptions and experiences⁵⁰ that leads us to a self-image. That kind of self-experience is difficult to understand without any incorporation of the physical, outward biological being and the bodily self.⁵¹ Our bodies have a significant contribution in building both our awareness of the self and our self-identity. I have a body and I am the body. Due to our bodily existence in the world, things in our surroundings receive their characterization.⁵² We may experience our body as a single and static entity, but the body is actually the vehicle or the medium through which the whole process of interaction with the world goes on continuously. In fact, the presence of ourselves in this world is dominantly a bodily presence. Human existence is inseparably connected with the world, and this connected existence takes place through my body. So, according to me, the awareness of 'I' cannot be apprehended without referring to a body that I identify as mine. My point here is to bring the physical dimension of the self into consideration. The physical dimension of the self is thought to be constituted by the physical body which has specific spacio-temporal reference and a history.

⁴⁹ Dainton 2004: 381

⁵⁰ W. Toit 2019 : 1-9

⁵¹ Here, someone might start a discussion regarding personal identity. However, that will take my research to a completely different direction, which at this point I am not willing to do. I would rather like to explore more about the role of our physical bodies in building our self-awareness.

⁵² Mohanty 2000: 75

So, the sense of 'I' , or the self-awareness according to me is an amalgamation of the mine-ness of the mind and the unique body which the subject identifies as her own. I think, I realize that I am different from other selves because of two things, one is the mine-ness aspect of pre-reflective and reflective self-consciousness as discussed in the previous section, and also through the body which I identify as mine and has a unique spatiotemporal reference and history. To be a self-aware individual being is to be a body. So, we need to consider ourselves as beings with both a physical and a conscious aspect. The emergence of the sense of 'I' cannot happen without incorporating the biological being. When I am saying that the body of the individual contributes to shaping her self-awareness, I am not just referring to the body that is publicly observable, I am also referring to the body that she feels to be her body from the inside. When I consider myself as the agent of an action, say for example dancing, or running, at these moments I obviously consider my body as a very important aspect of myself. A non-physical mental thing cannot be the doer of these actions. In everyday life as well, when I talk about myself and refer to myself, I do not hesitate to point at my body and say that 'This is me'. I may not mean to say that the body is the only thing that constitutes me, but my body is that part of my self-awareness that makes the references towards me possible.

So, the awareness of the self may be said to be constituted as someone who is a conscious subject of experience. Sometimes the subject is pre-reflectively conscious. Sometimes, she has reflexive self-awareness. There can be different layers of self-awareness, like there can be a minimal sense of self-awareness and there can also be a complex self-awareness where the awareness of myself seems to be more substantial and meatier which consists of many information about my

public identity. But, both in pre-reflective and reflective self-awareness and both in minimal and complex self-awareness, there is a saliently present mine-ness. This mine-ness is a unique feeling that makes me feel like me and not anyone else from within. There is also a contribution of the other selves in shaping some aspects of my self-awareness. My public identity, my behaviour, my emotions, and my reactions to different situations, all contribute to the constitution of my self-awareness, and all these are socially constructed by the other. But there is also a for-me-ness in self-awareness which only the subject gets to experience. Apart from that mental repertoire, another very important factor that shapes our self-experience is our own body. Whenever an experience gets registered in our self-awareness gets expressed by us as 'I know such and such' or 'I do such and such', the 'I' refers to a unifying stream of potentially conscious being with a uniquely identifiable body. I would also like to emphasize that there is an important role that a body plays in the formation of I-Quale. It is undeniable that whatever self-experience we gain, the only means through which we can gain it is our body. I have a body and I am that particularly identifiable body. The body is that field around which my experiences of the world gather. Physically I experience my body as one entity but my particularly identifiable body represents a set of complexities that occurs to me and the world around me. So, when we are trying to conceive of the notion of self-awareness, or I-quale of self-awareness for that matter, we should not overlook the embodied representation of the self, i.e., body. The physical, outward, biological, organismic representation of ourselves is the body, which constitutes the I-quale through different bodily sensations that we go through.

At this point, I would also like to claim that just as the body plays a significant role in constituting the self-awareness for the subject, similarly it also has its construction largely in biological socialization. The complexity and the richness of self-awareness are presented to us through a plurality of self-experiences and there is an intrinsic other-relatedness in those self-experiences⁵³. This layer of Self-awareness is called the *mundane self-awareness* by Husserl⁵⁴. This mundane self-awareness in fact helps the subject to think of herself as a worldly entity. We are fully ourselves when we are amongst others. Emmanuel Levinas⁵⁶ also said that our self-perception is constitutively associated to our relationship with the other. Not so long ago, discussions regarding selfhood in the philosophy of mind tended to focus on a view that human selfhood is socially derived and belongs to the domain of social ontology. Some have argued that we first experience ourselves as a part of a society having other subjects like us. This belongingness automatically shapes our self-awareness before we develop our own individuality and distinct perspective on the world. The community of which I am a part influences what is significant and meaningful for me. It is vital for my personal flourishing and provides me with a cultural background on the basis of which I make individual choices about my preferences in life. And this whole process builds what sort of self-image I am going to have. As a result, some philosophers have defended the claim that the 'we' is prior to the 'I' and the 'you' in self-awareness. To be precise, it is mostly the external factor like the '*other*' who moulds our self-awareness, rather

⁵³ Madhucchanda Sen 2005 : 29-42

⁵⁴ Hua 1952: 8, 71; 5, 146; 4,174-176

⁵⁵ Zahavi 1999

⁵⁶ Levinas 1991

than our own selves. At this point, I would like to clarify that I am not denying the significance of the 'other' in constituting self-awareness. However, I propose that a sound theory of consciousness that wishes to explore the subjective dimension of our experiential life significantly must take the minimal notion of self into serious consideration. An individual cannot be a member of the 'We' without affirming that membership experientially within. To be a part of 'we', or to have any experience for that matter, an individual must experience it from within with peculiar epistemic access to it. Hence, no matter how important the contribution the 'other' has in shaping our self-awareness, we must admit there is always a primary, minimal *for-me-ness* in every instance of my own self-experience. The *for-me-ness* of my experience makes my self-awareness, peculiarly mine. If we want to do justice to the subjective character of the episodes of our self-experience, we should acknowledge that every experience that builds our self-awareness is also characterized by the "what-it-is-like-for-me-ness". This '*for-me-ness*' is extremely important because it is the root from which the sense of ownership and agency arises in a subject.

The greatest difficulty one faces when one tries to understand the notion of self-awareness is that one has to comprehend the self which has both an inner dimension and also a worldly dimension. The problem arises in the reconciliation of these two⁵⁷, because these two seem to be two conflicting dimensions. I think we can try to reconcile these two dimensions of the self, avoiding the previous difficulties. The self has both a subjective and obscure dimension and the same self seems to be an intersubjectively accessible worldly

⁵⁷ Casteneda 1989 : 27-58

object.⁵⁸ I think the subjective and elusive aspect of self is nothing but the mine-ness or for-me-ness present in every experience of the subject. The intersubjectively accessible self is the more complex layer of self-awareness which is constituted partially by the body, partially by the intervention of the other, and partially by the social and cultural teachings. The elusive subjectivity aspect of the self can be empathized by other subjects, meaning a subject can feel what it is to be a subject for another subject. But when the subject herself has the experience there is a uniqueness in the presentation of the experience only to the experiencer. There would not arise any issue of privacy because there is no privacy. What a subject has is a peculiar access over the mine-ness of experiences.

E. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have tried to enquire about how the awareness of the self is constituted and structured for a subject. While discussing that I have borrowed the concept of pre-reflective and reflective self-awareness. I have tried to show that the experience of self-awareness can happen in two ways, namely, pre-reflectively and reflectively. But in both these kinds of awareness, there is a co-existence of a constant-mindedness and an intervention of the other. A self-aware subject can be pre-reflectively aware or reflectively aware of her existence and self-experiences but all those experiences possess a '*for-me-ness*' and at the same time they are in some way or the other moulded by the other. How I see myself as a person is largely dependent on how I see myself from the third-person perspective. So, very little part of my self-awareness is purely mine. Mostly it is constituted by social factors. But what is left as purely mine is the

⁵⁸ Zahavi 1999 : 159

for-me-ness over the self-awareness which cannot by default be presented to another subject. After that, I also tried to show that the reflexivity of self-awareness sometimes plays a very important role in order to constitute a complete sense of 'I'. Then I have tried to demonstrate that along with these inter dimensions of pre-reflective and reflective self-awareness, the outward bodily and physical aspects of self also have significant contributions in constituting our self-awareness. When we are talking about these embodied selves we must also accept that the self is embedded in the physical world with so many other subjects which also mould some layers of awareness of ourselves. Let us now examine whether my idea of how the constitution of self-awareness should be accounted for matches up to the desiderata I had talked about, at the beginning of the chapter or not.

1. The first criterion was that any creditable account of self-awareness should be able to explain self-awareness in a representational term where the mechanism of the representation is well explained. In this chapter, I have tried to establish that every state of self-awareness is self-intimating and reflexive. And this reflexivity is the same order reflexivity. This means that whenever a self-conscious state of self-awareness takes place, that state of awareness is intrinsically self-representational. The nature of every self-conscious state is such that as soon as it takes place it gets revealed to the subject and there is no need for any higher order monitoring conscious state for that. The reflexive representation happens in the same order as the self-conscious state.

2. Secondly, it has been suggested that the account should ground its representational mechanism on a conscious state. This present account of self-awareness that we are dealing with is not saying that the intimation and the

reflexive awareness of the self emanates from an intrinsically non-conscious state as the HOM theory does. In this entire chapter, it has been suggested that what we get in our experience is self-consciousness and through this awareness only, we can get to know about the self if there actually exists an entity called self. I think the consciousness factor in self-awareness stems quite naturally and the self-reflexive nature of that self-awareness is also self-sprung by nature.

3. Thirdly it has been said that the account of self-awareness must elude mysterious and unintelligible explanations, like the Cartesian theory. I believe that the methodology we have adopted to describe the constitution of self-awareness for a subject is not at all mysterious and unintelligible. The pre-reflective and reflective aspect of self-awareness is something that every individual gets to experience. The constant-mindedness is also an experienced factor. The intervention of the other in building a meaty self-identity is also nothing mysterious, rather we all would approve of the fact that a large part of our self-awareness is actually brought into shape by the social and cultural dimension. Lastly, I have spoken about the significance of the body in constituting the self-awareness, where the physical body is anything but a mysterious component of self-awareness. In fact, the role of the physical body in constituting the self-awareness is supposed to be the most important component from a layman's perspective of understanding the self.

This is how I have tried to represent my idea of the constitution of self-awareness so that it meets the set of desiderata that I had talked about in the beginning. I would like to conclude this chapter by saying that, right now I am not in a position to radically claim that the self is a substantive entity like the Indian philosophical schools like Naiyāyikas, Sāmkhyas, etc., had accepted.

Neither would I like to go for a no-self theory like the Buddhists. Right now, I would like to stick to the point of view that most of the major figures in phenomenology had. I would also like to believe that the discourse regarding self-awareness is of primary significance to us because this is what we get acquainted with in our experience. What I have tried to portray in this chapter is how this awareness of the self gets constituted, how this self-awareness is structured what are the main components of the self-awareness that an individual experiences.

In conclusion, I would also like to briefly answer some of the questions I had raised in the beginning of the chapter. Those questions seem to probe the nature of the self I would like to believe in. I should state that at this point, I am hesitant to acknowledge the permanent self if 'permanent' suggests a substantive self, as I am uncertain about such a concept. On a similar note, I do not want to take an extreme stance by supporting the no-self theory either. Nevertheless, I do acknowledge a continuous awareness of the self that is possessed by every subject, and also an awareness of some sort of a continuous self. I believe that developing and exploring an account of self-awareness does not necessarily require adopting a theory of self. There is no inconsistency in accepting the existence of an experientially given self-awareness without having a confirmation about the ontology of the self.

Chapter 3

Understanding the Indexical ‘I’

A. Introduction

An important discussion in philosophy, regarding demonstratives and indexical revolves around this inquiry: What constitutes the semantic analysis of sentences containing demonstratives and indexical? This inquiry further gains significance as it aims at accommodating demonstratives and indexicals within the framework of one's chosen theory of meaning and philosophy of language. John Perry says in his essay named "Indexicals and Demonstratives"⁵⁹ that philosophers are intrigued by indexicals and demonstratives for two reasons:

1. Words such as "I," "now," and "this" hold pivotal roles in the discussions and paradoxes surrounding philosophically rich topics like the self, the concept of time, and the nature of perception.
2. The meanings of these words may appear straightforward; however, it has not been so evident how to integrate these meanings into the semantic theory of our linguistic uses.

Let us be acquainted with the standard list of demonstratives and indexicals in English: ‘I’, ‘you’, ‘she’, ‘her’, ‘it’, ‘this’, ‘that’, ‘here’, ‘now’, ‘yesterday’, ‘today’, ‘tomorrow’, ‘actual’, ‘present’, ‘currently’, ‘contemporary’, ‘local’, etc. Pronouns, personal pronouns, demonstrative

⁵⁹ Perry 1999 : 586

pronouns, and adverbs, adjectives such as 'these', and 'anaphora', all have indexical/demonstrative elements in them. Nevertheless, I am not concerned about all of them in this research. For now, I shall be concentrating on the question: what is it that 'I' refers to, when an individual self-consciously uses the indexical 'I' to talk about herself? We all know that we refer to ourselves by using the indexical 'I'. In the discussions regarding self-awareness, it is essential to address the discussion regarding the indexical 'I' because it directly refers to oneself.

'I' is a peculiar word and it seems to fit a peculiar entity in my life, that is me, myself. Philosophers have somehow linked the indexical 'I' with its referent, the individual self. My peculiar position or relation to myself is believed to be reflected in the peculiarity of the word 'I'. So, analytic philosophers have obsessed over the meaning and use of the indexical 'I', with the hope that an analysis of these would shed light on our relation with ourselves. Hence a vast literature has proliferated on the indexical 'I'. Now, the indexical 'I' commonly seems to be the object of self-awareness.

A directly referring expression, like indexical 'I' is said to have a character and content in itself. The 'character' of a directly referring expression is a function that determines the referent of that expression for a given context. The content of a referring expression is the reference of the word. So, we see that the reference or the meaning of indexical 'I' always changes from context to context, unlike other (usual) words of a linguistic system. I use 'I' to refer to myself, Aristotle can also use 'I' to refer to himself, and both these uses would be absolutely accurate and meaningful in terms of referring to the correct person. That is called the *character* or the running element of indexical 'I'. It specifically

means that the meaning of 'I' changes in accordance with its utterances. The person who is being referred to by 'I' is called the content.

In the history of the philosophy of language, there have been numerous debates regarding the use of the indexical 'I'. While talking about the indexical 'I', Gottlob Frege has claimed that it appears to be the present significant challenges in analytic philosophy. When an individual thinks about herself, she grasps a thought, that no other subject can possibly grasp. The way in which she is presented to herself is such that she can never be presented to anyone else in the same way.⁶⁰ On a similar note, no one else can be presented to her in the identically same manner. This led Frege to talk about a private sense of the 'I', which seems to appear as a doctrine of incommunicable sense of 'I'. Frege had suggested that when we try to communicate to other subjects about ourselves by using the indexical (demonstrative) 'I', this 'I' demonstrative functions just like other demonstratives. We can simply replace the indexical 'I', with phrases that comprise other demonstratives, like 'the person who is speaking *now*'. However, when *we*, think about ourselves, we are presented to ourselves in a unique way and this idea had led Frege to introduce the thesis of incommunicable sense of indexical 'I'. Suppose I claim that 'I' stands for something that is privately given and I am considering that privately given entity as the referent of 'I', then the sense of 'I' becomes private. If we support this view then it by default would go against the idea that language is essentially a tool of communication. We speak in our languages to exchange thoughts and express our ideas. Now, if we take the meaning of a particular word as private, then the very communication

⁶⁰ Frege 1956 : 298

regarding that word becomes practically impossible. So, this would be the problem if we claim that the sense of 'I' is private.

John Perry aimed to find out a possible solution to this problem of the incommunicable sense of 'I', in his paper⁶¹ and he claimed that the solution would not lead us to accept that sense of indexical 'I' must not be incommunicable. Perry suggests that Frege did not necessarily have to think of demonstratives, especially 'I' as incommunicable in order to fit demonstratives in his scheme. He interprets the Fregean phrase that 'everyone is presented to himself in a particular and primitive way' in a different shade of light. He says that what Frege meant by this is that it is primitive because it cannot be further analyzed into simpler accessible senses. Perry suggests that I am presented to myself in a way I am presented to no one else, but that does not have to be unique to the case of myself alone. For example, let us suppose I am having a toothache. It might well be the case that no one else is aware of my toothache. However, how toothache feels to oneself may not be a private idea. The aspects of myself which I think I am alone aware of, may not be such that no other individual has those aspects. Others may be aware of those aspects. It is just that I have not asked them to find out if they did have them. None of those aspects would be incommunicable. Consequently, the aspects I uniquely associate myself may well pick up others along with me.

Later on, Bertrand Russell has also talked about the nature and function of the indexical 'I', and he claimed that 'I' is a purely referring expression. He first talked about two categories of knowledge, namely knowledge of things and

⁶¹ Perry 1977: 474-497

knowledge of truths⁶². He further talked about two ways of knowing, namely, knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description⁶³. Knowledge by acquaintance takes place when we immediately become aware of something by means of our gained sense data, without any inferential process. For example, my conscious knowledge about my hand. The knowledge by acquaintance does not involve the knowledge of truth because in this case things are immediately known to us just as they are. On the contrary, knowledge by description allows us to attain information about the things of the actual world. We know this kind of knowledge through the phrases of the forms "the object is so-and-so". This sort of knowledge involves knowledge of truth. Now when Russell is making a list of things about which we get aware of through the knowledge by acquaintance, he is keeping the indexical 'I' in that list. He has also claimed that 'I' is a purely referring expression, that does not have any descriptive content. Russell has defined referring expressions by providing a criterion. He claimed that all other linguistic expressions manage to refer by way of embodying or having a descriptive content within themselves. If the descriptive content is applicable to something, then that becomes the referent of the linguistic expression in question. Purely referring expressions are able to refer to something meaningfully without having any descriptive content at all. That is why Russell says that logical proper names are purely referring expressions. Indexical 'I' which is also a demonstrative, is one such example. Moreover, to say that 'I' is a purely referring expression is to say that in case 'I' fails to refer

⁶² Russell 1912: 46

⁶³ Russell 1910: 108-128

to anything 'I' becomes meaningless, and the sentence in which 'I' occurs also becomes meaningless.

However, here at this point, we have an opportunity to raise a question: Does the indexical 'I' really not have any descriptive content at all? When I talk about myself, and utter 'I' in a sentence, does it not possess some description about myself and represent 'I' to me? We can use the indexical 'I' in a sentence in two ways. We can use it in the sense of a subject and we can also use it in the sense of an object. These uses are called subject use and object use of 'I'.⁶⁴ In the subject use of 'I', I appear to myself as the immediately experiencing subject. In the object use of 'I', I appear to myself as an entity residing in the outer world like so many other objects and subjects. The subject use of 'I' holds my unique and immediately revealed identity as an experiencing subject to myself. The object use of 'I' holds my public identity. Now, can we not claim that these uses of 'I' hold two different sorts of descriptions of 'I'?

On the basis of the insights presented in this introductory discussion, I believe that when we are trying to understand the nature of self-awareness, it is also important for us to understand the function and the peculiarity of the indexical 'I' because the 'I' is the essential terminology that is used in our language to refer to our self-awareness.

This chapter has six sections. After the introduction we discuss the nature of the referent of 'I' and addresses questions such as: Is 'I' a proper name? Is it a referential term at all? If it is considered as a referential term then what does it refer to? Does it refer to some mystical entity as Descartes claimed? I have tried

⁶⁴ Shoemaker 2001: 81-93

to answer these questions and I have referred to Elizabeth Anscombe's view⁶⁵ in this context. But I have not subscribed to her thesis that 'I' does not refer to anything at all. From Anscombe's view, I think we can assume that the usage of 'I' involves being self-conscious, a kind of self-ness, and being in the conscious subjective mode of existence. 'I' also represents a reflective self-consciousness about which we can gather information further as a human being.

After that, I shall be discussing whether the usage of 'I' exemplifies self-awareness in the sense of being a subject or in the sense of being an object. I think both these kinds of usages of 'I' are practically possible. But I have proposed that the subject usage of 'I' is the primary usage and it occurs as a precondition of the object usage. While talking about this particular issue, I have taken significant reference from Sydney Shoemaker's work⁶⁶. I shall also be presenting a possible answer to the question I raised previously, that is: Does indexical 'I' hold some sort of description? I shall be discussing that indexical 'I' holds some peculiar description while being used in both senses, namely, subject 'I' and object 'I' .

Following that, I shall be discussing John Perry's view on the indexical 'I' and tried to explain how the shift of meaning or referent of 'I' is possible from context to context. Despite the shifting of references, we all are able to use 'I' perfectly in a statement. Not only that but also, we are able to predict someone's behaviour when someone uses 'I'. In this issue, I have agreed to John Perry's take on it. The reference to 'I' seems to have a functional tool for everyone rather

⁶⁵ Anscombe 1975: 45-65

⁶⁶ Shoemaker 2001: 81-93

than referring to a fixed object. Indexicals refer to what they refer to in particular contexts. Once the hearer is given the context, she can figure out the meaning. This functional tool also explains the behaviour of individuals while reacting to the usage of indexical 'I'.

And lastly, I shall attempt to discuss whether the reference of 'I' is private and non-explicable. I shall claim that there are certain layers of self-awareness that are socially constructed and they are potentially communicable. The self-information we get in such layers of self-awareness is received externally; they are also moulded by socio-cultural factors. That layer of self-awareness can be inferentially known by others. So, this layer cannot be private. But I shall also talk about another layer of self-awareness, where there is just a mindedness present for the subject. This aspect of self-awareness involves just a kind of self-ness. I think that this layer of self-awareness can be considered as peculiarly accessible only to the subject, but still not private. It consists of just being uniquely presented to oneself. I would accept that every individual has this sort of peculiar accessibility to this layer of minimal self-awareness. I would not say that it is private because, another subject can empathize and imagine what it is for me to be a subject, by thinking how he or she is also presented to herself as a subject in a unique way. However, they cannot immediately get it in experience. Only the subject can experience this layer of self-awareness and that is why I think that the subject does have a peculiar access to it and no one else has it. This peculiar access is what makes an 'I' the 'I' and not any other subject.

B. The Referring Nature of Indexical 'I'

At first, I am going to discuss, what is the nature of the indexical 'I' in our language. Is it a proper name? Is it an identity-holding term? What is it? What exact method it has while referring to an individual. In order to understand the notion, I have taken ideas from Elizabeth Anscombe's article 'The First Person'⁶⁷ because I think the way she has broken down the function of the indexical 'I' would really help us to have a clear understanding of the role that the indexical 'I' plays in our linguistic system.

Elizabeth Anscombe is a 20th-century philosopher best known for her work named 'The First Person' where she is trying to discuss the nature of the usage of the first-person pronoun 'I'. In this article, Anscombe first points out a problem in Descartes's method of deriving the Cartesian ego. She says that in 'I think therefore I am', the 'I' is not properly defined. Descartes claims that he is a thinking thing but he can definitely doubt the existence of his body. So, in short, we can derive that 'I am not the body'. Now, from this statement, Anscombe is developing an argument that a person who thinks 'I am not the body' depending on the method of doubt, can also think that 'I am not Descartes' because 'Descartes' is nothing but a proper name that refers to the physical body which resides as an object in the world. Now, if we consider that 'I' is a direct reference to Descartes, then we can reformulate the previous statement as 'Descartes is not Descartes', which would be both a tautological and contradictory, also a meaningless statement. This contradiction shows us that the first-person pronoun 'I' is not a direct reference to a proper name, neither 'I' is

⁶⁷ Anscombe 1975: 45-65

a substitute for a proper nor the 'I' function in our language is identical to the function of proper names. Therefore, 'I' cannot be treated as a proper name, rather it is different from proper names. It can be named as *a private pronoun* as suggested by Anscombe.

After that, Anscombe takes two hypothetical situations to show that the relation between 'I' and its referent is not as simple and direct as we think it is. The first hypothesis is: Imagine a society with a group of people. Each one of these people has the letter **A** written on their wrists. All of them have another name written on their back. Those names are between the English alphabets **B to Z**. So, a person himself cannot see what is written on their back but he can see **A** written on his wrist. So, when he is talking about himself, he uses the letter **A** to refer to himself. On the contrary, he can see what name is written on some other person's back, so he uses the names **B to Z** to refer to other people. Now, very interestingly it may seem to us that what the letter **A** is doing in this society is similar to what 'I' does for us in our linguistic usages. But, Anscombe will deny this proposal. The logic behind that is that in this hypothesis, the letter **A** is clearly a plain and simple referring term. Now, since I can see both the letter **A** on a man's wrist and some other letter between **B to Z** on his back, I can very well choose to call and refer to some other person as **A** in spite of the fact I call myself **A** too. At least there is no practical problem with that possibility because the other person also has **A** written on his wrist just like me. So, I can refer to myself as **A** as well as the other person. But we cannot do the same with the first person pronoun 'I'. I use 'I' only to talk about myself and can never make a sound use of 'I' if I want to refer to someone else. This shows that the function of **A** is not the same as the function of 'I'. What makes the usage of 'I' different

from **A**? Anscombe's answer to this question is, that the usage of 'I' involves self-ness, self-consciousness, and being able to think of oneself as a conscious subject. All these lack in the usage of **A**. The usage of **A** does not involve self-consciousness. **A** is just a simple and direct referring expression like a proper name.

The second hypothesis is: suppose a person X had an accident which caused him to have complete memory loss. Now, the person has forgotten that his name is X. So, he cannot state that 'I am X'. However, there is no problem for him to use the first person pronoun 'I' to talk about himself. For example, he can easily say 'I am hungry' when he feels hungry. What does this show us regarding the nature of the reference of 'I'? Anscombe answers that this shows us that the reference of 'I' is a two-step reference. When I say that 'I am Sanchayaita', here 'I' does not directly refer to Sanchayaita. This should be broken down to 'I am some object and that object is Sanchayaita'. In the case of X it is 'I am some object and that object is X'. After the accident what happens is that the second step does not arise anymore. X can still think 'I am something' but he cannot further think that 'That something is X'. So, statements like 'I am Sanchayaita, I am X, I am Anscombe' are not direct identity propositions. These are two-step identity propositions. The identity of 'I' is in a way complete in the first step already. In the second step, we just add up the public identity. So, there is no problem in using 'I', identifying a referent by 'I', even after a person loses his public identity⁶⁸.

⁶⁸ Anscombe 1975 : 33

Now, let us try to summarise what we learn about the nature of indexical 'I' from Anscombes's view.

'I' is not a proper name. It is not a substitute for a proper name. It does not refer to some Cartesian ego, whose nature is to date unidentified. 'I' is not a direct referring expression where 'I' directly refers to a proper name in one step. It is neither a direct identity proposition where 'I' directly identifies itself with a proper name. It is rather a two-step process that involves two identity propositions. In the first step, we realize that 'I am something'. This step involves being self-conscious, self-ness, and being in a conscious subjective mode of existence. In the second we equate this 'I' with a proper name. However, the usage of 'I' indexical does not necessarily require the second step (second identity proposition) to be accomplished. Even if the second step identity is missing, there can be a perfect and correct use of 'I', only if the subject is self-conscious. The bottom line according to me is that self-consciousness is the only necessary factor for using 'I'. Anscombe's other point that is important for us to note is that 'I' thoughts are unmediated conceptions of mental states, they are reflective consciousness of mental states, actions, etc. 'I' is not the name of an object. 'I' is an expression of reflective self-consciousness about which I can further gather information as a human being.

I would disagree with the view that 'I' is not a referential term at all. I think it refers to different levels of being self-conscious. At one level it refers to a pre-reflective, pre-linguistic stage of self-awareness. At another level, it also refers to a meaty layer of self-consciousness. The former is a logically essential pre-requisite, a foundation on which the entire building of self-awareness emerges.

C. Use of indexical 'I' in the sense of a subject and object

If we claim that the necessary prerequisite of the usage of 'I' is self-consciousness or self-awareness⁶⁹ then another question can arise, that is: Should we consider this self-awareness to be a subject use of self-consciousness or object use of self-consciousness? Or, should we think of a middle path where the subject use of self-consciousness and the object use of self-consciousness are complementary to each other? In order to discuss this issue, I shall follow a very significant article written by Sydney Shoemaker, named "Self-reference and Self-awareness".⁷⁰

So, in the previous section, we learned about a view that says that 'I' is not a referring term. Some philosophers have found that the referring function of 'I' is perplexing, and at least some of its uses are not a referring term at all. For example, Wittgenstein once said that in statements like 'I have a toothache', the 'I' does not 'designate a possessor'. So, from this, confusion might develop that, does 'I' at all refer to any subject or any object? If 'I' does refer to something then what kind of entity does it refer to? Is it a subject or an object? We can very well get to experience that 'I' does not refer to any transcendental ego because no such thing is presented to our physical eye. Then what kind of usage does this indexical 'I' have? Now, let us diagnose the source of this issue surrounding the usage of the term 'I' and let us see which usage of the term 'I' (subject or object) is possible and which one is more fundamental between these two usages.

⁶⁹ It is to be noted that I am not differentiating between these two.

⁷⁰ Shoemaker 2001: 81-93

Let us first clearly understand what subject use is and what object use is. Suppose I am saying that (1) "I have a headache" and (2) I have a bleeding arm. Statement 1 is a subject usage of 'I' and statement 2 is an object usage of 'I'. In statement 1, there is no question regarding recognizing a person. Nobody is going to ask me 'Are you sure that it's you who has the headache?' Because there is no room for error in identifying in this case. But in the second statement, there is a case of recognition of a particular person, and hence there is a possibility of error that has been provided for. It can happen that I see a bleeding arm but actually, my body is tangled up with someone else's body and that arm is actually of some other person which I mistakenly thought was my own arm. So, there is a chance of error through misidentification in this case. First-person statements where 'I' is being used as a 'subject' in the sense just described above are said to have absolute immunity to error through misidentification⁷¹⁷²⁷³. In the subject use of 'I' the individual is presented to herself in a first-person mode. In the object use the individual is seen as an object in the world filled with so many other objects. More importantly, in the object use of 'I' and the self-awareness associated thereof, there is a very significant role played by the body. The reason behind this is that it is mostly an intuitive awareness through introspection. When thinking or expressing certain 'I'-thoughts, the subject can be mistaken regarding the property that is being self-ascribed, but never be mistaken with respect to the subject of the self-ascription. For example, when I judge on the basis of my experience that I have a toothache, I cannot be mistaken with respect

⁷¹ Wittgenstein 1958

⁷² Shoemaker 1968: vol 65 :555-567

⁷³ Evans 1982: 215

to the point that it is really me who has the toothache. Now, Shoemaker believes that the fact that knowing oneself as a presented object in the world goes together with the possibility of misidentification is the main cause of the view that one cannot be an object to oneself, and 'I' does not refer at all. Philosophers who think that 'I' cannot be a referring term think that if a person ever comes across the referent of 'I' in experience, then for them it must occur only in the cases where the usage of 'I' is most secure and absolutely immune to any error.

Now, at this point, one might ask, is it only subject to error when a flesh-blood person known through ordinary sense perception is being referred to by 'I'? Or is it also questionable when some introspectable immaterial or transcendental entity is being referred to? In my opinion, there should not be any doubt or question regarding the subject usage of the 'I', because I first of all believe that in these cases, no misidentification is possible. If someone expresses her doubt about accepting the very existence of such immaterial substance, then my answer to such a question would be, we can actually accept the existence of such a non-physical entity as we have enough epistemic evidence in favour of that. We all possess an inner awareness of self which we cannot deny and I think that is verifiably known to all of us through the human faculty of intuition. But, by 'immaterial' and 'non-physical' I do not refer to any spiritual or mysterious entity. What I mean to say is that the subject usage of 'I' can be an epistemic entity. Now, coming to the object usage of 'I', why should we believe that whenever 'I' is referring to a flesh-blood person, it is not accessible to others in the way it is accessible to me? I believe that there is a significant role of the flesh-blood physical body in constituting a person's identity. It makes perfectly good sense to say that we come across that aspect of self-identity through

external perception. I think both the subject usage and the object usage are possible in the linguistic norm of 'I'. Let us scrutinize how these two kinds of usages occur. In the self-reference that occurs in the subject usage of 'I', we make certain self-ascriptions that are absolutely immune to error through misidentification. If this had not been possible, then certain truths of daily life that are taken for granted by us would be at stake. We ascribe psychological predicates in such ascriptions, which can be compared to what P.F Strawson has named as P-predicates. It is believed to be a fundamental feature of the mental realm that each person knows his or her psychological states to a large extent even if not completely. Moreover, people do have authority over it as well in the sense that the way a person knows his own psychology, no other person can know it that way. Now, questioning this ability is the same as questioning, how it is possible for people to use the 'I' indexical whose meaning is given by the rule of language that it refers to the same person who uses it, and how it is possible for people to talk about themselves by using that referring expression. It is a fact that we ascribe psychological predicates on ourselves and these predicates can very well be seen as a manifestation of self-awareness.

Now coming to the discussion of the object usage of 'I'. I believe that the object usage of 'I' is possible. But I would like to claim a priority of subject usage over the object usage of 'I' and hence I would like to agree with Sydney Shoemaker in this context⁷⁴. Let me explain how I think the object usage of 'I' takes place and how it is different from the process of referring to others. Think of the cases where we ascribe some predicate to other people. Suppose I am trying to say that Aditi has grown long hair. Now, how do we cognize this belief

⁷⁴ Shoemaker 2001: 93

about Aditi? We think of a set of other properties that we know belong to this woman, say for example, her name is Aditi, she lives in Howrah, is very tall, has bright eyes, is very pretty, etc. And then we think of the newly added property that is long hair, as being added to the set of other properties already observed in her. So, my cognition would be such that, the tall woman whose name is Aditi, who lives in Howrah, has very pretty bright eyes and has grown long hair. But when we use the 'I' as taking ourselves as the object being presented to our own self, I do not think of any predicate as getting added to certain specific properties. For example, suppose I stand at the weight machine and it shows I have put on some weight, I would not think that the person whose name is Sanchayaita, a researcher of Jadavpur University, who lives in Kolkata has put on some weight. I would simply think that the body that is showing to have put on the weight is mine, and that is connected with the subject usage of mine. To be more precise, self-awareness as subject usage is primarily given to my experience first. Now, whatever information, or ascription I come across in the object usage of 'I', gets accumulated with the sense of 'I' that I have in the subject usage of 'I'. The object usage of 'I' is possible because the subject usage of 'I' is always saliently there in us.

So, I think the subject usage of 'I' indexical is primary. The object usage of 'I' is also possible. Our thoughts about ourselves can be constructed as an object or an element in reality. We can make perfect sense of ourselves by looking at ourselves as entities of the objective order of things. We conceive of plenty of state of affairs where we do not think what it is like for us, we rather think what it will be like for us to be aware of such state of affairs. But this usage according to me is possible only when the subject usage is already there. The

reason behind that is, I think whatever ascription we make in the object usage of 'I' actually assimilates in the 'I' which has been denoted in the subject usage.

Now, a question can arise, do I agree with the view that 'I' is not at all a referring term (discussed previously in this chapter)? I would like to in fact disagree with such a radical take on this issue. I would like to agree with Anscombe's view when she says that 'I' is not a direct referring term, it is rather a two-step identity process. But I think that does not necessarily imply that 'I' does not refer to anything at all. I think, such a view emerges due to the age-old firm idea that 'I' refers to some mysterious entity. When that mysterious entity is never found and an explanatory gap is created, philosophers started to think that perhaps 'I' is not a referring term at all. Another probable reason behind the idea that 'I' is not a referring term is that the referencing process of 'I' in our language does not conform to the other kinds of referencing terms of our language like dog, cat, and table. These terms refer to certain objects in an unproblematic way because they refer to tangible entities. But, in the case of 'I', I think what it primarily refers to is an epistemic entity, which is phenomenally given to our immediate experience. That is the subject usage of 'I'. In order to make this usage possible, an individual just needs to be self-conscious and able to use 'I' to communicate the I-thoughts. That is how self-conscious subjects become competent users of 'I'.⁷⁵ But then there is a secondary usage of 'I', that is the object usage of 'I', where I ascribe certain qualities, and information about my own self, and this ascription may add to my self-awareness but it is not immune to error through misidentification. The ascriptions of the object usage

⁷⁵ Bermudez 2016 : 2

ultimately get accumulated with the self-awareness that has been referred to as the 'I' of the subject usage. The use of the term 'I' does not necessarily require the object usage. Even if the object usage of the term 'I' can very well be used in our language as a subject usage to express 'I' thoughts which I believe are immune to error through misidentification. So, I think it is not the case that 'I' does not refer to anything. 'I' has two senses of reference, namely, a subject sense and an object sense, and between these two senses, the subject sense is the primary, prior, and fundamental one and also the one which is sufficient for an individual to be capable of using the term 'I', because in this sense the only requirement for the individual is to be self-conscious.

I would also like to claim that there are times when there is a co-occurrence of the subject usage and the object usage of 'I'. At one moment I am having 'I' thoughts that I feel hungry, and at the next moment I can have the thought that I am in a meeting, and it would look really bad if someone starts eating in the middle of the meeting. In the first thought, I am using 'I' as a subject, in the next moment I am being represented to myself as an object in the outer world. So, there is constant subject-object merging going on in the self-awareness that is referred to by the 'I'. Our idea about ourselves is in no way cordial to the Cartesian mysterious entity called self. Our continuous customary subject-object usage of 'I' perfectly spans the explanatory gap between the mental and the physical because I think we cannot account for our idea of self-awareness if we stick to only one aspect of self-conception and disregard the other.

I would now like to talk about another proposal regarding the subject and object usage of indexical 'I'. We have learned that the 'I' can be perceived from two perspectives. Firstly, it can be seen as a subject. Secondly, it can also be seen

as an object. Now, we have learned from Gottlob Frege and Bertrand Russell, that 'I' being an indexical, is a purely referring expression. Hence, it is bereft of any descriptive content. However, we may have to rethink this position, given the fact that we have spoken about being aware of oneself as a subject and being aware of oneself as an object. These ways of being aware of oneself may suggest some descriptive content associated with the indexical 'I'. Let us take a few examples. When I feel guilty or I am feeling ashamed of something, on the one hand, I am the experiencing subject of that feeling. On the other hand, I am also making myself an object of moral evaluation. I am evaluating my character or personality from a third-person perspective and judging my actions and hence I am feeling guilty or ashamed of something. However, when I am feeling intense pain in my teeth, I do not perceive myself as an agent or object of moral evaluation anymore. In this case, I am just a subject of experience to whom the experience of toothache is revealed immediately. Now, these two representational senses, namely, subject and object, may hold some sort of descriptive content of indexical 'I'.

Now, I have claimed that both the subject use of 'I' and the object use of 'I' may have some sort of description. If it is true then are we to reject the well-accepted notion that the 'I' is an indexical that is by nature bereft of any sort of description? In fact, I have also said that the uniqueness of 'I' is an intimately related aspect of the essential indexical 'I'. Then how do we at the same time, make sense of this claim that 'I' may have some description associated with it as well? As an answer to this possible question, I would like to bring the idea of *immunity to error through misidentification*⁷⁶ and ask, why is it that I am

⁷⁶ Evans 1982: 215

immune to making any kind of error about what is it that I identify by the word 'I'. It might seem that no errors occur, merely because 'I' does not have any description associated with it. Someone might claim that since there is no descriptive content associated with 'I', there is no possibility of misplacing the description of 'I'. As a consequence, we never fail to correctly refer by the use of 'I'. However, I would like to shift from this view and claim that there is another reason behind the fact that the reference of 'I' is never erroneous. The reason behind that is this: When I use the word 'I', I may associate a description with it. For example, when I say to my family members "I should start cooking now", the description I associate with 'I' is 'the person responsible for cooking today's meal'. The point I want to make here is that this description may or may not be applicable to me when I use the indexical 'I'. The interesting fact is that, the moment I say 'I', I am able to directly refer to myself. No matter whether or what description applies to me or not or what descriptive content I might have in mind when I am making the use of 'I', uttering 'I' directly refers to the utterer without any muddle. This is why 'I' is said to be essentially indexical. The success or failure of reference is in a way tangential to the satisfaction of the description by me. Whether or not I satisfy the description that I am actually having in mind while I am using the word 'I' is immaterial because 'I' is essentially indexical. As soon as I utter it, I manage to ensure reference success. If the description does not apply to me then the proposition having the indexical 'I' may become false. However, it will not be meaningless. Moreover, the reference of 'I' will not be erroneous. Also, 'I' is not necessarily description-

less. Even if the description is inapplicable then also the referential aspect of 'I' will be untouched.

We get to see a similar concept in Saul Kripke's work when he talks about "rigid designators". Kripke called the names, rigid designators^{77 78}. He said that names are rigid designators that have descriptions and there is an essential connection between the name and its referent. The sole function of names is to designate. They designate the same object in all possible worlds where that object exists and never designate anything else. Now, it may be the case that the indexical 'I' also designates its referent rigidly. However, that does not necessarily mean that when 'I' gets represented to us it comes bereft of any kind of description. The description that comes along with the indexical 'I' varies from context to context. The description is never absolute and it keeps changing. I may make mistakes about myself in those descriptions. When I teach in my class and think of myself as a teacher then there is one kind of description of myself that is getting referred to by 'I'. When I am at home and cooking for my family, then there is another kind of description of myself that is getting referred to as 'I'. There are several other examples of the same instance. It happens because the 'I' conversation that happens in our inner speech always revolves around the life that we lead. The life that we lead is making us situated all the time in particular contexts. In those contexts, these descriptions are the ways in

⁷⁷ Kripke 1971: 135–164

⁷⁸ Kripke 1980: 14

which we place ourselves as ourselves. But that does not mean that the description is labelled with me in such a way that it is inseparable from me.

So, I would like to talk about a notion of description of indexical 'I' that is variable. However, that does not mean that 'I' is bereft of description. Nevertheless, embodying a description or not embodying it, correctly applying the description, or not applying it does not affect the referencing ability of indexical 'I'. The moment 'I' is uttered, the reference is always direct and clear. It is also brought out by the linguistic character of 'I'.

D. The Role of 'I' in Explaining the Behaviour of an Individual

Since we are on the discussion of the referential nature of the indexical 'I', I think we should also shed some light on the aspect that when we utter the term 'I' in a statement, like 'I feel pain' or 'I have to reach the meeting on time' we do not just refer to ourselves and state some ordinary proposition. There happens a lot more than that in a statement containing an indexical 'I'. I think it is important for my thesis to clearly state how it happens for which I shall be taking significant references from John Perry's article 'The Problem of Essential Indexical'⁷⁹.

First of all, the reference to 'I' keeps changing in different contexts. I can say that 'I am going to be late for college', and John Perry can also say that 'I am going to be late for college', and the interesting fact is in both these cases, despite

⁷⁹ Perry 1979: 3-21

the fact that the meaning of 'I' has shifted, the statements can be absolutely true and completely meaningful. So, we can see that the truth function in cases of statements containing 'I' is very different from other sorts of propositions. Second of all, another interesting fact is that here 'I' and John Perry both utter the same identically same and true statements and let us assume that both of us are good-hearted and responsible people, then what would both of us do in such a situation? We would act in the same way. We would rush to our respective campuses so that we would not be late for our duties and that is quite predictable. So, statements containing indexical 'I' explain behaviour of an individual. How does this prediction happen? What is the common factor in the usages of 'I' that the behaviour can be predicted? While explaining this unique feature John Perry has talked about a problem of the indexical 'I'. He says that the problem with the indexical will arise if we adopt the traditional way of thinking of belief. He first talks about the doctrine of propositions held by Gottlob Frege. This doctrine has three main tenets.

1.

Belief is a relation between a subject and an object. The object gets denoted by a 'that clause'. Example- Carter believes that Atlanta is the capital of Georgia. This part of the object is called a proposition.

2.

Propositions have truth value in an absolute sense, as opposed to merely being true or false for a particular person at a particular spatial-temporal reference.

3.

The third tenet determines how we individuate propositions. It says propositions must be individuated in a more proper way (maybe with the help of concepts) than just being individuated by truth value or the notion of truth conditions.

The essential indexical is a problem for the doctrine of propositions. The main problem arises from the second tenet, as we can see sentences with essential indexical do not have absolute truth value. These sentences become true and false depending on who and how it is used. If I say that 'I am happy', this proposition will be true in case I am really happy. But the same sentence will also be true if person X says 'I am happy' and it turns out that person X is also really happy. It will be false when person X says that 'I am happy' whereas the only happy individual present there is me. So, this statement does not identify a proposition. There is a missing conceptual ingredient.

On each occasion of my usage of 'I', there is some concept I have in mind that fits me uniquely, and which is the missing conceptual ingredient in the proposition that remains incompletely identified when I characterize my beliefs. The concept used by me to think of myself is not necessarily identically the same every single time I do so. Also, every time others use the indexical 'I', they all are using various concepts of themselves so that they can fit into it and not anybody else. There is no general way of replacing 'I' with a particular term that leads up to the missing ingredient. When I say 'she is wise', or 'I am happy', the 'she' and 'I' do not hint at an appropriate conceptual ingredient, they rather function as a variable ranging over a class of individuals/ subjects. This is how the indexical 'I' functions. That is why the shifting of references in the usage of 'I' never creates any problem.

Now that does not exhaust the nature of the reference of the 'I' indexical. Perry argues that there is an essentiality or indispensability of indexical beliefs. Coming to the context where I said that, when I, or John Perry both uttered the same identically same and true statements, both of us being good-hearted and responsible people would act in the same way and we would rush to our respective campuses so that we do not be late for our duties, hence, statements containing indexical 'I' explains behaviour of an individual. How does this happen? This happens because both of us have something in common. What I and Perry have in common is not the object of our beliefs because the object of my belief is me and the object of his belief is him and consequently the respective propositions corresponding to these beliefs would also differ from each other. What is common in both my and Perry's cases is the same *belief state*. Actually, we are represented to ourselves as subjects or agents in a specific manner that is common between me and Perry. Perry argues that belief states expressed with indexical 'I' are essential behind their intentional actions because these beliefs in question locate the subject in a particular space, time, and situation and they are reported in public language with the use of indexical 'I'. According to Perry, such beliefs give us reason to act and this process does not depend on what the beliefs are about, but rather on the ways the subject of the belief is presented to herself. For instance, in the case of 'I' thoughts in Perry's famous example, 'I am the one who is making a mess in the supermarket', the subject is locating himself as himself, whom he knows how to move and act. Then only he is straitening his sack of sugar. Anybody who had been in his place would have done the same thing. Whenever I utter a statement using the indexical 'I', I get presented to

myself as myself, as a self that is my own, and as a subject who is a vehicle of my actions.

E. Discussion regarding the notion of privacy associated with the concept of Self-Awareness:

Now, on the basis of the discussion so far, we can say that the essential referent of 'I' is self-awareness. In this context, here a fundamental question about privacy can arise, that is: Is the notion of self-awareness which we get acquainted with, as the referent of 'I' private or is it a perfectly shareable and communicable notion? This section attempts to discuss this issue.

There has been an age-old idea regarding self-awareness that it is private. The idea of privacy obviously originated in the Cartesian theory of mind. The Cartesian theory seems to be a straight picture when it explains the advantages that a subject has over his/her self-awareness. Although this theory has been criticized by various philosophers saying that the verifiability of self-knowledge is not guaranteed through introspective method, I still believe that the Cartesian theory of the self correctly points out the immediacy and authoritativeness of self-awareness to a great extent.

The famous Cartesian theory of ego upholds that we have a **first-person perspective**⁸⁰ while knowing our own selves. It says that the awareness of self is strictly subjective as well as private. It also talks about **authoritativeness** over one's self-knowledge. This authoritativeness over self-awareness has its origin in the notion of **privacy**. According to Descartes, I have an exclusive authority over my conscious phenomena, because it is extremely private to me. I am

⁸⁰ Anscombe 1975: 45-65

capable of knowing myself (my mental states or occurrences) in an inimitable way through introspection that no one else can. This private self-awareness has four exclusive features, i.e., **subjectivity**, over which I have a first-person perspective. This perspective exclusively reveals truths about my mental occurrences to myself. Also, my self-awareness is **infallible**. There is no room for error when an individual knows about his/her own mental state because one has privileged access to his/her own mental state. The mind or self is an insulated entity that is self-sufficient in terms of knowing itself. The privileged access to the self cannot be shared with anything other than the individual himself. Moreover, knowledge about the mental occurrences is revealed to an individual as soon as they take place, hence they are **immediate**. This awareness of self is **salient** to every individual. Even if I do not admit the self as a separate ontological category, I cannot deny that I have an awareness of my consciousness. So, this Cartesian characterization of self-awareness upholds certain exclusive features of it. To sum it up we can say that we have a private, immediate, subjective, salient sense of ourselves over which we tend to have an authority⁸¹. Crispin Wright has reformulated these characteristic marks of self-awareness saying that they are **groundless, authoritative, and transparent**⁸². Groundless means that it is inappropriate to ask for evidence from the subject herself to corroborate what she claims about her own feelings. Authoritativeness can be ascribed to self-awareness because it is generally quite logical to claim that a subject has more sincerity and understanding of her own self than a third party. Transparency means that when a subject feels something it is usually

⁸¹ Descartes (Trans. Veitch) 2010

⁸² Wright 1998: 102

transparently and clearly presented to the subject herself. At least in a normal run of cases, it seems very unusual that the subject is confused about what he or she is feeling.

Now this quite sums up how we define the notion of privacy in the context of self-awareness. Now the question is, do we need to admit radical privacy here? Can we claim that the self-awareness that we have is actually an insulated secret entity that is strictly and only available to the subject? Are we not able to share this awareness with other subjects? Is not my self-awareness knowable by others if not completely but partially? An even bigger problem arises if we say the privacy of self-awareness is actually radically true, then we would fail to explain some of the facts of our daily lives that we take for granted as true. For example, I do have certain epistemic access to my friend's mental state, I am able to predict her behaviour, and I can very well correctly assume how she must be feeling and thinking in a particular situation. Now, if the entire mental repertoire is private and epistemically available only to the subject then how am I able to know my friend's internal states so well?

Cartesian theory has a very neat picture of how there are certain advantages that we enjoy over self-awareness, such as authoritativeness, privacy, immediacy, etc. This suggestion of Cartesian theory is not to be regarded as bad straightway. All these features seem to actually exist in our self-awareness. Hence, these basic features of self-awareness should not be treated as non-starters. I believe that we need to reevaluate and reconstruct the notion of privacy in the context of self-awareness.

I think there are two facets of self-awareness. One that is immediately given to the subject that I have been naming is the minimal-mindedness. It feels like something to be in that state. This can be considered as the qualia of a subject. I, as a subject am uniquely and primitively represented to me that no one else can experience. This state of self-awareness is pre-linguistic. This felt aspect cannot be expressed through language. It is like the phenomenal aspect of being a subject. I think that every subject has a peculiar accessibility over this layer of self-awareness. This aspect of self-awareness is revealed to the subject through intuition. The capacity of this intuition is present in every individual by fault since he or she is born. We do not have to deliberately learn or reflect upon how to apprehend this aspect of self-awareness. To be in this state of self-awareness is to be a conscious subject. I think that the mindedness is present in every individual and only the individual herself can feel it. I would deliberately and intentionally not call it private because the fact that every individual is presented to herself in a unique way and the individual experiences a constant-mindedness by virtue of being a subject is known to all of us. So, if we want, we can empathize and imagine what it is for another subject to be a subject and have that mindedness. So, it is not a private understanding that is secretly done. But we can say this much about this facet of self-awareness that the subject has unique and peculiar access to it because it is not immediately given to anyone else other than the subject itself. Here, the problem of privacy that the Cartesian theory has been facing for years would not arise. The Cartesian theory faced objections because it said that the mental repertoire of every subject is so private that no one else can correctly infer another subject's mental state. But we do not see that happening in real life. We can very well infer the mental state of the

subject and that too correctly. Hence the Cartesian notion of privacy seemed to be a very impractical proposal. I think that this problem will not arise if we claim that the subject only has peculiar access to the mindedness by virtue of being a subject because the epistemic understanding of that mindedness is by default revealed to the subject only. There is no problem in accepting the peculiar access because that minimal mindedness is not required to be shared by others. It is by nature pre-linguistic and it does not have to be expressed to the other. It would not be practically problematic to claim so as it was when it was claimed that no mental state could be correctly inferred by the other. So, in order to get rid of the baggage of practical problems that privacy brings in, instead of accepting that self-awareness is private we should claim that the subject has a peculiar access, but the subject does not have it over the entire range of self-awareness but only over the mindedness aspect of self-awareness.

Now, there is another layer of self-awareness where the awareness of the self is constructed both internally and externally. We can become aware of ourselves in two ways. One kind of self-informative sources are introspection, perception, and proprioception. Another way of knowing about self refers to external informative sources like knowing from other people, mirrors, books, etc. By combining the information that we receive from these two kinds of sources we form a self-notion⁸³. I believe that this self-notion is basically our self-identity that we use in front of other people. This self-awareness is constructed both externally and internally. There are certain mental ascriptions that I accredit to myself, and certain thoughts that I have about myself. For

⁸³ John Perry talked about a similar kind of self-notion in one of his lectures given at Stanford University in 2019.

example, I internally think about myself as an individual whose name is Sanchayaita, a student living in Calcutta, who also teaches in Calcutta, loves ice cream, likes keeping things clean and organized, etc. These are some information about myself that help my self-awareness to have a concretized form. A point to be noted is that all this information that I just mentioned about me has absolutely no difficulty in being conveyed through language to the other. So, this part of self-awareness is definitely not private. The way I know myself through this information can also be known by one of my friends. Also, I can talk about them to others to let them know. So, this aspect of self-awareness is strictly sharable, hence not private. Now, coming to the external informative sources, there are certain self-informative sources where we get to know about ourselves from others. That information also adds to our awareness of ourselves. For example, I can get to know about myself from my mother that when I was a child, I used to like eating sweets and biscuits. I can look in the mirror and get to know about myself that I have put some weight. This information is a part of a substantial self-notion which can very well be communicated with others. They can also be such that they are in fact known to us through other people only. I believe that this kind of self-notion which is constructed both internally and externally, is basically constructed by both self-conceptualisation and social construction. The notion of privacy cannot be ascribed to this layer of self-awareness. We need to accept a meaty version of self-awareness. This form of self-awareness is the one that basically forms our social identity. People get to know me by observing and knowing this aspect of me. This part of self-awareness makes me what I am to other people. With the help of this, we explain the notion of agency. This self-awareness is relational, it is not one-dimensional as it does not only involve the

subject but also involves other people both in the constituting aspect and in the expressional aspect. This is that substantial self-awareness that introduces me to others' perspectives as a specific individual. This layer of self-awareness is not private and it is accessible. It is that identity of the self that keeps evolving over the years. A fundamental component of this self-awareness is how others see me as an individual. This is how I would like to subscribe to the view of two layers of self-awareness. There is a layer of minimal-mindedness over which only the subject can have a peculiar access and there is another layer where there is no exclusive access of the subject over it. The way the subject knows this self-image about her own self can also be known by others.

F. Conclusion

Let us now draw some strands together. In this chapter, I tried to shed some light on the different aspects of the use of the indexical 'I'. I think that the discussion about the indexical 'I' is important for my research because the use of the indexical 'I' exemplifies that an individual is self-aware and she is referring to herself in and through this self-awareness. I have attempted to propose here that 'I' may not be the proper name. It is not a substitute for a proper name. It definitely does not refer to some Cartesian ego, whose nature is always unrevealed. 'I' does not share the meaning of a proper name. It is neither a direct identity proposition where 'I' directly identifies itself with a proper name. It is rather a two-step process that involves two identity propositions. In the first step, we realize that 'I am something'. This step involves being self-conscious, self-ness, and being in conscious subjective mode of existence. In the second step, we equate this 'I' with a proper name. However, the usage of the 'I' indexical does not necessarily require the second step (second identity proposition) to be

accomplished. Even if the second step identity is missing, there can be a perfect and correct usage of 'I', only if the subject is self-conscious. The bottom line according to me is that self-consciousness is the only necessary factor for using 'I'. I would disagree with the radical standpoint that 'I' does not refer to anything. I think 'I' refers to this mode of being self-conscious or self-aware. It refers to self-ness. The reference of 'I' is not like the referents of other words in our language. The referent of 'I' is the subject's existential mode of being uniquely conscious about herself. Then I have proceeded to say that, there can be two ways of referring while using the indexical 'I'. One is the subject usage and the other is the object usage. The use in the sense if a subject is a ubiquitous use and its referent is immune to error through misidentification whereas, the object usage is secondary and there can occur some sort of misidentification in referring to oneself. I have also endorsed the view that the subject usage of 'I' is a logical pre-requisite of the object usage of 'I'. However, the full development of the sense of 'I' emerges only when I see myself both as a subject and as an object and I also understand that I am an object to other subjects, and the other subjects who are objects to me are also subjects to themselves in the same way that I am. This is given to our linguistic community as well. It comes under an intersubjective domain. Otherwise, the usage of 'I' would not have been possible.

I have also proposed that maybe, both these uses of indexical 'I' are associated with some sort of descriptive content. Nevertheless, embodying a description or not embodying it, correctly applying the description or not applying it does affect the referring ability of indexical 'I'. The moment 'I' is uttered, the reference is always essential, direct, and clear. After that, I have tried

to explain that the shift of meaning or referent is possible in the case of indexical 'I' because the referent of 'I' is not an absolute fixed entity. The indexical 'I' rather has a common function or apparatus to play for every subject. I refer to my mode of being subject to myself while using 'I', another subject can use the same 'I' to refer to the mode of being another subject to herself. Now, if we say that the indexical 'I' is playing the same kind of functional tool for every subject then can we still accept that states of self-awareness are private in the way Cartesian theory has taught us to believe? If the same thing happens to all of us, how can it still be private? I have attempted to answer this issue by saying that it is better not to claim that self-awareness is private. 'Private' is a very resilient quality to ascribe. It indicates a sense of ungraspability as if we are never able to comprehend what it is for a subject to be a subject. But that is not true. We can actually empathize with another subject because we are also familiar with the experience of being a subject. So, being self-aware is not an insulated state that exists secretly inside the subject. But, instead of accepting privacy, what we can say is that all the subjects have peculiar access to the constant-mindedness that we saliently feel. The span of this peculiar access is very little according to me. It only applies to the core mindedness that a subject feels by virtue of being in subject mode. A subject does not have this peculiar access over the self-awareness or self-conception that is created through the significant intervention of the other. The self-awareness that gets shaped in us socially, culturally, and externally cannot be private, nor can it be exclusively and peculiarly available to me. It is available to me and it is also available to other subjects as well, through the ability of imagination, empathy, simulation, and inference.

Chapter 4

The Role of Emotion in Constituting Self-Awareness

A. Introduction

Emotional experiences play a very important role in constituting self-awareness. Emotions motivate our actions, they let us know about our own biases. They colour our perspectives of looking at the world. By doing so, emotional experiences kind of constitute the very mode of our existence in this world. From these two previous statements, it can also be derived that emotions also largely determine how an individual would see herself, or what kind of self-image one would have. However, this hypothesis that emotions constitute a large part of our self-awareness definitely needs firm arguments and elaborate explanations. In this chapter, I am going to make an attempt to explain how the emotional states of an individual suffice to be a very important part in the constitution of self-awareness.

Since I am writing a chapter to explain the role of emotional states in the constitution of self-awareness, a question may arise: Why does the discussion of emotions seem necessary for me in the context of self-awareness? My answer to this question would be that I have given certain arguments in support of accepting a '*for-me-ness*' in all layers of self-awareness in the previous chapters. I have tried to argue that no matter how latent, pre-reflective, or subtle the state of self-awareness is, there will always be an '*I-quale*' in the self-awareness that uniquely marks my self-awareness as mine. Here I would like to justify my other conviction regarding self-awareness that amongst many other clusters of mental

phenomena out there, memory and emotion play one of the most important roles in the constitution of self-awareness for an individual. In fact, I think that they contribute in constituting the '*I-quale*'. Emotion keeps moulding the self-image of an individual throughout her entire life and memory is that mental phenomenon that ties all these experiences of different periods of time in one thread. Thus, both emotion and memory construct the prime part of self-awareness for an individual. This is why, I think it is important to explain how emotions, as significant mental phenomena, constitute self-awareness for an individual.

This chapter consists of four chapters. In the introduction I have mentioned why I think the discussion of emotion seems extremely relevant to the discussion of self-awareness. In Section B, I am going to discuss about two types of emotions, namely basic and non-basic. I shall discuss about the apparent distinction usually made between these two categories. In my understanding, the non-basic emotions are basically self-conscious emotions. I shall also argue that I believe both basic and non-basic emotions play an important role in constituting self-awareness in their own unique way. Hence, in the context of self-awareness, the distinction between basic and non-basic emotions is not that significant in the sense that none of these categories of emotions is inferior to the other in terms of its efficacy of constituting self-awareness. In section C, I am going to elaborately discuss the function of both basic emotions and non-basic emotions in constituting self-awareness separately, with examples. While discussing the role of non-basic emotions, I have taken significant reference from the cognitivist theory of emotion because non-basic emotions are mainly the emotions coming from cognitive evaluations. In addition, while discussing

about the role of basic emotions I shall refer to Jean Paul Sartre's theory of emotions. After that, in the conclusion of this chapter, I shall be briefing about how self-awareness is shaped by both basic and non-basic emotions. In the cases of basic emotions, the self-awareness might be in a pre-reflective and implicit state, and in the case of non-basic emotions, the self-awareness is in a reflective state. Since the non-basic emotions are a product of evaluative judgments about the world and ourselves, the self-awareness related to the non-basic emotions is intimately related to my explicit self-image.

B. Categories of Emotions

Usually, a key distinction is made between two categories of emotions. Some emotions are considered to be basic, and some are called non-basic. Basic emotions are defined by saying that they are something that happens automatically in an individual, without any conscious cognitive processes taking place⁸⁴. Examples of basic emotions are joy, distress, anger, fear, surprise, etc. The idea that there exists a set of "basic emotions" dates back to the theory of Descartes (1649/1988) who was almost the first person to recommend that all emotional states can be derived from six fundamental "passions" (joy, sadness, love, desire, hatred, and wonder). Although the thesis that some emotions are more "basic" than others is extensively admitted by philosophers and psychologists, however, there is little agreement on which emotions should be included in the category of the basic ones⁸⁵. Their number varies depending on

⁸⁴ <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2012/11/emotion> [American Psychological Association]

⁸⁵ Piorkowska and Wrobel 2017 : 1

the theory⁸⁶. Non-basic emotions are considered to be such emotions that involve cognitive processes consisting of self-reflection and self-evaluation. These emotions are those which are affected by how we perceive ourselves and how we think people perceive us. They can help us fit in and function properly in the society. For example, shame, guilt, embarrassment, etc. Some theses uphold that only the non-basic emotions (which basically refer to nothing but self-conscious emotions) play an important role in constituting self-awareness because we are explicitly, reflexively, and consciously aware of it. Basic emotions are not that significant in this context because they do not involve reflective awareness and self-evaluation. Having many emotional experiences, and having a rich emotional life, does not in itself increase proper self-understanding. Rather, emotional experiences enhance self-understanding only when one is reflectively aware of them. This point of view is mainly advocated by John Lambie.⁸⁷ However, I believe this distinction would not be so much relevant in my understanding of the function of emotions in the human existential context. What type of emotion is basic to my self-understanding and which one is non-basic seems very difficult to determine because I think it is a contingent fact. There might be cases where the so-called basic emotions also give shape to our self-awareness. So, I would avoid indulging into the binary distinction of basic and non-basic emotions, I would consciously evade claiming that a particular category of emotion does not significantly contribute to constituting self-awareness, because I think all sorts of emotions, be it an emotion that we are

⁸⁶ Ortony and Turner 1990: 315–331

⁸⁷ Lambie. John A. 2009 : Vol 1 , 272-280

explicitly aware of or be it an emotion that we are implicitly aware of, in some way or the other do shape our self-understanding.

C. States of Emotions Constituting Self-awareness

I have just clarified that I believe that all sorts of emotions, be they basic or non-basic, do play an important role in constituting self-awareness. Nonetheless, in the case of non-basic emotions, an individual is reflexively aware of her emotion category. He or she goes through a self-evaluation while going through the episode of non-basic emotion. In this context, I must mention that when we say that in some emotional experiences, an individual goes through self-evaluation, then those emotion categories can be categorized under the domain of the Cognitivist theory of emotions. A Cognitivist account of emotion claims that the first part of the process of emotion involves the manipulation of the data our perception has received. Hence, it should be considered as a cognitive process. A strong Cognitivist account of emotion follows from the Stoics, who identify emotions with judgments. The cognitive theories about emotions uphold that the significant part of the process of generation of a state of emotion involves cognitive activities, hence, emotions should be defined and understood in terms of the cognitive states and activities. There is a main observation behind the Cognitive theorist's view, that is, different individuals respond differently and their emotional responses vary even for the same stimulus. Hence, it can be said that it depends on the cognitive evaluation of the individual which type of emotional response would come. In these instances of emotional episodes, it is very easy to determine how it happens. The reason

behind that is, in those cases, the individual appropriately attends to the state of emotion and also has the concept of that emotion to understand what they are and how it affects her. The concept contains various scripts of the different emotions of one's culture, and, more specifically, the folk-psychological assumptions, action urges, and so forth, with regard to that particular emotion.

Let us first examine, how an evaluative emotion builds our self-awareness. The narrative of emotion is seen as the narrative of one's judgments about some important events, judgments in which we acknowledge our hardship and incompleteness before those elements that we are not able to cope with easily. Most of the emotional states come on the surface when we feel discomfort due to an unusual situation and when it contradicts normalcy when the situational circumstances become difficult for us. These episodes of hardship bring out the real self from inside. These incidents construct both the things, what I am aware of as an individual and how a third person perceives me. In turn that third-person perspective also has a significant contribution in constructing my self-knowledge, because of the fact that, how I want to seem to others also has a lot to add to how I would want to perceive myself. The intentional object of an emotional state is constituted by the way how the individual interprets or sees the different aspects of an event. My way of internally perceiving and interpreting an event internally embodies the crux of my self-awareness. The cognitive aspect of emotion also implies that pertinent beliefs and perceptions are necessary conditions of the relevant emotion. Those beliefs and perceptions are the constituents of that particular emotion. My self-awareness is obviously synchronized by my complex system of beliefs and perception of the world. The same set of beliefs and perceptions are immensely expressed through our

emotional expressions. So, we can assume that in many instances, the emotional consciousness makes us who we are.

Self-conscious non-basic emotions have a crucial role in stirring and regulating almost all thoughts, feelings, and behaviours of people.⁸⁸ For example, we see some people spend a great deal of time dodging social intimacy, which is supposedly a strong elicitor of shame and embarrassment. We are sometimes worried about losing social status in the eyes of others and, as Goffman⁸⁹ had said, our every social act is highly prejudiced by even a slight chance of public shame or loss of “face” and dignity. In fact, according to the “Cooley–Scheff conjecture,” we are “virtually always in a state of either pride or shame”.⁹⁰ In fact, Emotions like embarrassment, guilt, pride, and shame drive people to do the hard work to achieve something he or she desires for^{91,92}. People also get the motivation to behave ethically, and in socially acceptable ways in their social interactions and intimate relationships^{93 94 95} because of the drive people have to avoid emotions like guilt and shame. Guilt is described as the central element of mending and prosocial attitudes such as empathy, altruism, caregiving, donating, and helping^{96 97}. Shame on the other hand enables the negative emotional and physical health consequences of social dishonour. Victims of physical or mental abuse⁹⁸ suffer from an inferior emotional complex

⁸⁸ Campos, 1995: ix–xi

⁸⁹ Goffman 1955: 213–231

⁹⁰ Scheff, 1988: 399

⁹¹ Stipek 1995: 237–252

⁹² Weiner 1985: 548–573

⁹³ Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton 1994: 243–267

⁹⁴ Leith & Baumeister 1998: 1–37

⁹⁵ Retzinger, 1987: 151–181

⁹⁶ Batson, 1987: vol X, 65–122

⁹⁷ Tangney, Stuewig, & Mashek 2007: 345–372

⁹⁸ Feiring, Taska, & Lewis, 2002: 79–92

if they feel humiliated by the disgrace. Shame is also associated with depression and chronic anger issues⁹⁹¹⁰⁰, and is a central component of a narcissistic, antisocial behaviour¹⁰¹. When a category of emotion emerges in me from a cluster of beliefs and evaluations, then the emotional state is supposed to be about something. An emotion often has an object¹⁰². My shame, and my guilt, are intentional. Now this aboutness of emotion is internally built in us. It embodies my perception of the world around me and myself. It comes from my active way of seeing and interpreting a situation and how I react to a situation.

The perception of an emotional state in response to a situation contains an accurate view of how I see myself, and what my self-image is. That is because emotions embody not only the ways of seeing oneself and the world, but it also involves the set of complex beliefs that we cultivate in us as individuals. Those beliefs are a crucial part of the individuality I possess as a person. Emotions are the judgments of the values we possess as individuals. A cognitivist theorist of emotion, Martha Nussbaum says, “Finally, there is something marked in the intentional perceptions and the belief characteristic of the emotions: they are all concerned with value, they see their object as invested with value.”¹⁰³ She is claiming that all our emotional states are always related to or rather come from certain allied values. For example, if I am sad because I have not done so well in my exam, that implies that doing well in the exams and achieving good grades are extremely important to me. Had I not given so much importance to doing

⁹⁹ Harder, 1995: 368–392

¹⁰⁰ H. B. Lewis 1971

¹⁰¹ Tangney, Tracy, Robin, 2007: ix–xi

¹⁰² However, some pathological cases of anger, anxiety etc. sometimes do not have recognizable objects. However, mostly emotional states do have some object.

¹⁰³ Nussbaum 2003: 276

well in academics, the state of sadness due to poor performance would not ever come to my mind. One way of interpreting this may be that we learn what things are to be prioritized based on moral teachings. In that way, emotions can be interpreted as something that comes from the eudemonistic concept of 'How should I be living?' This is something we get to see in ancient Greek philosophy. Now these values are called by Nussbaum as intentional perceptions or belief characteristics of the emotion.¹⁰⁴ Our values are an important part of self-awareness. When we react with a particular emotional response in a situation that shows us the things in which we are most invested in life as individual beings. For example, if I do not prioritise my family so much in life then I would not fear their absence in my life. If I am not inclined towards having a clean and honest image in society, then I would be so ashamed of being called a thief in front of everyone. If I do not believe that it is my duty to empathize and stand by a friend going through a phase of depression then I would not feel so much guilty when I fail to do so. So, now if I am asked, what kind of an individual I am, all these examples will indicate the fact that I see myself as a family-oriented, honest individual who is also affectionate towards people in any kind of need. Now whenever this self-image that I have about myself gets derogated, I would get very disturbed. I would have a crisis due to the turbulence caused in the repertoire of my long-built self-awareness.

Premise 1. What would be my emotional response to a situation depends on what kind of value I have towards that situation.

¹⁰⁴ Nussbaum 2003: 277

Premise 2. And, the values that we cherish in us have a stronghold in constituting our self-awareness.

Therefore, our emotions demonstrate a lot of information about the awareness that we have about ourselves. Here, in this context, when I am using the term self-awareness, only the reflective and meaty layer of self-awareness is meant.

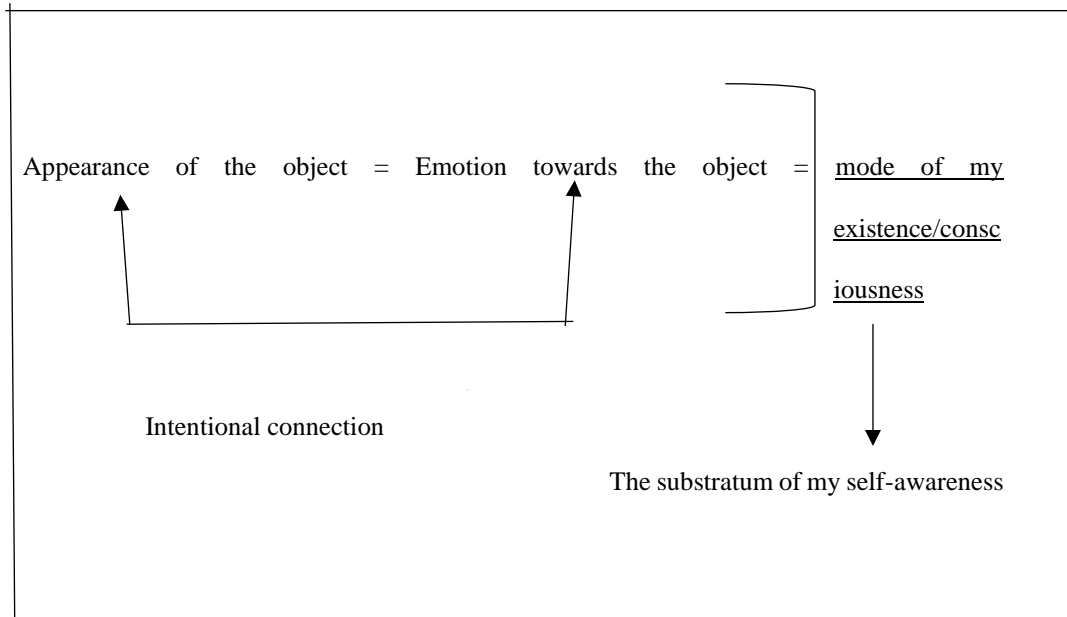
Let us now come to the discussion of how the basic emotions about which we are not consciously and reflexively aware all the time, contribute to the constitution of our self-awareness. There is a conviction, as mentioned previously in this chapter, that only the so-called non-basic emotional experiences enhance our self-understanding. We recognizably understand the contribution of emotional states in shaping our self-awareness only if one is reflectively aware of the emotions. The incapability to attend to emotional episodes reflectively or lack of an appropriate theory of the emotion leads to a depleted self-knowledge and consequently a distorted view of self-awareness. However, I would like to disagree with this thesis and I would argue that even if an emotion is such that we are not reflexively aware of it, even if the emotional experience is in a pre-reflective state, the state of emotion has something significant to shape our self-awareness.

In order to establish this view, I would take significant reference from Jean Paul Sartre's theory of emotion. I shall do it in order to show how Sartre had defined emotion in a specific manner where he is demonstrating that an emotional state can also emerge in a non-reflective level, and that can also be considered as an episode of an individual's emotional consciousness. This

emotional consciousness would be identical to the conscious mode existence of that individual at that moment. I think that the concept of non-reflective emotional consciousness given by Sartre indicates the fact that even the so-called basic emotions also shape a substratum of our self-consciousness. He had adopted a phenomenological and existentialist approach while describing the nature of emotions. He wanted to highlight the significance of human emotion in the context of the existence of an individual. According to him, emotions are the basic mode of human existence. He had rejected any reductionist versions of the psychoanalytic approach towards emotion. In fact, Sartre's theory of self-consciousness mainly rests upon the significance of emotions. So much so that, he constructs his theory of consciousness on the basis of the idea he has given regarding what it is like for a person to experience emotions. He has done it by specifically explaining the aspects of reality that get manifested to a person when she is emotionally directed towards the world.

In Sartre's theory, our affective mental states like love, hatred, and boredom are basically psychical qualities appearing to us due to our encounter with some physical object from the past. Suppose, I have a feeling of disgust towards a particular object. That feeling of disgust for that one particular object is an experience immersed in the hateful qualities of that object. For Sartre, that feeling of disgust is a conscious activity and there is no difference between the feeling of disgust and the appearance of the object to me, they are one and the same. My emotional state of resentment towards that object is nothing over and above the appearance of that object to me. In other words, my entire apprehension of that object is exhausted by my conscious feeling of hatred towards that object. I see that object and get disgusted because I am perceiving

the object via hateful qualities that I am ascribing to that object. Moreover, there is also not much difference between the mode of my conscious existence and my state of emotion. When I am having a state of aversion on seeing someone or something, my state of aversion, at that moment, is identical to the mode of consciousness. For, 'aversion or 'hatred' towards that object is a quality to me that I ascribe to that object (who is a part of the appearance of reality to me). The mode in which the reality at that moment is revealed to me is constituted by my state of emotion. The mode of the revelation of the appearance of reality to me is precisely my mode of conscious existence for the time being. The appearance of the object and the kind of feeling that I have towards that particular object, say for example 'disgust', constitutes the intentional connection between me and the object I am confronting. The intentionality reveals the appearance of reality to me which is again an aspect of my conscious emotional state. Therefore, there exists an intentional connection between my emotional state and the world. That is the connection between the appearance of the object and my feelings towards it. These two are immersed in each other. The appearance of the object to me about which my emotional state of disgust has emerged, and my felt emotion towards it are immersed in the sense that these two get absorbed into one another in an emotional episode while forming that intentional connection. When these two get absorbed into one another, they constitute the mode of my conscious existence during the emotional episode. That mode of existence is nothing but the core element of my mode of self-awareness. That mode of conscious existence is actually the substratum upon which my awareness of self is grounded upon.



According to Sartre emotional consciousness is the consciousness of the world at a very basic level. Every emotion exposes the outer world to us in a different way. It constitutes the very mode of perceiving the world. For example, if I find something horrible while interacting with the outer world, that horribleness is a substantial quality of the world that constitutes the appearance of the outer world in a specific way to me. As a conscious agent, I experience the objects of the outer world as something having certain possibilities. I perceive them in accordance with certain plans and intentions and those plans and intentions entail activities involving those objects. When I see a pen, I see that object as something that I can write with and use it to note down important information when needed. Now, suppose the pen is not working properly when I actually need it. I am having difficulties while writing with that pen. What happens then? My emotions bubble up. And I get angry and throw the pen away.

Sartre has explained, that emotional outburst is a transformation of the world to us. When we are having difficulties while encountering the world, my state of emotions compels me to perform certain actions that might change the worldly surroundings for us. Sartre also says, in the process of making an attempt to change the world, we can get into such a frame of mind where we can also change the mode of being conscious. So, emotion is a specific manner of apprehending the world. He said emotion is not just a felt aspect of our consciousness which has little significance in our life. It is rather the mode or manner in which we apprehend the world. Our emotional state constitutes the structure in which an individual faces and interacts with her circumstances. It gives meaning to one's relationship with the reality. Here I would like to justify my idea that, this emotional experience as described by Sartre seems equivalent to one's conscious existence. So, this conscious existence is tented with the awareness of ourselves.

Now coming to the most relevant factor of this discussion, that is, according to Sartre, the emotion that is defined as the consciousness of the world can also be non-reflective, whereas, most of the psychologists uphold that consciousness of emotion is definitely a reflective consciousness. It is reflective of an individual's feelings. In Sartre's theory, we find that it is not necessarily conscious of itself all the time. For example, most of the time, while performing an action, there is usually no reflective awareness. Suppose, I am writing right now, but I am in fact, not conscious about every little gesture I make to get my writing task completed. I am as if, in an automated mode to get the writing task done. That does not mean that the habit of writing on a regular basis has made me unconscious of all the hand movements I am making. The

act of writing is not at all unconscious. The action itself is the structure of consciousness. But it is not a reflective consciousness, it is not conscious of itself. I am not especially giving my attention to each and every movement I am making and the words I am writing. This same thing might happen in the case of a state of emotion. When I am about to write the word 'value', that will be a probable word to be written; when I have already written the word on paper, it becomes a reality. I realize that the word is exigent in a particular statement, and I write that down. According to Sartre, this spontaneous, unreflective act of writing constitutes an existential stratum in the world. The act itself is the structure through which an individual interacts with his circumstances. Moreover, it is not necessary for the self to be conscious of the act in a second-order level. Similarly, according to Sartre, emotional states are such modes of consciousness that do not necessarily have to be self-reflective all the time. Unreflective-ness does not imply unconsciousness. Is it the case that Sartre wants to tie emotions with the unreflective rather than the unconscious? Yes, that may be the case. Sartre's claim here is that, just as emotions must not be non-reflective all the time, similarly it is not the case that emotions are always reflective and evaluative. I can have a reflective awareness of my emotional state if I want to. For example, when I am angry, the very mode of apprehending the appearance of the world at that moment is my anger. I can be aware of my anger voluntarily, while having a second-order consciousness. In that second-order consciousness, my anger would be the object of consciousness. However, in the first-order consciousness, where I am having an emotional encounter with the world, my anger is not the object, and

neither the state of anger is reflective.¹⁰⁵ At that moment, I am in a particular state of emotional consciousness (anger) and that emotional awareness is the very mode of my first-order conscious existence. Another example of such non-reflective, non-evaluative, and non-categorical emotion can be seen in an instance where a baby greets me. I experience her as a cute, little, gorgeous bundle of joy who is extremely huggable. I can't stop looking at her and she looks so much adorable. This is unquestionably an experience of love, but while having it I am not explicitly aware of "love" or "being in the state of love." I am not mindful of any feeling and neither am I aware of any emotion. Rather, I am just aware of this incredibly beautiful baby. This is a typical example where an individual has an emotion, which seems to be very basic and non-reflective. Moreover, my state of emotion at that moment constitutes the mode of my self-conscious existence at that moment because while having that episode of emotion, my state of emotion is the state of my self-awareness through which I am interacting with the world.

Now, one may ask here, am I trying to say that basic emotions and pre-reflective or non-reflective emotions are the same? No. I would not claim that they are the same. However, basic emotions are defined as emotions having no reflexive awareness and emerging from no self-evaluation. Basic emotions are emotions that take place in an individual in a preset or automated manner. So, in my understanding, I believe that even if an emotion is so basic that it is existent at a pre-reflective or non-reflective state of a minimal self-awareness of an individual, even then that emotional consciousness is shaping our self-

¹⁰⁵ Sartre (Trans. Mairet) 2012

awareness because at that moment, my pre-reflective and basic emotional awareness and my state of self-conscious existence is identical.

D. Conclusion

Let us now briefly summarise the main objective of this chapter, i.e., the role of emotional mental states in the constitution of self-awareness. Emotion is considered to be a very significant aspect of the repertoire of our mental phenomena. My firm conviction is that emotional experiences have a great impact on the constitution of our self-awareness. In some cases, emotions also amplify our sense of the self. This chapter makes an attempt to demonstrate how the emotional states build up the self-awareness and the self-image of an individual. I have discussed the nature of different categories of emotions and the usual distinctions that are made between them. Usually, psychologists and some philosophers admit two main categories of emotions, basic and non-basic. The basic emotions are said to be biologically and psychologically basic, they happen to an individual without much cognitive processing. For example, fear, anger, happiness, love, etc. On the contrary, non-basic emotions are comparatively more complex sets of emotions like embarrassment, guilt, shame, etc. which require self-reflection and self-evaluation. The non-basic emotions are self-conscious emotions. There have been theses amongst which John Lambie's view is a recognizable one, which upheld that emotional experiences enhance self-understanding only if one is reflectively aware of them. In this context, I have claimed that there might be some distinction between the basic and non-basic emotions, from a biological and psychological perspective.

However, in my opinion, self-awareness or self-understanding is enhanced by both kinds of emotions, be it basic or non-basic. In fact, which sort of emotion is constructing my self-awareness varies depending on different experiences of self-awareness. The role of the non-basic, self-conscious, complex emotions in the constitution of self-awareness is very easy to determine because in these cases, the self-conscious emotions are manifested explicitly in the meaty layer of our self-awareness of an individual as I have previously mentioned with examples. The emotions of shame, guilt, and embarrassment sort of build what kind of self I would want to be perceived as from the third person's point of view. These emotions highly influence the actions of the self as an agent and thus it determines the public persona of myself to myself and to the other. However, the role of the basic emotions in the constitution of self-awareness is comparatively implicit. I have borrowed the notion of non-reflective (pre-reflective) emotion from Jean Paul Sartre's theory in order to demonstrate the contribution of basic emotions in the constitution of self-awareness. I am again clarifying that I am not confusing the basic emotions as pre-reflective emotions. They are definitely not synonymous. Pre-reflectiveness is a state of consciousness that may consist of many mental phenomena such as emotion. But there is a similarity between the notion of basic emotions and Sartre's non-reflective emotions, that is, they both are devoid of any kind of complex cognitive processing. My point here is that, even if there is a basic emotion in an individual which is extremely devoid of any cognitive appraisal, so much so that it exists in a completely non-reflective or pre-reflective level; even then the state of emotion would have a certain function to do in shaping our self-awareness. How does that happen? I have attempted to answer this by taking the help of

Sartre's theory. According to Sartre, the existence of emotion is sown in the very integral part of human existence. In Sartre's theory, emotions in human beings comprise the very mode of encountering reality. He has made an attempt to understand how emotions transform the world to an individual, and how emotion makes the world appear to us in a particular way. According to him, in an emotional encounter with the world, it is the state of emotion that constitutes the very mode in which an individual would apprehend the world around him. It sort of becomes a vehicle for us through which we encounter the objects of the world. In an emotional encounter, the state of emotion is absorbed in the state of consciousness, and they become identical. Now keeping Sartre's view in mind, if my state of emotion somehow becomes equivalent to my state of consciously being in the world, even if I am pre-reflectively aware of it, I have to say that at that moment I am apprehending my self-consciousness pre-reflectively as a subject in the world and this whole apprehension is being construed by that state of emotion only, because at that moment my emotional consciousness and my self-consciousness has become identical. So, in pre-reflective emotional experience, we also do get a self-understanding. We just don't focus on it explicitly. That self-understanding is identical to my existence at that moment. So, the contribution of emotion in pre-reflective awareness is different than the contribution in the case of reflective awareness.

In the context of reflective awareness of self-conscious emotions, I would agree with John Lambie that here we explicitly reflect upon our emotional experiences. In these cases, emotion defines us, our biases. Emotion describes us, controls and justifies, and modifies or actions. Overall, it can be stated that it describes a large part of our public identity.

I have always been in favour of accepting two strata of self-awareness. One is primitive, pre-reflective, implicit, non-verbal, peculiarly unique, and first-order. The other is second-order, reflective, explicit, public identity, and communicable. Emotional experiences contribute to both these kinds of self-awareness. But the contributions are of a different sort. In the former, the self-consciousness is identical to the emotional experience of that moment. In the latter, the emotion concept provides concrete information about the individual.

Chapter 5

Subjectivity Reassessed

A. Introduction

There is something it is like for a subject to go through a conscious experience. The notion of subjectivity is enigmatic and deserves to be accounted for. In order to have a clear understanding of what self-awareness is, one also needs to understand the nature of subjectivity and its place in the overall structure of self-awareness. In this chapter, I shall directly address the issue regarding what subjectivity is. After exploring the nature of self-awareness, I would also attempt to provide a tractable, non-dubious, and non-paradoxical account of subjectivity in my thesis. I think, I imagine, I wish and thus I am a subject. I am the owner of my mental states that have a distinct subjective character. The main objective of this chapter is to understand the notion of peculiar subjectivity on the basis of our understanding of the nature of self-awareness as discussed in the previous chapters of this thesis. The notion of subjectivity can be primarily defined as a fundamental component of consciousness. Subjectivity is the way in which the world appears to a potentially conscious individual. It is usually presumed that there is a distinction between a subject and other objects, which includes the world and the other subjects. By means of subjectivity, a subject is marked as a unique individual to herself. Another point that needs to be noted here is that, the ability to use the indexical 'I' also frames the notion of subjectivity. I believe when we are self-aware, we can assert an ability to think of ourselves as a subject of experiences, we are linguistically capable of using 'I' to refer to ourselves and we entertain 'I' thoughts, then it is at that point we

can say that all these features add up to our subjectivity. I have already mentioned that in this chapter I would like to explain the nature of subjectivity on the basis of the ideas we have developed through the discussion in the previous chapters. Let me briefly state in the very beginning what kind of idea of subjectivity I would like to endorse here. In the discussion regarding the nature of self-awareness in the previous chapters, I have attempted to establish that there are at least two different layers of self-awareness. One layer of the self-awareness is built and shaped by the society. That is the meaty layer of self-awareness. It is moulded by a different set of values ascribed to us by society and the third-person perspective. However, there is another layer of self-awareness which is minimal self-awareness. This layer of self-awareness is peculiarly mine in the sense that it is constituted internally within the subject's awareness. This is a very basic way in which an individual subject is phenomenally given to herself. This state lesser significant contribution of the third-person perspective¹⁰⁶. This is a primitive sense of being the 'I' which possesses the mine-ness of every experience of an individual. Now, based on this idea, I want to advocate that the subjectivity of an individual is constituted by both these aspects of self-awareness. Subjectivity arises from the co-existence of 'mine-ness' and the 'me-other-ness'. First of all, in section B, I shall try to explore a different concept of subjectivity through the framework of my evolving understanding of self-awareness. Usually, if it is acknowledged that every individual possesses subjectivity, it implies that the mental states of each person are bound to be strictly private and accessible only to the individual herself. I

¹⁰⁶ Although the recognition of the other may be present in the minimal mindedness in a pre-conceptual form, as we discussed in chapter 2.

want to shift away from this perspective. I aim at considering subjectivity and privacy as distinct notions that are not necessarily associated with each other. I want to establish that the notion of subjectivity can be retained without the aspect of privacy. I shall also discuss that the uniqueness of the subjectivity of every individual constituted because an individual is capable of adopting both the first-person perspective and a third-person perspective of looking at herself. In section C, I shall be discussing that our physical bodies and our world-embeddedness do play an important role in constituting our subjectivity because the body is the medium by means of which we experience the outer world. It determines the way in which objects are presented to us. Hence, it is important for us to know about the role of the body in constituting subjectivity. In section D, I shall be discussing the role of reflexivity of self-awareness in constituting subjectivity as I believe that being reflexive about own self-experience also shapes the essence of subjectivity of an individual. In section E, I shall be discussing how the subjectivity of an individual incorporates both first-person and third-person perspectives at the same time. Nevertheless, I shall also defend that the first-person perspective is the primary component between the two. Then, in the conclusion of the chapter, I shall draw an outline regarding my apprehension of the notion of subjectivity that is constituted by the three aforementioned components, namely, the body of the subject, the reflexivity of self-awareness, and the coexistence of first-person and third-person perspectives of an individual.

B. What is Subjectivity?

In this chapter, my main intention is to provide a fresh and distinct notion of subjectivity on the basis of the conceptual development I have had about self-awareness from all the discussions that have been going on in the previous chapters. I would also attempt to establish the importance of accepting the notion of subjectivity in the context of self-awareness by determining a relationship between *for-me-ness* and constituted subjectivity. Usually, in the light of Cartesian philosophy, we have seen that we tend to understand subjectivity along with a notion of privacy in it. Subjectivity is understood in terms of privacy, meaning, if I am admitting that every individual has subjectivity that means the mental repertoire of that subject would also be considered as strictly private and is only accessible to the subject herself. I wish to change this perspective. I want to retain the notion of subjectivity without retaining the notion of privacy. I am perceiving the aspect of subjectivity and the aspect of privacy as two separate notions. I want to describe an individual as a non-private subject, yet I want to claim that the individual has its own unique subjectivity. By negating the insulated sense of privacy, I do not want to negate the exclusivity of the subject or its peculiarity. I would like to negate such privacy which gives rise to the inexplicability of the communication that takes place in the intersubjective domain. If someone really wants to retain the notion of privacy then I would claim that only the *for-me-ness* aspect is private for an individual. This implicit level of privacy creates no problem for communication. How can we define such a notion of subjectivity? What, for me, then is subjectivity? I believe that the crux of subjectivity lies in the *for-me-ness* of every awareness an individual has. The *for-me-ness* builds the unique subjective aspect of every subject. Why is it

unique? It is unique because while being a subject and retaining my subjectivity, I can take more than one position of looking at myself. I can see myself from a first-person perspective. I can also see myself from a third-person perspective. Moreover, sometimes, there is another 'I' who perceives and judges both my first-person perspective and third-person perspective and the collapse between the two. So, as a subject, I am always in a special position who can take over all these perspectives and still be the continuing entity called 'I, myself'. This 'I' is the rudimentary 'I'. The *for-me-ness* that we have been talking about is always associated with this rudimentary 'I'. We can accept this rudimentary 'I' without necessarily accepting that there is a unifying principle that binds all these 'I' s together. This is what is phenomenologically given to me in my experience of myself.

C. **Embodiment and Subjectivity**

Self-awareness is quite often characterized by subjectivity. Thomas Nagel had famously proclaimed: "No matter how the form may vary, the fact that an organism has conscious experiences at all means, basically, that there is something it is like to be that organism."¹⁰⁷. There is something it is like to be a subject of experience. It is associated with a first-personal perspective and a feeling of what-it-is-like-for-me. However, I believe that we must not forget that we are embodied subjects who experience everything. So, it is irrefutable that the subjectivity of self-awareness is bodily in a large part. Although the bodily aspect of subjectivity does not exhaust the notion and there is a lot more to the

¹⁰⁷ Nagel 1974: 436

notion of subjectivity to discover. Nonetheless, the body and the world-embeddedness do play an important role in constituting our subjectivity. Our body is the vehicle through which we experience the outer world. It determines the way in which objects are presented to us. Our body yields a specific kind of perspectivalness of having a perception. Everything that we perceive or experience, we are bound to experience it from a particular spatial position. Everything is experienced in relation to the position of the subject's body. Moreover, the very fact that the subject of experience is different from the object of experience, this very distinction is evidently imposed by our bodies. My body is ever-present in my experience insofar as I am present as a subject in an experience. Bodily subjectivity is well justified in the following quote from Quassim Cassam : "If the subject of experience is that which perceives, acts, and thinks, and perceiving, acting, and thinking must be understood in bodily terms, then the metaphysical lesson is obvious: the subject of experience is, first and foremost, an embodied subject of experience"¹⁰⁸. The experience of the world around us is practically not possible without the body. In fact, it is only by means of our body that we are able to experience the world. The reason behind that is, that all our worldly experiences come to us through the interaction that takes place between our body and the environment. I feel the cold in winter, I see the redness of a rose with my eyes, and so on and so forth. Like so, it can be stated that our body is largely the subject of experience. Our body is not like an instrument or an apparatus that we use to experience things. Rather, our being a

¹⁰⁸ Cassam 2011:142

subject and having a body are not two separable factors. We are our bodies to an extent. Our body is ever present in our conscious existence. On a similar note, Merleau Ponty states, "The body is not just another external object that could offer the peculiarity of always being there. If it is permanent, then this has to do with an absolute permanence"¹⁰⁹.

Our body in a way enables all of our experiences in the world. The fact that the objects of the world are presented to us is in fact made possible because we have a bodily existence in this world. Body is something that in a way makes us a subject of experiences. Besides, the body itself also becomes an object of our own experience. For example, I can look at my hand and then move my gaze away from my hand to the picture hanging on the wall. Here, my hand first becomes an object with what I am visually engaging with. Then I am disengaging with it and making another thing my object of experience. When I disengage from visually seeing my hand, my hand, and my body, don't vanish from my self-experience. The body has a continuous presence in my experience as a subject. So, the body's presence in an individual's self-experience as a bodily subject yields a bodily subjectivity of self-consciousness. Although there is not one single consensus about the nature of subjectivity of consciousness, neither any theory has been able to explain where it arises from, however, it is accepted to a large extent that conscious experience definitely has a subjective character. Now, let us recall the embodied mind theory which upholds that some bodily states have constitutional relation to some mental states¹¹⁰. According to this

¹⁰⁹ Ponty 1945: 92-94

¹¹⁰ Rowlands 2010: 51-84

view, consciousness is always qualified with subjectivity. Now this subjectivity is largely constituted by a bodily subjectivity. For, our experiences are largely bodily. Experiences are gathered by a bodily subject. Furthermore, for the same reason, we can claim that if the subjectivity of consciousness is considered to be a fundamental aspect of consciousness, then, bodily subjectivity must also be considered as an equally fundamental aspect of what it is like to be an experientially conscious subject. What-it-is-like-for-me to experience the taste of an ice cream necessarily yields from my bodily engagement with the ice cream.

Throughout all the previous chapters of my thesis, I have been emphasizing upon the notions of '*for-me-ness*', '*what it is like for me-ness*' of self-experience. This '*for-me-ness*' is obviously associated with the concept of first-person perspective. However, the '*for-me-ness*' cannot be entirely and simply reduced to the notion of first-person perspective. However, it is a fact that whatever self-experience we gather, we do it from a specific orientation or a special position. We are incapable of changing that particular orientation. This orientation comes from being positioned in a particular space in relation to other objects of experience. This positioning stems from residing as a bodily entity in this world. The embodiment of the self is significant in this case. The first-person perspective is largely constituted by the bodily position of the experiencing subject. Hence, the point here is that the first-person-ness is construed by the spatial position of the body to a substantial extent. The bodily vantage yields a

specific tone¹¹¹ in the subjective experience of the self. The tone is a first-person tone.

The first-person tone is not physical in nature. It is a felt quality of subjectivity. The physical body of a subject does have an important role in constituting the felt first perspective tone. However, the physical aspect of a subject does not exhaust the first perspectival-ness. We may categorize it as a phenomenal aspect of subjectivity. The role of the body successfully highlights the first-person-ness of our self-experience. This first-person-ness leads us to the feeling of being a unique subject. This felt quality is what we call the subjectivity of the self. The body determines the manner in which a subject would experience an object. If we want to understand how the subjectivity of the self is constituted, then it would not be enough to only look at the object of experience and the subject. We must also explore how the subject interacts or connects with the object with its living body. On a similar note, some philosophers have talked about the concept of Interoception¹¹². Interoception is defined as a sense data that provides information about the state of the subject's body. From the concept of Interoception, we can think of bodily processes where specific internal bodily states get generated inside the body, on the basis of which our self-experiences acquire a particular mood, which helps build our subjectivity.

¹¹¹ Kuhle 2017: 6

¹¹² Craig 2002: 655-666

Now, a critic might raise a question that, the body is physical in nature but the subjectivity that it yields is definitely not physical in nature. So, would there not be an explanatory gap in this case? In other words, one might ask, how can the biological processes of a body give rise to the subjectivity of self-awareness? My answer to this question would be, that the issue of the explanatory gap will arise when we fail to explain the ontology regarding how our physical body interacts with consciousness¹¹³. However, in this case, I am not discussing about the ontology at all. I think the subjectivity of the self is purely an experiential entity. It is a felt aspect given to our experience. My self-awareness is an ever-present factor that crops my subjectivity, and my body plays a very important role in this ever-present awareness because the body is that ever-present medium in my experiential consciousness through which I gain my self-experience.

D. Reflexivity and Subjectivity

My intention here is to establish that the reflexive nature of self-awareness plays an important role in the constitution of subjectivity. In order to do that we need first of all understand the nature of the reflexivity that is involved in self-awareness. Then we can explore how it helps to produce subjectivity in self-awareness. Someone might also claim that reflexivity is actually a paradox. Reflexivity is usually referred to as an inner incoherence where it is told that the

¹¹³ Most of neuro-scientists have completely reduced the concept of consciousness to the functional aspects of brain. Now, a thorough investigation in the research of cognitive sciences would enlighten us about a whole new dimension regarding the first-person perspective. However, right now I am not indulging in the discussion of cognitive science in this context.

self can be aware of itself. We are already acquainted with the idea of reflexivity in the chapter where we discussed the constitution of self-awareness. Let us now bring about the idea of reflexivity in the context of subjectivity. There are theories of awareness under which it is thought that awareness by default retains a kind of subject-object dichotomy and this dichotomy makes reflexivity of self-awareness possible. This means where the self is both the subject of awareness and the object of awareness at the same time, there occurs a kind of self-reflexivity. In the reflexive nature of self-awareness, the self becomes aware of itself. So, here the self is concurrently both the object and the subject. Husserl, in a very different spirit, claims that mundane self-awareness involves a kind of objectification of the self where the self acknowledges itself as being an object for other subjects. Other theorists like Sartre take self-awareness as defying the knower-known diad¹¹⁴. Sartre claims that “every positional consciousness of an object is at the same time a non-positional consciousness of itself. Even though my attention is on the object, the experience itself remains conscious, not in the sense that I am aware of it, in the sense of being intentionally directed towards it, but in the sense that there is something it is like to be in that state”¹¹⁵. It means that every self-conscious experience that canters around an object always has a non-positional consciousness of itself. Suppose that I am counting many mangoes and it turns out that there are a dozen mangoes out there. Now, the fact that there are twelve mangoes is revealed to me as an existing property of the world and I am thoroughly conscious about the fact. However, there is a chance that I may not be conscious of the action of counting the mangoes in the same

¹¹⁴ Sartre *Being and nothingness* BN p. Iii; EN, pp. 18f

¹¹⁵ Zahavi 2005: 13,14,43

way. I am not conscious about myself counting them. So, being conscious about the fact there are twelve mangoes is a positional consciousness according to Sartre, however not being conscious about the action of counting them is non-positional consciousness. Now, in order to avoid the infinite regress of the knower to be known further, Sartre says that there is a known object, there is a knower and all of them fall into the repertoire of an unconscious into non-self-conscious reflection. However, let me clarify that I think that there does occur a reflection in every self-conscious experience, and I would like to believe that the reflection is definitely not unconscious. The reflection is implicitly conscious.

We have seen in a previous chapter that in Galen Strawson's (2017) work we get to know about the idea of reflexivity of self-awareness. In that notion, reflexivity does not necessarily involve a higher-order mental state. We can defensibly claim that all states of self-awareness involve an awareness of itself in the same order. On the issue regarding 'awareness of awareness', G. Strawson in his text *The Subject of Experience* (2017) says that, it is true that every awareness possesses an awareness of itself. However, he also thinks that it is better to claim that the awareness of awareness is not a higher order or secondary awareness. Now, such a claim may lead us towards an infinite regress. That is why, let us just claim that every awareness has an awareness of itself but in the same order. We can also simply reformulate the statement and say that **all awareness is awareness**. For each and every episode of awareness of A on the part of any subject named S, the existence of A entails S's awareness of A, otherwise, if subject S is not even aware of the fact that he has A, then the very existence of A gets negated. Therefore, it is being precisely said that all awareness basically has is reflexivity. Every state of self-awareness is

reflectively aware of itself. Whenever we have self-experience, we come to be self-reflexively aware of ourselves. I am the knower of content and the content of the awareness is also mine. All self-conscious experiences have the consciousness of that very conscious experience. All experience implicates experiencing that very experience. It may be objected that it turns out to be a tautology. However, even if it is a tautology, it does not seem problematic. The essence of self-awareness might be such that it is explained in the best possible way through a tautology. We have learned previously that self-awareness is self-sprung in an essential and fundamental way. All awareness retains awareness of itself and they are necessarily self-intimated. In this context, Galen Strawson talks about the *self-intimation* (Strawson 2017, 145) thesis of Galen Strawson, This thesis can be put as where we learn, a state of self-experience is to affirm that self-conscious experience cognizes itself in order to have an awareness.

We have also learned about another thesis of John Perry regarding self-awareness similar to this current issue. This view also helps us to understand the reflexivity of self-experience from an altered perspective. John Perry in his lecture in April, 2019 named "The complexity of self-knowledge" talked about Self-Notion. He said that, we can become aware of ourselves in two ways. One is self-informative sources like introspection, perception, and proprioception. Another way of knowing about self refers to external informative sources like knowing from other people, mirrors, books, etc. We construct a '**self-notion**' when we combine the information that we get from self-informative ways and other external informative ways. Precisely, self-notion is the realization where the self is represented as a person to the subject itself described in terms of relation. In self-notion we describe the self as 'myself' and this holds the **relation**

of identity. What does this relation of identity reveal to us? It reveals that the information about the self that I have gathered from other external informative sources and the self that I have known from self-informative sources are basically about the same person. And this self-notion is expressed through the indexical 'I' (Perry 1979).

So, all these concepts refer to some kind of reflexivity of self-awareness.

The intended point of this chapter is that the reflexivity or the self-intimation of self-awareness is the main factor that gives rise to the uniqueness (immediacy, authority, groundlessness, peculiarity) of self-awareness that we enjoy. This uniqueness created by the reflexivity adds to the felt subjectivity of our self-awareness. Due to this same reflexivity factor, in self-notion also (as described by Perry) we, the subjects get to realize the relation of identity between the self-awareness gained from two distinct sources (self-informative and external). The reflexive nature of self-awareness establishes this relation of identity that the two kinds of gathered information are about the same person and it makes self-awareness uniquely presented to us. This unique presentation of us to ourselves constitutes the subjectivity that we experience.

What mainly happens in the making of this uniqueness is that: At one level I am a biological being and also a physical object. From this point of view, there is no ample amount of difference between us. We are merely a set of individuals. But at some level, every single individual gets acquainted with this distinct sense of individuation. Every individual becomes an 'I' to her own self. Each of us acquires a unique sense of 'I'. My sense of 'I' is unique because it is immediately presented to me. It is peculiarly accessible to me. This immediacy and peculiarity

arise because my primitive state of self-awareness manifests itself to myself. It also arises because of the I-Quale or the for-me-ness of self-experience that we have been talking about in the previous chapters. In these self-experiences, the content of the cognition feels like *mine* to an individual (Flanagan1992¹¹⁶; Martin 1995¹¹⁷; Dokic 2003¹¹⁸; Marcel 2003¹¹⁹; Zahavi 2005¹²⁰; 2013¹²¹; Tsakiris 2011¹²²; Zahavi & Kriegel 2015¹²³). The cognizer here is also me. Simultaneously, I am also having the awareness of an ownership that both the awareness and the state of being aware belong to me. This is how the self-awareness becomes peculiarly different from all other experiences. This peculiar difference is what we call the subjectivity. This subjectivity is a kind of shielded process in which only the subject is the witness.

There is a kind of peculiarity and uniqueness that we have over our self-awareness. This peculiarity and uniqueness and peculiarity can be explained with the help of the notion of reflexivity. Reflexivity is an essential feature of self-awareness. It refers to the self-manifesting nature of self-experience. Whenever a conscious state of self-awareness takes place, this state of awareness also has the awareness of itself. That means, here, the subject has an awareness and also has an awareness of that very awareness. The latter awareness or the self-intimating aspect of self-awareness takes place in the same order of appearance. Due to this reflexivity factor, the self-awareness gets represented to the subject

¹¹⁶ Flanagan1992

¹¹⁷ Martin 1995: 267–289

¹¹⁸ Dokic 2003: 321–344

¹¹⁹ Marcel 2003: 48-93

¹²⁰ Zahavi 2005: ch.5

¹²¹ Zahavi 2014

¹²² Tsakiris 2011: 180–203

¹²³ Zahavi & Kriegel 2015: 36–53

in a peculiar and unique way. Moreover, this aspect of self-awareness harvests the subjectivity in an individual. By being reflexively aware, the subject becomes acquainted with a state of awareness that belongs to her, and the knower is also the subject herself. Hence, this reflexivity of self-awareness seems to provide an insulated authority to the subject over her self-awareness, and thus the subject realizes the notions of 'own self', 'me', 'mine-ness', and 'what it is like for-me-ness'. The awareness of subjectivity is immediately manifested to the subject only.

E. The sense of 'Me' and 'Other' in constituting Subjectivity

On the basis of the discussion so far, we now understand that the sense of 'I' is peculiar and unique. We assert our identity as subjects every single time we speak about this 'I'. The peculiar sense of 'I' helps us understand the notion of subjectivity because 'subjectivity' refers to nothing but this uniqueness and peculiarity. Now, the usage of indexical 'I' involves 'I' thoughts. 'I' thoughts are the thoughts about the self that get expressed in first-person speech. In this first-person speech, we make continuous inner dialogues. These inner dialogues are mostly about determining an individual's action. So, the inner 'I' with whom we have the inner dialogue is an agent. How we understand the nature of this agency will also give us some idea about the nature of subjectivity because the subjectivity also incorporates a sense of agency as well. While having those inner dialogues, while having a sense of an agency I am presented to myself not only from a first-person perspective but also from a third-person perspective. A subject is capable of adopting both a first-person and a third-person perspective

within herself. This happens most vividly when I tell myself what I should do in a particular situation. I determine my responsibilities depending largely on my social identity. However, even if I determine my action from a third-person perspective, there still remains a sense of peculiar 'I' when I am accomplishing that action. So, my subjectivity and agency consist of a first-person and a third-person perspective simultaneously. In addition, there is a kind of constant collapse and shifting between the first-person perspective and the third-person perspective. The subjectivity emerges from a continuous *me-other* thought process.

Not so long ago, discussions regarding selfhood and subjectivity in the philosophy of mind tended to focus on a view that human selfhood is socially derived and belongs to the domain of social ontology. Some have argued that we first experience ourselves as a part of a society having other subjects like us. This belongingness automatically shapes our self-awareness before we develop our own individual subjectivity and distinct perspective on the world. The community of which I am a part influences what is significant and meaningful for me. It is vital for my personal flourishing and provides me with a cultural background on the basis of which I make individual choices about my preferences in life. This whole process builds what sort of self-image I am going to have. As a result, some philosophers have defended the claim that the 'we' is prior to the 'I' in self-awareness. To be precise, it is mostly the external factor like the '*other*' who moulds our self-awareness, rather than our own selves. On the basis of this point of view, we further derive another conclusion that if the *other* becomes the main factor that shapes our self-awareness and the 'we' is prior to the 'I' in self-awareness then there would be no peculiar subjectivity left in

the self-awareness of an individual that is exclusively given to the self-experience of the individual herself.

My thesis takes issue with the aforementioned proposal. I propose that a sound theory of self-consciousness that wishes to explore the subjective dimension of our experiential life significantly, must take the minimal notion of self into serious consideration. So, regarding the context of the constant and simultaneous co-existence of *me-other* perspective we have just talked about, if someone questions which one from the 'me' and the 'other' I think has the primary significance, my answer to that would be that the first-person perspective obviously has the primary significance in constituting both an individual's self-awareness and its subjectivity. An individual cannot be a member of the 'We' without affirming that membership experientially within. To be a part of 'we', or to have any experience for that matter, an individual must experience it from within with a peculiar epistemic access to it. Hence, no matter how important contribution the 'other' or the third person perspective has in shaping our self-awareness, we must admit that there is always a primary, minimal *for-me-ness* in every instance of my own self-experience. The *for-me-ness* of my experience makes my self-awareness, peculiarly mine. If we want to do justice to the subjective character of the episodes of our self-experience, we should acknowledge that every experience that builds our self-awareness is also characterized by the "what-it-is-like-for-me-ness". This '*for-me-ness*' seems important, also because it is the root from which the sense of ownership and agency arises in a subject. In order to establish my point, I shall be taking

significant reference from Dan Zahavi's work on the same issue¹²⁴. On the minimal self-awareness account, the self is present in experience, not as a surplus experiential object or as an additional experiential component but as the very first-personal givenness of experience. It is meant to aim at and grasp the ineliminable subjectivity and perspectival givenness of consciousness. It is not propositional, so it cannot be expressed linguistically. It is intrinsic and rudimentary. As opposed to this sense of the self, there is another robust idea of the self. That is the meaty layer of the self that is socially constructed. In our self-awareness, we have different layers of the self. This layer of self-awareness is way more complex as it is a product of public communication, social interaction, and is recognition of perspectival differences. This self-awareness is conceptual and explicit. It is that self-awareness that gets constituted involving third-person perspective. Here I evaluate myself, I try to understand what I am and how I am to others. The concepts that I apply in this sort of self-awareness are not only constituted within the subject but they are mostly constructed socially. And this is the self-awareness that is not only accessible by the subject only, it is also expressible through language. The information that constitutes this self-awareness, is the information about me that other subjects can also have access to. Things that I know and believe about myself in my explicit self-awareness can also be known by other people in the same way as I do, as that information is conceptual and propositional. My claim in this chapter is not to deny that our self-identity to an extent is shaped and explained by a collective intentionality and socio-cultural background and as a result, it is intersubjectively accessible. However, claiming that our self-hood is exhausted

¹²⁴ Zahavi, D. 2020: 19-24

by 'we-membership' will not get us what we want, meaning it will lead us to a radical notion of intersubjectivity. Since we are trying to defend the importance of the subjective character of self-experience, we must take the first-personal perspective of self-experience on a more serious note. In most of the modern philosophical approaches, discourses regarding collective intentionality emphasize that our self-awareness is entirely constituted by the other. They argue that we first have our self-experience as being a part of a particular group or a tribe, way before we develop our own individuality and distinct perspective of looking at the world. So, subjective experiences are merely social constructs. Some philosophers might defend this view by saying that, self-awareness is not a fixed entity that is provided to us as expedient. Self-awareness is a process that goes on like a stream where episodes of different narratives have a very important role to play. In building self-awareness, our biology plays an important role. Moreover, cognitive evaluations done from a third-person perspective have an even more important role to play. How I see myself self largely depends on how others see me as an individual. It is a matter of what kinds of values, and preferences I embrace to fit in the society I belong to. With the changing circumstances, religious views, and political views, I also change and my self-awareness also changes. So, the community of which I am part, determines what is appropriate for me, and my self-identity gets constituted accordingly. But we need to stop right there and think that even if some parts of the self-identity of an individual are constituted collectively, can we derive from this that what an individual is by nature is solely the result of one's group membership? Now, deriving such a radical conclusion is not commendable for two reasons, those are:

1. It oversimplifies the complexity of self-hood and subjectivity¹²⁵.
2. Despite of enjoying a symphony, we also enjoy a distinct unique person-ness of our own. The collective approach fails to explain the notion of this first-person perspective.

The relation between a group and an individual is often understood with an analogy of a heap of sand and each grain of sand. But we should not go so far that we establish the supremacy and primacy of the 'we' over the 'I'. Some philosophers who wish to extirpate the individualist bias, argue that self-experiences are socially constructed. For example, Wolfgang Prinz¹²⁶ defends such a view and says that if we denied all sorts of social intersections of human beings, then they would eventually become like zombies, which means they would be without consciousness as well. However, I would like to object to this thesis by quoting Barry Dainton that "A self is a thing whose nature is to be capable of being conscious; a self has the capacity for consciousness at every moment at which it exists, and it possesses this capacity essentially. A self can only lose consciousness provided it retains the potential to be conscious"¹²⁷. So, we must accept the state of just being conscious, because there is something it is like to be a conscious subject. This is called 'Perspectival Ownership'¹²⁸. There is a difficulty in such a radical claim of sociality because nobody so far has been

¹²⁵ Zahavi 2020 : 19-24

¹²⁶ Prinz 2003 : 515-528

¹²⁷ Dainton 2005: 16

¹²⁸ Zahavi 2020 : 19-24

able to clarify how a collective intentionality or a group membership or social interactions are supposed to give rise to the uniqueness of the experiences of an individual. The attempt to derive the subjectivity of the 'I' from the 'we' fails to do justice to the subjective character of the experiences which is only given to the owner of those experiences. Even if we always exist in a social community, but there is always an experiencing anchoring in every episode of experiences in the midst of that community. To be precise, I cannot have the third-person perspective prior to internally affirming the first-person perspective within myself. The co-existence of the group membership and the unique perspective of my own is what makes me a first-person plural. I am trying to deny the priority of the socially constructed self because the primacy of the socially constructed self cannot be established just by pointing out the role of society in constructing self-hood. Sociality is a very wide term. We belong to so many different groups at the same time, namely, students, teachers, and friends. All these are different kinds of social formations. So, we must remember that the number of people with whom I have social relations is much larger than the number of people who actually constitute my self-awareness. Moreover, merely being in a community does not necessarily imply the fact that my self-hood is constituted by that. For example, an infant's first self-experience occurs in the company of other individuals but that does not mean the self-awareness is enabled by the other. Denying that our self-awareness is completely constructed by social interaction is not to reject that our self-knowledge is many ways shaped by our social-cultural background. There is no inconsistency in accepting that sociality shapes our self-hood at some level of self-awareness but there still remains a minimal form of self-awareness that is self-enclosed and has a disembodied interiority.

This is what is called 'For-me-ness' of self-awareness. Even the experiences that happen to the complex layer of self-awareness is marked with this 'For-me-ness'. In fact, this mine-ness of self-awareness makes my experience exclusively mine. This is exactly where our sense of subjectivity emerges from.

F. Conclusion

The main questions that this chapter tries to give an answer to is, what is subjectivity? How is the subjectivity of self-awareness constituted? Let us now bring some strands together and briefly describe the nature of subjectivity that we learned from this chapter.

First of all, I would like to reaffirm that subjectivity is not a myth. Subjectivity is a real phenomenon that makes an individual present to herself as the owner of her experiences. Every subject is presented to herself in a unique way. So, even though our mental states, communicative aspects, and thoughts are intersubjectively accessible, there is something left in the self-awareness of an individual purely as the subject's own. That is subjectivity. According to my opinion, the phenomenon of subjectivity arises from three apparatuses/constituents, namely, the body of the subject, the reflexivity of self-awareness, and the coexistence of *me-other* perspective of an individual. The subjectivity of experiential self-consciousness is to a great extent bodily subjectivity. We can also explain the structure of subjective self-awareness by looking at certain bodily processes because the body is the main medium through which we have all our self-experiences. We need to accept the role of the body

in constituting subjectivity because the body's presence in experience gives rise to a kind of bodily subjectivity of consciousness. In fact, bodily subjectivity is both implicitly and explicitly present in the constant for-me-ness of self-experience that we have talked about in the previous chapters. Then comes the reflexivity of self-awareness. The reflexivity of a self-conscious state makes a subject what it is. Reflexivity refers to the fact that the content of the states of awareness belongs to the subject and it also gets immediately revealed to the same subject. The state of self-awareness makes it known to the subject as soon as it becomes conscious. This self-intimating and self-manifesting nature of self-awareness makes it immediately, peculiarly, authoritatively, groundlessly, and non-inferentially presented to the subject herself. All these characteristic features are the exclusive aspects that make a subject uniquely presented to herself. These aspects of self-awareness get originated from the reflexive nature of self-awareness. A subject may have an implicit self-awareness experienced internally, and the subject may also have an explicit layer of self-awareness about her public persona known from external sources. However, when the subject reflects upon the fact that both these types of self-knowledge gained from two different sources are about her own self, then only the subject's complete sense of 'I' and its subjectivity emerge. So, in order to have a complete sense of what one means by 'I' as a subject, one needs to look at her self-awareness reflexively. Lastly, what ultimately emerges as the subjectivity of an individual is the realization that she obtains a co-existence of first-person perspective and third-person perspective simultaneously going on within herself. Subjectivity

makes a subject a *first-person plural*¹²⁹. That means we embrace the belongingness to a community. We adopt the third-person perspective. However, we experience it internally. So, we also have a first-person perspective. While realizing myself as the subject of my own self-experiences, I make a constant shift from the first-person perspective to the third-person perspective. This capability of shifting the perspectives construes the subjectivity of an individual.

¹²⁹ Zahavi 2020 : 19-24

Conclusion

My primary intention in this thesis was to discuss the nature of self-awareness. While discussing self-awareness, it seemed evident that we should also discuss the essence of subjectivity while exploring the nature of self-awareness. Each one of us is presented to ourselves uniquely. My conviction is that the exclusivity of every individual lies in her unique self-awareness and the subjectivity that it ensues. What I mean by this is that despite being biologically similar entities, every human subject is uniquely experienced by herself in her self-awareness, which constitutes her subjectivity. My main aim has been to explore the exclusivity or uniqueness of the awareness of a subject when she experiences herself. To achieve that I have attempted to do this research on self-awareness and subjectivity. In this research, I have drawn ideas from different philosophical traditions. I have not confined myself to the ideas of one single philosopher, or one single philosophical tradition. I believe that adopting one single method would overlook the complexity of the notions of self-awareness and subjectivity. Hence, I have discussed these from several different perspectives.

I have raised certain research questions in the introductory chapter. I have tried to answer those questions throughout the thesis. In the conclusion, I am briefly summarising the probable answers to those questions, on the basis of my understanding of the discussion in the previous chapters of this thesis.

Self-awareness simply refers to one's experience of oneself. We all possess self-experience. We are not as confident about the experience of any other thing as we are confident about the experience of ourselves. We get to

know about the self because there is a salient *sense of the self* that we all possess. One need not be particularly intelligent, thoughtful, or educated to have this sense of self. It comes to us naturally. We may deny any particular ontological theory about the self, we may even deny the existence of any ontological entity like self, but we can never deny that we have a *sense of the self*. Self-awareness is the awareness of self that is immediately given to the subject. In this thesis, I am adhering to the view that every individual subject is uniquely presented to herself¹³⁰. However, the notion of self-awareness can be explained and discussed from several perspectives. In the first chapter named “An Overview of Different Accounts of Self-Awareness”, I have discussed that self-awareness can be understood at least in four possible ways.

1. Self-realization, i.e. knowledge about the real nature of the self that leads to liberation. This discussion has a metaphysical inclination.
2. Awareness of the occurrent mental state of a subject. This discussion is somewhat an epistemological one.
3. Theoretical knowledge of who I am or what sort of entity I am, along with ontological commitments.
4. Self-experience, i.e., the immediate awareness of self-hood within oneself. This is to an extent a phenomenological quest.

Among these interpretations, I have mentioned that in this thesis I shall be focusing on the form of self-awareness that is constituted by the immediately given constant experience of self-hood (fourth alternative). I tried to establish that there is an ever-present experiencing subject who has a continuous awareness of the stream of experiences. I have also argued that there may be

¹³⁰ Frege 1918: 325-345

different layers of self-awareness. One may be understood as the explicit layer and the other as the implicit layer of self-awareness. In the explicit layer of self-awareness, we become aware of our public identity that is constituted by the whole narration of our lived experiences. In contrast, there may be another layer of implicit self-awareness. In this layer of self-awareness, a conscious subject is merely represented to herself just as an experiencer. I am trying to establish that both these layers of self-awareness are qualified with the aspect of *'for-me-ness'*. All our experiences are first-personally manifested with the aspect of *for-me-ness*. I would claim that accepting the notion of *for-me-ness* of 'I' is necessary because I believe, this unique sense of 'I' is a logical prerequisite for uniquely distinguishing my subjectivity to myself by myself. To deny the existence of this *for-me-ness* is to deny that we have a markedly different acquaintance with our own experiential life. Someone might say that it is a fundamental mistake to claim that our experiences are first-personally and peculiarly revealed to us. The reason for making this objection lies in the belief that there is actually no such *for-me-ness* or what-it-likeness¹³¹. There is definitely something it is like to experience the blueness of the sky or the sweet fragrance of a flower. However, what should be interpreted as exclusive are the properties of the objects of the experience; namely the blueness or the sweet fragrance. There is no need to assume a quality in the subject that goes like "it is like to experience these objects" over and above the qualities of the object. As Garfield claims, consciousness is always the consciousness of some object, and when the object is inhibited, there is nothing else that remains to be characterized exclusively. Dan Zahavi has replied to this objection. He says

¹³¹ Garfield 2016: 73-82.

that if we support the aforesaid claim, then it would be difficult to differentiate between conscious and non-conscious intentional states. Suppose there is a situation where my sense organs receive a non-conscious rose representation, and there is another scenario where I am consciously aware of a fragrant rose. In these two situations, the same object is being offered to me. There is no difference in the properties of those objects in isolation. Yet there is a difference between my experiences of those objects. Whenever a certain set of properties of an object appear to a subject, they always appear in specific ways. It is constituted on the basis of the first personal givenness or 'for-me-ness' that the subject goes through. Sartre helped us understand this by talking about minimal selfhood. He claimed that in pre-reflective self-consciousness also, we have a sense of self-consciousness. In fact, through this notion of the self, we can apprehend the very meaning of being conscious. He says that self-awareness is lived through in a pre-reflective state. He has called it the "fundamental self-ness"¹³². The conclusion I want to make out of this whole thesis is that the *for-me-ness* is essentially significant for maintaining the exclusivity of a subject. In the framework of Cartesian philosophy, we tend to have a concept of an insulated self. The only significant aspect of this self is its mental essence. This concept of self has been eventually criticized by the continental philosophers, such as the post-modernists and the existentialists. In this thesis as well, we are trying to establish that the sense of the self is constituted not only by its mental essence but also by the physical and bodily properties, the intervention of the other, and the world-embeddedness of a subject. Moreover, all these aspects together contribute to the subject's "for-

¹³² Sartre 2003: 127

me-ness," which distinguishes her as a unique individual to herself. Human beings are not just quintessentially rational animals. An individual develops their identity through both their mental essence and their connection to the world, yet each individual retains their distinctive uniqueness. I think it is important to admit the phenomenal *I*. Prinz¹³³ talks about three possibilities: first, we have so many experiential qualities, amongst which we can label one specific item as 'I'. Secondly, we might uphold that there is an I-qualé, some kind of mineness or for-me-ness of experience. However, one might object that it is reducible to other kinds of qualia we experience. The *I-Quale* is nothing over and above the qualities of perception, memory, bodily sensation, and emotion. Thirdly, one can opt to completely deny that there is any *I-Quale* at all. This is the view that Prinz himself had supported. I am going to support the second alternative. I want to accept the idea of for-me-ness or I-qualé or mine-ness. I don't think it is reducible to the totality of qualias of other mental events that we go through like memory and emotions. I think it is true that all our mental occurrences do have qualia. However, it is necessary to admit one principle of persistence that binds all these qualia together. The acceptance of the 'I quale' or for-me-ness may not be experientially given in an explicit form. If we retrospect and logically analyse the uniqueness of the experiences a subject derives from all her experiences, then the *for-me-ness* seems like a logical pre-requisite for all those experiences. If we say that there are just discrete instances of so many qualias coming from so many experiences, then a question regarding a subject will always arise, that is, whose qualias are they?

¹³³ Prinz 2012: 123–149.

There will be an explanatory gap in the answer to this question if we reject the notion of *for-me-ness*.

According to Searle¹³⁴, the self is not ontologically a separate and distinct entity. It rather can be categorized as a formal feature of the conscious experiences. Searle upholds that we would fail to describe the conscious repertoire correctly if we think of it only as an arena constituted by its mere contents and their arrangements. The contents need a principle of unity, but that principle, namely the self, is not a separate thing or entity. I do not want to disagree much with this view. But I would like to point out that we can call it a formal entity but that does not make it devoid of *I-quale*. If other experiences have qualia, the experience of selfhood also has qualia. According to Searle, we cannot make sense out of our bundle of conscious experiences unless we presuppose that they occur to a self or a subject, even though the self is not consciously experienced. - “Even though the self is not consciously experienced” is a problematic statement as I believe that the sense of the self is definitely consciously experienced in its pre-reflective state. Searle takes the self as a non-experiential metaphysical relation rather than something that gets phenomenally manifested to us. I disagree and claim the implicit self-awareness which continuous, underlying substratum of all our experiences, our persisting identity pole, our I-quale is pre-reflectively, phenomenally given to us.

My reason for giving so much importance to the notion of *for-me-ness* is that I firmly believe that if we deny the existence of the *for-me-ness* in the self-experiencing episodes, then we would in essence negate the difference between

¹³⁴ Searle: 2005: 7–19

the acquaintance we all have with our own experiential episodes in life and the experiential lives of other subjects. However, this difference exists. It exists not only when we introspect or reflect, but rather it is already there in the very instance of having an experience. If we ignore it then we will fail to recognize an essential aspect of that experience.¹³⁵

Now, one may ask, how is this unique self-awareness constituted in a subject? In other words, what is the structure of this self-awareness? While trying to answer this question, I have claimed that, in whichever way one tries to explain the constitution of self-awareness, one should abide by certain criteria while constructing the theory. In the explanation, the account of self should not lead us to a mysterious and unintelligible concept. As we all know there is a strong possibility that self-awareness represents the object of awareness and itself, hence the explanation must be able to explain this representational nature of self-awareness. Moreover, the representation should be grounded on conscious mental states. I have further clarified that I support the idea that there are two ways of experiencing self-consciousness or self-awareness, namely, pre-reflective self-awareness and reflective self-awareness. Pre-reflective self-awareness is defined as the most basic and preliminary form of consciousness, whereas reflective self-awareness is comparatively more complex because it is reflectively, consciously given to a subject with conscious attention. In both pre-reflective and reflective states of self-awareness, there is a co-existence of a tacit mine-ness or *for-me-ness*, also known as mindedness a conditioning of the other (the world). I believe that the *for-me-ness* is pre-conceptual, pre-linguistic, pre-observational. It is not the case that we always be very conscious and attentive

¹³⁵ Zahavi 2019: 635-653

about the *for-me-ness* aspect. The *for-me-ness* is a logical pre-requisite for accepting the uniqueness of self-awareness. The 'me' in any form of *for-me-ness* comes with the otherness from the 'other' built into it. I have also spoken about the significance of the body in constituting self-awareness. The self-experience is difficult to understand without any incorporation of the physical, outward biological being and the bodily self. Human existence is inseparably connected with the world, and this connected existence takes place through my body. So, I believe that the awareness of 'I' cannot be apprehended without referring to the body that I identify as mine. No enthusiast of the minimal- self-theory or *for-me-ness*, would consider that the minimal selfhood exhausts account of selfhood. In fact, the name 'minimal' is somewhat used in order to highlight how restricted the notion is. Much more needs to be said in order to account for the complete nature of the human self. So, the upshot here is that self-awareness of a subject is constituted in the totality of the subject's mental repertoire, having both pre-reflective and reflective levels, the body, the intervention of the other, and the subject's world-embeddedness.

While we are talking about the awareness of the self, we should also be well acquainted with the nature of the indexical 'I'. Hence, I proceeded to the discussion of the use of the indexical 'I' that is used for referring to oneself. In this context, I tried to establish that philosophers have associated the indexical 'I' with its referent which is the individual self. Moreover, it is believed that I have a peculiar position or relation to myself. This peculiarity is believed to be reflected in the peculiarity of the word 'I'. I tried to argue that the nature of indexical 'I' is such that it refers to this mode of being self-conscious or self-aware. If one is just self-aware, or conscious about her own existence then it

implies that the individual would be capable of using indexical 'I' to refer to herself. In order to be capable of using the indexical 'I', one does not have to link a proper name or a mystical self as its referent. Then I have proceeded to say that, there can be two ways of referring while using the indexical 'I'. One is the use in the sense of a subject and the other is the use in the sense of an object. In the use as a subject, 'I' is seen as an immediately given first-person. In use as an object, 'I' is seen as an individual amongst so many other individuals from a third-person perspective. I believe that the use in the sense of a subject is more ubiquitous and its referent is immune to error through misidentification whereas, the object usage is secondary and there can occur some sort of misidentification in referring to oneself. I have also endorsed the view that the subject usage of 'I' is a logical pre-requisite of the object usage of 'I'. I have also tried to find out whether the sense or reference of indexical 'I' is private or not. I have advocated that there are different layers of self-awareness. In one layer, the awareness of the self is implicit, minimal, and unarticulated. None of these layers of self-awareness is private. This minimal layer is peculiarly and exclusively manifested to the subject. On the contrary, the self-awareness that gets shaped in us socially, culturally, and externally, and that which is more articulated, is also not private, neither is it exclusively and peculiarly available to me. It is available to me and it is also available to other subjects as well, through the ability of imagination, empathy, simulation, and inference. I have also proposed that it is may be the case that indexical 'I' carries a variable description contrary to the popular view of Frege and Russell that indexicals are bereft of descriptions. I am trying to establish that the subject use of 'I' holds my unique and immediately revealed identity as an experiencing subject to myself. The object use of 'I' holds my

public identity. The description is variable in the sense that the description is not absolutely fixed. Also, whether or not I satisfy the description that I am actually having in mind while I am using the word 'I' is immaterial, and the success and failure of the referring nature of indexical 'I' does not depend on the description that is associated with indexical 'I'. As soon as I utter it, I manage to ensure reference success.

After that, I have delved into the discussion of emotion playing an important role in constituting self-awareness. I believe that there are two significant mental phenomena that play a very important role in constituting our self-awareness, namely, memory and emotion. In this thesis, I have made a humble attempt to understand the role of emotion in shaping our self-awareness. I have always been in favour of accepting two strata of self-awareness. One is primitive, pre-reflective, implicit, non-verbal, peculiarly unique, and first-order. The other is second-order, reflective, explicit, public identity, and communicable. Contrary to the usual belief that emotions only contribute to creating the complex layer of self-awareness, I have tried to establish that emotional experiences contribute to both these kinds of self-awareness. However, the contributions are of a different sort. In the former (the primitive level), the self-awareness is identical to the emotional experience of that moment. So, here the emotional experiences get tented with the self-awareness of that individual. In the latter, the emotion concept provides concrete information about the individual. The personality and the public identity of the subject get revealed to both the individual herself and others through the articulated emotion concepts the individual possesses.

Finally, I have tried to depict a notion of subjectivity, based on my understanding of the nature of self-awareness. I have argued that subjectivity is not a mere illusion. Subjectivity is a real phenomenon that makes an individual present to herself as the owner of her experiences. Every subject is presented to herself in a unique way. So, even though our mental states, communicative aspects, and thoughts are intersubjectively accessible, there is something left in the self-awareness of an individual purely as the subject's own. That is subjectivity. According to my opinion, the phenomenon of subjectivity arises from three apparatuses/constituents, namely, the body of the subject, the reflexivity of self-awareness, and the coexistence of *me-other* perspective of an individual. The subjectivity of experiential self-consciousness is to a great extent bodily subjectivity. We must also accept that the reflexive nature of self-awareness is also significant in constituting subjectivity. The reflexivity of a self-awareness state makes a subject what it is. Reflexivity refers to the fact that the content of the states of awareness belongs to the subject and it also gets immediately revealed to the same subject. This self-intimating and self-manifesting nature of self-awareness makes it immediately, peculiarly, authoritatively, groundlessly, and non-inferentially presented to the subject herself. All these characteristic features are the exclusive aspects that make a subject uniquely presented to herself. That is subjectivity. What ultimately emerges as the subjectivity of an individual is the realization that she obtains a co-existence of first-person perspective and third-person perspective simultaneously going on within herself. Subjectivity makes a subject a *first-*

*person plural*¹³⁶. That means we embrace belongingness to a community. We adopt the third-person perspective. However, we experience it internally. So, we also have a first-person perspective.

I would like to conclude my thesis by saying that since the beginning of this thesis I have been stating that I shall consciously refrain myself from getting into any metaphysical discussion about the self. However, all the analysis of self-awareness and subjectivity that we have come across in this thesis so far, points to some kind of metaphysics. It cannot fully escape the metaphysical aspect. Hence, I would like to advocate for an intersubjective metaphysics. The idea is that, in the mundane world of so many subjects, our self-awareness and subjectivity get constituted. In the process of this constitution the body-mind-world-embeddedness of a subject and the body-mind-world embeddedness of other subjects, everything has a role to play. The self-awareness and the subjectivity do not remain as objects of a hidden domain in this metaphysics. They come into being through an inter-personal dimension. It goes without saying that I shall not be able to provide a complete framework for the metaphysical discussion in a brief format. Therefore, I express my strong desire to explore it in detail in my future research.

In conclusion, I am posing some questions that could advance this area of study. I aim to conduct further research based on these questions.

- What is the metaphysics of self-awareness?
- What is the metaphysics of subjectivity?

¹³⁶ Zahavi 2020: 19-24

- What is the role of memory in constituting self-awareness of an individual?
- Does cultural and linguistic diversity and difference induce variations in the form self-awareness?

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the nature of self-awareness **and its relation to the world**

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. Self- awareness standardly refers to the knowledge of the self. Some would argue that this knowledge would be confined to understanding the mental states of a subject. Is it really so? It seems like self-awareness points towards something more expansive. Let us take a closer look at the issue. It may be the case that my mind, my body, my life, my lived experiences, my consciousness, my conscience, my knowledge, everything together creates my awareness of myself. The summation of all these factors yields the completeness of my self- awareness. However, in this thesis, I shall try to investigate how the awareness of the self is built. Is it only the mental states that contribute to the self-awareness? Or, is it the particularly concerned physical body? Or, is it the subject's world-embeddedness that has an important role to play? Across different research, most of the times, it has been accepted to a great extent that there may be two broad categories or kinds of self-awareness. The first may be described as an inward or internal awareness of the self that happens within the subject. The second category may be considered as external self- awareness where other subjects know themselves through external information. I think that the notion of self-awareness clasps the totality of these two categories of awareness, namely, inward awareness and external awareness of world-embeddedness. I shall be defining inward self-awareness as a constant- mindedness regarding the constant conscious

existence that emerges just by virtue of being a subject. However, in the second category, outward self-awareness is built from external sources. It emerges from the point of view of how others perceive us. Sometimes philosophers distinguish between the notions of self-awareness or self-consciousness and self-knowledge. Self-knowledge may convey a sense of dense knowledge of a subject's identity and personality. Self-awareness on the contrary includes both these senses, namely the inward- minded and the public personality of the self. In this thesis, I shall prefer to investigate the nature of self-awareness which also includes the repertoire of self-knowledge as well. A. Research Questions The phenomenon of self-awareness calls for an explanation. In the thesis, it will be gradually revealed that I shall try not to take any metaphysical stand about the self, right now. I shall be focusing on the experience of the awareness of the self. Even if we want to explore the notion of self, we do not have any path other than reaching it through the discussion of self-awareness. The moment we realize that the most convenient way of talking about the self is by carefully exploring self-awareness more; the discourse regarding self-awareness becomes of primary significance to us. However, in my thesis specifically, self-awareness is the more crucial factor. In order to explore

the nature of the self -awareness **that is** given to us **in** our **experience** , we are going 5
to

address a few questions in this thesis, such as: 1. What is self-awareness? 2. In how many ways self-awareness can be perceived and understood? 3. How is the awareness of the self constituted or built in us? 4. Are there different layers of self-awareness? 5.

What is the nature **of** the **pre-reflective** layer of **self-awareness** ? 6. What is **the** 39
nature **of the** reflective layer **of**

self-awareness? 7. What is for-me-ness in self-awareness? 8. How significant is the sense of for-me-ness in self-awareness? 9. What is the nature of the indexical 'I'? 10. What is the function of indexical 'I' while referring to self-awareness? 11. Can the indexical 'I' be used both

in the sense of a subject and **in the sense** of **an object** 95

? 12. What is it like to use the indexical 'I' in the sense of a subject? 13. What is it like to use the indexical 'I' in the sense of an object? 14. Which one

between the subject use and the object use of indexical 'I' **is** 74

more ubiquitous? 15. Does the meaning of indexical 'I' carry a sense of privacy? 16.

What is the role of emotion in constituting self-awareness ? 17. What is the nature of

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Subjectivity? 18. What notion of subjectivity can we develop based on the idea of self-awareness we are discussing here? 19. How is the subjectivity of a subject constituted? 20. Does subjectivity imply privacy? B. Summary of the Chapters The main discussion starts with the first chapter. The name of the first chapter is "An Overview of Different Accounts of Self-awareness". In this chapter, I have attempted to show that there are various possible ways of apprehending self-awareness. It may be apprehended in at least four possible ways. Firstly, we can talk about the knowledge of the real nature of the self. Emancipatory discourses always assign great importance to the knowledge of the real ontological status of the self, for example in classical Indian Philosophy. Secondly, there can be a stream of discussion regarding the momentary awareness of the current mental state of a subject. Thirdly, there can be a discussion regarding the theoretical knowledge about who I am or what sort of entity I am, along with ontological commitments. Lastly, there is self-experience, i.e., the immediate awareness of self-hood within oneself. I have proceeded with clarifying that in this thesis, I am only concerned about the fourth alternative for now. I have also explained that this inner me-awareness may be felt in different layers of awareness. One can be named as the explicit layer and the other one can be named as the implicit layer

of self-awareness. In the explicit layer of self-awareness, we become aware of

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our public identity. However, there may be another layer of implicit self-awareness where a conscious subject is merely represented to herself just as a conscious experiencer. However, in all these different layers of self-awareness, there is a quality of 'for-me-ness' that makes the self-awareness exclusively represented to the individual. After that, I have talked about the notion of for-me-ness in this chapter and how I think

this is an extremely significant aspect of self-awareness. The name of the second chapter is

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"The Constitution of Self-Awareness". This chapter attempts to understand how our self-awareness is constituted. In this chapter, I have proposed that there should be certain criteria that any account of self-awareness should abide by. For example, an account of self-awareness should be able to explain its representational nature as it is a firm possibility that self-awareness represents both our object of experience and itself. The explanation of representational mechanism should not be bereft of the aspect of consciousness. Lastly, the explanation of self-awareness should point towards an entity that we get in our experience. It should not lead us to believe that self is some mystical and unexplainable entity. I have also discussed that self-awareness is something that automatically gets revealed to us and it makes us aware of the fact that we exist. Now, how does this kind of self-awareness get constructed in us? How is it constituted? I have tried to endorse that the experience of self-awareness can happen on two levels, namely, pre-reflective and reflective. However, in both these states of self-awareness, there is a concurrence of constant-mindedness and an intervention of

the other. This mindedness is also called the for-me-ness by many philosophers. The awareness of the self, conveys a sense of being a subject. The term 'self-awareness' carries a sense of felt aspect and quale factor. This is considered as the for-me-ness by many philosophers, about which we shall have a discussion later in this thesis. Now, what it precisely means is that the nature of my self-awareness would be determined in two ways. At some level, it is largely dependent on how I see myself from the third-person perspective. My personality, character, and all the information that describes me are basically descriptions of me, seen from the other's perspective. Nevertheless, at a very basic level, in my self-awareness, every experience of mine is marked with the quality of for-me-ness. So, I shall try to establish that for-me-ness is a significant aspect of my self-awareness. Furthermore, I have also discussed that the body and the world-embeddedness of a subject also play vital roles in the constitution of self-awareness. The name of the third chapter is 'Understanding Indexical 'I'. The indexical 'I', when used in our language, refers to one single entity, that is the individual herself. Moreover, it is always the awareness of the self that we paradigmatically refer to when we use the indexical 'I'. The referent of indexical 'I' commonly seems to be the object of self-awareness. 'I' is a peculiar word and it seems to fit a peculiar entity in my life, that is me, myself. We have seen

in the history of philosophy that the indexical 'I' has been linked

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with its referent, that is the individual self. An individual's peculiar position or relation to herself is believed to be reflected in the peculiarity of the word 'I'. Hence, the analytic philosophers have obsessed over the meaning and use of the indexical 'I', with the hope that an analysis of indexical 'I', would enlighten us about our relation with ourselves. As a result, a vast literature has proliferated on the indexical 'I'. Each of us has a thirst for knowing and exploring the nature of this 'I'. I have started the chapter discussing some important parts of the history of

the philosophy of language, tracing **the** gradual development **of the** discourse regarding

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the **meaning of**

the indexical 'I'. In the beginning, I have tried to find out what makes the indexical 'I', a purely referring expression. I have discussed whether 'I' can be categorized as a proper name or a referential term. Does the indexical 'I' refer to anything at all? If 'I' does refer to something then what is the nature of its referent? It is followed by the discussion of Elizabeth Anscombe's view in detail, in order to explore more about the referring nature of 'I'. After that, I have discussed that the indexical 'I' can be used in two different senses. Firstly, it can be used in the sense of being a subject. Secondly, it can be used in the sense of being an object. I have attempted to establish that the use of indexical 'I' in the sense of a subject is comparatively more primary than the use of indexical 'I' in the sense of an object. I have also attempted to answer the question, are the uses of indexical 'I' as subject or as an object hold some sort of description? I have also discussed John Perry's view on the indexical 'I' and tried to explain how the shift of meaning or referent of 'I' is possible from context to context. How is it possible for us to use the indexical 'I' perfectly meaningfully in a statement despite the shift of references? After that I have also discussed whether the meaning of indexical 'I' should be considered as private or intersubjectively accessible. The name of the fourth chapter is "Role of Emotions in Constituting Self-awareness". In this chapter, I have tried to establish that emotions play a very important role in constituting self-awareness. I have