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CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING EXISTENTIALIST ONTOLOGY, AND IDENTIFICATION OF INTENTIONALITY AS A CATEGORY

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the place of intentionality of consciousness within the cognizance of existentialist ontology. This puts into consideration, the goal of the paper is to explicate the intentionality thesis as an existential thesis. The issue of prior dependence upon previous ontologies is discussed as a measure of insight to note the point of departure between existentialism and non-existentialist theories of ontology. Otherwise, one might be tempted to accept the thrust of the previous ontology that sees truth in light of changeless notion. The existentialist ontology and the architectonics associated with the intentionality category is more plausible in explaining the notion of a multivalent epistemology, that is, epistemological framework oriented towards many truths.

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INTRODUCTION

The place of ontology, broadly speaking, is prevalent among philosophers, and commonplacely, a part of the enterprise to suggest that truth or truths exist. Truth, therefore, whether invariant, single, dual or plural, should be explicable in terms of ontological framework. In accounting for existentialist ontology, there are two stages required for its realization. In the first stage, the paper attempts a preliminary explication of the previous accounts of ontology. This is needed because, it provides the basis of the existentialist critique in one dimension. Rather than give up the generalizations of previous account of ontologies, these generalizations, provide for the existentialists, notably Martin Heidegger, Jean - PualSatre, and Maurice Merleau- Ponty grounds of their critique of previous ontologies. The difference is expressed by showing that one (that is previous ontological accounts) makes demarcation into realms, a priority, while existentialist ontology depends on non-demarcation and borderless orientation as a perspective. The second stage rest largely on the existentialist recognition that the application of ontological inquiry to truth acquisition requires that intentionality is often a basis for showing how to overcome the problem of certainty as an ideal of knowing.

The intentionality thesis forms the basis of the existentialist conviction, regarding multivalent epistemology, that is, the existence of multiplicity of truths. It is upon the intentionality thesis, as a thesis about "directness", that the existentialist develops their critique against the collateral history of ontology as depicting an invariant epistemology. The existentialist recognized that Edmund Husserl had provided an account of intentionality that anticipates their own conceptualization. But, they differ with Husserl with regard to what he meant by intentionality, so as not to beg the question of its "directness". The intentionality thesis represents objection, however, to the Husserlian interpretation that tempts us into accepting the duality of the lived-world and the transcendental ego. With Husserl, there will be two different ways of reading intentionality. While one pertains to reducing knowledge to essence, the other leaves it open in terms of man's concrete involvements. The first is a notion of intentionality upon which its thesis about "directness" does not fulfill the existentialist aspiration. The consequence of accepting it will underestimate the existentialist goal of believing multivalent truths. The reason for this is that Husserl never anticipated the consequence of its employment for detachment. While existentialism is open to concrete involvements, it abhors detachment, even as an observer. The existentialist sought to reorient ontology¹, meaning that ontology is not just staring us anew. The subject-matter

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presupposes that those who are interested in ontology, whether by developing a critique, sustaining a critique or developing a rebuttal share in a common understanding about what is relevant to their paradigm and what ought to be excluded. In considering what makes an ontological outlook existentialist, we are led to discern the way the theories of existentialism might be perceived as provoking and answering ontological questions. In doing this, it is hopeless to try to define existentialism, because, existentialism is existentialism, in so far as it is best understood by analyzing the many ways the theorists have wished it to be understood. Existentialism is not to be equated to an essence with either eternal or immutable truth. Although it may be difficult to summarize their positions into neat propositions, this point affirms a truth about existentialism. In this paper, we will attempt to elucidate the features that distinguish existentialism from, as well as connect it with other forms of inquiry on ontology.

Pure Phenomenology as a Ground for Presupposing Existentialist Ontology:

A number of distinct and interrelated approaches to the question of ontology have been labelled by their proponents or commentators either as transcendental phenomenology or existential phenomenology. Any attempt at a basic articulation of ontology must be related to phenomenology which underpins it as a method; otherwise it becomes an enterprise in personal reflections. The source of all methods and ways of attaining the goal of all existence, ways of perceiving our personal existence, our environment, surroundings and interactions which we call reality is phenomenology. It is a presuppositionless philosophy which was born of an interest to cope with the problem of phenomenological epoche (suspension of judgement) in a way that leaves us justified in thinking that we do have a pre-theoretical account of the world. The landmark of phenomenology as a presuppositionless philosophy is that we are led to abandon the conception of ontology that is concerned with providing foundations for solipsism, dualisms, immutability, in favor of a description of an ontology which in fact develops out of our initial contacts with the world. The philosophical literature of the phenomenologists' attitude towards ontology deals mainly with two aspects. The first consists in a critique of traditional (Plato) and modern (Cartesian) ontologies spearheaded by Edmund Husserl. The second consists in improvements upon the Husserlian phenomenology and the rejection of his transcendental phenomenology by the existentialist philosophers. The first aspect consists of the various attempts by Edmund Husserl to throw critical light on the implications of traditional and modern ontologies. The desire to sever the phenomenon of the world from ontological inquiry is persistent in traditional ontology, notably Plato. Plato's project is based on showing that there are two realms of being, whereby the beings of the familiar world participates in the being of the world of Ideas. Further complicating this picture is our understanding of Kantianism where the dominant theoretical positions tended from the beginning, to indicate that being is identical with certain realms that are either knowable or unknowable such as the forms and the noumenon. The Husserlian phenomenology reverses this trend in its conceptualisation of ontology. For Husserl, it is fitting that what has been sketched under the rubrics of *forms* and *noumenon*, should first find a meaning to *lebenswelt*² and within the *lebenswelt* (lived world). Rather than say that being participates in another being, with a speculative content, one must see the unitary synthetic moment in the concept of *lebenswelt*, where, "the world-context defines

and set limits to human action"³. The *lebenswelt*, interpreted as the lived-world denotes the establishment of a conceptual scheme that constitutes the sole available medium inherent to all human actions without involving ourselves with further questions which bear in mind the necessity of our participating in the being or reality of another realm. This is the starting point of the Husserlian quest. The *lebenswelt* is not to be arrived at by drawing upon the resources of Platonism where being participates in a form of existence to which it is inadequate for its concrete existence. The reading is that a world that is constantly changing cannot participate in another world that is rationally stable. What one should make of this claim permits a general formulation of the principle which Husserl had called the *phenomenological epoche*. It deals with the question of the way out in our phenomenological quest which has hitherto gone unnoticed because of our traditional views of ontology which focuses on the impact of dualisms in explaining ontology. In so far as the phenomenon of the world is the central concern of ontology, all our usual beliefs about the world and our relation to it, as well as all specific inquiries into the character of the world, must be set aside or be enclosed within parenthesis.

The phenomenological epoche marks a frontier in phenomenological inquiries. It represents a phenomenological method whose starting point is the lived-world. It depicts the new status of ontology which has been dispossessed of all previous presuppositions about the world. Consequently, the initial and very important step in phenomenological investigation is what Husserl calls *Phenomenological epoche* which consists in putting between brackets (in other words, putting aside) all previous beliefs, assumptions and presuppositions about the object of inquiry. All these must be set aside, and the investigator must focus his attention on the essence of the object as it reveals itself to pure experience.⁴ This passage brings out one important way to gain a certain understanding of Husserl's project as an exercise in transcendental phenomenology. It will be well to make clear what kind of expectation these words, 'focus his attention on the essence of the object as it reveals itself to pure experience' have for us. The attempts at gaining the knowledge of the object which we call the world are unlikely to succeed if the observer fails to separate himself from the world. This suggests that instead of belaboring Descartes for pointing out that the essence of the *cogito* consists in the fact of thinking, "Husserl, however, maintains that the *cogito* reveals not only the thinking subject but also the object of his thought."⁵ The *cogito* should be seen as a foundation theme to reorient us in ontological thinking.

The difference between that which is sought by Husserl and Descartes is that thinking is the direct theoretical premise of the phenomenological point of view. To push past the point reached by Descartes, Husserl suggests that the relation to be established with the object of thought is to reduce it to essences in order to penetrate that which constitutes the object. This is called *eidetic reduction*⁶. The transition from thinking to reducing object of thinking to its essences serves to establish the *ego* as a transcendental ego which later constitutes the object of Sartrean existential critique.⁷ It is this notion of eidetic reduction and that of transcendental ego which distinguished his mode of thought from the Cartesian ontology. However, it should be mentioned that the Husserlian critique is firmly anchored to the Platonist ontology. The decision to reduce object of thinking to essences is only in

appearance phenomenological, but with an appeal to Platonism even though the subject matter is treated as if being is not participating in another realm. With the notion of eidetic reduction, the relation between the *ego* and the *lebenswelt* has been reversed. Whereas Husserl sees the task of transcendental phenomenology to be that of describing the lived-world from the viewpoint of a detached observer, existential phenomenology insists that the observer cannot separate himself from the world.⁸ In other words, should such notion of eidetic reduction be accommodated, it is here that we will find the most influential phenomenological attempts to derive rational outcomes by methods related to phenomenology. On reflection, Husserlian phenomenology turns out to offer no more genuine satisfaction than the conclusion about the *lebenswelt*, it had sought to establish with the result being that by eidetic reduction, and the emphasis of the phenomenological enterprises has changed significantly. Husserl's phenomenological project is susceptible to a double judgment. The project is based on showing that the traditional (Cartesian included) ontology is false and that a transcendental ego (not in need of a *lebenswelt*) is rationally satisfying. The identifying features for the establishment of existentialist ontology begin to appear with Husserlian phenomenology. We know, for instance, from the Husserlian outlines that the detached observer is set in stark contrast to the option of a being that is involved in the world (Being-in-the-world).

At this point, the relevance of the foregoing remark about the detached observer deserves more than a cursory reading. Two points are central to it. First, if phenomenology is to be regarded as a genuine alternative to previous ontologies, it must overcome the problem of certainty in providing sufficient reason for reliable knowledge-claims. Husserl's claim may be initially understood as a reassertion of the Cartesian over the Heraclitean line of thought where it is instructive to draw out the consequences of a constantly changing reality upon our knowledge-claims. The Heraclitean constantly changing scenario is not a false idea of the nature of reality, but it has in the main obscured the higher fact that all knowledge claims has of necessity some degree of certainty. Phenomenology, for Husserl, in the final reckoning should be placed on the same pedestal with science. Husserl's project is not the doubting of knowledge that ... to be doubted ... it is the grasping of what takes place and must take place in all knowledge so that knowledge can achieve what we take it to achieve. Thus, for Husserl, the question is not whether knowledge is capable of encountering its object. His question is, rather, how we are to comprehend the fact that knowledge comes to have the validity ascribed to it, and what talk about its validity and truth means and can only properly mean.⁹ One of the problems to arise, when we construe the detached observer as Cartesian *ego* is that the *ego* absolutely excludes the content of the fact of consciousness if it cannot overcome subjectivity's inability to provide sufficient reason for the existence of the world. Cartesianism exclude cases which clearly fall under consciousness. As an initial attempt, the Husserlian can say that, the transcendental ego reduces the phenomenon of the world into essences (*eidos*). It is presumed that the transcendental ego, rather the Cartesian ego "is a patchwork of ideas on a lot of largely independent philosophical themes"¹⁰. The reasoning here is that the same Cartesian, who tries to disprove the existence of the world by methodic doubt is forced to rely upon his methodic doubt to arrive at the *cogito*. A related point is that the Husserlian, rather than deny the phenomenon of the world attempts to say something more

constructive about the nature, extent, challenge and meaning of our contact with the world. This is because we are always confronted with the interpretation of the phenomenon of the world. Because of the challenges posed by the Heraclitean flux, the most convenient escape in the spirit of Husserl's philosophizing should be to pave the way for an acceptance of transcendental ego engaged in transcendental reduction. Like Descartes and Kant Husserl also believes that the human mind has a natural tendency to go astray and take illusion for reality... These three philosophers (Descartes, Kant and Husserl) each in his own way think it is necessary to resist this natural tendency of the mind to take illusion for genuine knowledge. Descartes' "methodic doubt" is designed precisely to check this tendency. Kant... tries to check it by restricting human knowledge to the empirical world beyond which lies illusion... since the categories of human understanding cannot be validly applied beyond the empirical world. Husserl for his part tries to check the natural tendency of the human mind by his "phenomenological epoche" and the transcendental reduction".¹¹

The phenomenological proof of the supposition that the phenomenon of the world as lived is unstable is to draw considerations from the transcendental reduction of the phenomenon. This is a burden of proof with which the Cartesian has struggled to unravel. However, as mentioned earlier, a reminder is needed, having said two points are central to any reading of the Husserlian detached observer. The second point is that there is an issue whether elements and themes drawn from transcendental phenomenology can mesh and produce the best possible response to the concerns of the existentialists. Since existentialism is acknowledged to have gained its methodic outfit from phenomenology, elements of phenomenology must be explained either as a problem or critique in terms of the way they mesh with existentialist ontology. It is the awareness of this point that has always made one to doubt the real status of existentialism as a separate and independent philosophic enterprise. The moral from the ontological characterization of the observer as a being detached has led phenomenology in the direction where undue attention is paid to essences rather than the richness of our everyday phenomenon. The existentialists are attracted to the work of Husserl who not only developed a critique of previous ontologies, but they are equally attracted to the assumption derived from the facts of our consciousness as intentional which shape our ordinary notions about what existence is and what existence is not. This merely points to the thesis that there are existential cues that shape our overall understanding in preference for consciousness. We all know that consciousness makes us vulnerable to the phenomenon of the world since it is asserted that consciousness is constantly consciousness of something.

If we are considering the spirit of Husserl's philosophizing, then, this is a matter of considerable importance. For Husserl, in so far as, the facts of consciousness are intentional, it paves the way for an acceptance of phenomenology in general. And in particular, it paves the way for an acceptance of existential phenomenology. Existentialism thrives on phenomenological strategies of attaching importance to the *lebenswelt* and the fact of consciousness as intentionality. The analysis of consciousness as intentional reveals the inadequacy of traditional ontology that is confused with dualisms. If we take a presuppositionless view of consciousness, which does not presuppose detachment; we shall be led to affirm the thesis

that consciousness entails intentionality. In this way, the thesis of intentionality guarantees a thematic continuity between phenomenology and existentialism; which requires that we must make deep connections with Husserlian phenomenology. The existentialists embraced from the start the implications of the thesis of intentionality for existence. For them, ontology survives as an enterprise when it defines problems in ways that it can claim to have resolved them. Unlike Husserl however, the existentialists hold that there is no ground for Husserl in his belief in a transcendental ego especially when we bear in mind the importance Husserl attached to the *lebenswelt*. In fact, there is little to be gained from calling this phenomenology existential if it cannot be described and compared.¹² The connection between phenomenology and existentialism is that existentialism seeks to use phenomenology as a model for the central method of existential analysis. With the thesis of the intentionality, the existentialists were led to show how the distinction between mind and body, subject and object, might be eroded in certain circumstances. What is implied when we distinguish beings that are conscious from those that are not, the interest is ontological rather than a mere classification. In clear rejection of the Husserlian view, the existentialists however find the Husserlian view of the transcendental ego not only unnecessary but ontologically problematic, because it turns our attention away from the everydayness of the world and the time phenomenon by which man's existence is comprehended. In the remainder of this paper, we shall focus on the existential conceptualization of ontology. This will include an examination of several themes that relate to our engagements with the world. The thesis of intentionality will thus be considered as a beginning and reference point for inquiry into the nature of our contacts with the world and how to gain knowledge of it.

The Intentionality of Consciousness as an Existential Thesis:

The concrete merit of consciousness is obscured by the focus of previous ontologies which speak of it as something that is directed exclusively to 'inner' experiences of the subject. The main proposition of consciousness according to these previous ontologies, notably Cartesian ontology is that it is derived from an approach which defines it as internal. If we presuppose consciousness as an ontology that is inside, it reduces the paradigm of philosophizing to the inner sense. The upshot is simply that the object of consciousness can never be the object of outer intuition because the previous ontologies presuppose a separation of the "internal" from the "external". One obvious consequence of any dualistic ontology is its separation of human knowledge into a sharply mechanistic outfit, portraying it as something that thrives by merely driving a wedge between the internal and the external. Even, when consciousness thinks of its object, at that, it could not draw any inference from it. Consciousness, thus viewed, is united with its object without being conscious of it because in this dualistic ontology nothing could transport us to our objects of intuition. The ontological focus of the dualist (even Spinoza's one-world) ontology has led to a general neglect of consciousness as both an intentional and existential thesis. It has encouraged the misreading of consciousness as something "inside" "inward," "inner" and exclusively a phenomenon about "self". Consciousness has been conceptualized as absolutely separate from the object on the one hand, and absolutely untouched by relationships on the other hand. It is conceived as having the property of inwardness. In this way it is hard to imagine how consciousness could be related to acts of intentionality "as

sight is referred to something that is seen, hearing to something that is heard, etc."¹³ What it comes to, then, is that the insight of inwardness means that consciousness is an invariant principle directed only at inner experience of the worldless ego, more so with a wrong reading of Husserlian phenomenological reduction where existence is presumed to have been suspended or put in brackets. One must not forget that there is a famous difficulty which besets any philosopher who ventures to use consciousness as an existential thesis. The difficulty lies in explaining how consciousness is directed at his objects. It is for this reason, Jean-Paul Sartre, an existentialist philosopher, while reconsidering the intentional nature of consciousness, noted that "consciousness (like Spinoza's substance) can be limited only by itself."¹⁴ Our task therefore is to attempt an exploration of consciousness as intentional and show how the often neglected existential dimension is worthy of phenomenological attention. It should be noted that running through the views of St. Augustine in Scholastic philosophy, the use made in his writings of the idea of intentionality vigorously brings out the limitations of consciousness as an existential thesis when God is made the focus of reference in thinking about intentionality. As A. Lambertino puts it, ontological intentionality assumes in Scholastic philosophy a different meaning from that of phenomenological philosophy: while for the former the being given to the consciousness is the existent being (in act or potentiality) circumscribed by an essence, for the latter it is the intentional meaning, the pure meaning – that is, the essence as such, referred only accidentally to its existential potentiality.¹⁵

Nevertheless, remark as being ranged above is likely to arouse existential interest, but it is helpful to begin by considering such a case. It enables us to draw a clear-cut conclusion that not all theories of intentionality are supposed to be worth of being described as existential theses. In order to explain this further, this conclusion is not varied in Husserl's intentionality. As noted by Sanguineti, Still, the Husserlian intentionality is not directed at external reality, but rather towards an ideal object, internal to consciousness: to think is to think *something* – that is, it contains a correlated object that it cannot lack.¹⁶ From above, we are thus led to specify how we must understand phenomenology based on Heidegger's reaction to Husserl's descriptive and transcendental phenomenologies. In a word, for Heidegger, phenomenology has no need of a hidden aspect. It is not accompanied by any evocation of a hidden aspect. The directedness thesis of intentionality has already secured us against this supposition. As Heidegger observes, Husserl makes transcendental phenomenology appear too privileged in respect of the eidetic reduction by which a subject is constituted as nothing but "the problem of the basic articulation of being, the question of the necessary belonging – together of whatness or way-of-being and the belonging of the two of them in their unity to the idea of being in general."¹⁷ But why is it that in both cases, that is, descriptive and transcendental, phenomenology is used by Husserl? Obviously, for Heidegger, Husserl is provisionally preoccupied with the task of elucidating a pseudo-problem, but the question to ask is: "What is the source for defining this concept and in what direction is it to be resolved?"¹⁸ The intentionality thesis when complemented by directedness, we are no longer faced with a choice of making duality into a method for the study of ontology understood as phenomenology. The various ontological views on intentionality can be classified according to whether they assume that intentionality is an existential thesis or not in their

interpretations of consciousness. This requires more detailed attention in the analysis of intentionality than it has earlier received. For, there is a constant pull towards an analysis of intentionality in terms of existential thesis, much of the past epochs of philosophizing, are a contingently class of thesis that has dominated ontological thinking which has led in the main to the importance of constructing ontological schemes for being in general.

Recognizing the importance of existence in ontological discourse opens up the notion of perception as a core problem in ontology. Any ontological view that gives a central place to the notion of perception hitherto is bound to be empirical. Perhaps this explains why so much of traditional ontology is dependent upon perception. The perceptual component of our approach to ontology is linked to Bishop George Berkeley, an empiricist. For him, we have some reasons for thinking that: to be is to be perceived. We accept or reject ontological theory on the basis of perception. Existence is best captured by perception because perception describes clear and compelling examples in which existence without perception is at odds with our considered judgments about existence. A good example is that a table in a room without being dependent upon a mind to perceive it does not exist. Although, as it will be explained later, Heidegger has admonished that we must learn to distinguish between being that is inside another being as water is in a cup and a being-in-the-world that is transcendent. In Berkeley's view the subject-matter of existence is best captured in the proposition, *Esseestpercipi* (to be is to be perceived). This proposition is what is meant by responding successfully to the challenges posed by time and gap in perception. An accurate analysis, thus of the term exists and its implications with an eye for its consequences on existential ontology is a general insight on board, beginning with problems of perception.

At the very start of Husserl's theory of intentionality is the rather striking claim that consciousness is of something. At the cost of existential implications, a link is arrived at between intentionality and existence. Consciousness conforms to intentionality, but in which sense is this to be specified? From within the non-existentialist ontology, all that is needed in intentionality is for an individual to rule out alternatives to his or her ontological outlook as contradictory, as intentionality is specifically directed at a definite lack in other realms. These aspects of intentionality's directness at a definite lack are clarified in Sartre's *Being and nothingness* in the following ontological credentials:

itis from being that nothingness derives concretely its efficacy. This is what we mean when we say nothingness haunts being. That means that being has no need of nothingness in order to be conceived and that we can examine the idea of it exhaustively without finding there the least trace of nothingness.¹⁹

This is the reason one has to explore the impetus behind intentionality of consciousness as an existential thesis. Heidegger puts the reason for this as follows while with the utmost assurance we have to cling to the meaning of the maxim: "to the matters themselves".²⁰ The principle of a research endeavor is the principle of its investigative conduct, and so the principle by which the idea of that research investigation is appropriated and carried out. ... Accordingly the principle of a research is that by which it constantly orients

itself in its execution and that which serves as a constant guideline in directing the actual steps of its execution.²¹

If the existential ontology and the previous ontologies were to be of different ontological frameworks, the pertinent question is to entertain areas of conflict. Existential ontology has radically altered what we take ontology to be, with a change in the subject matter from "thinghood" to "man". In previous ontologies, when we say something exist in the world or a region of the world, one sort of evidence is to say that the thing is placed within (inside), as if water is in a cup. This means being is still dependent upon another being just as it obtains in Plato. As Heidegger sees it, a principle for demarcating the world cannot be a sufficient principle of ontology. Ontology, or, what Heidegger calls fundamental ontology does not begin with the notion that man is spatial, except that with the notion of intentionality, the emphasis begins to change from solipsism. Much of what have been said about ontologies have yielded foundation themes such as ego, transcendental ego, epoche, bracketing, subject, object, world, which upon reflections, they are borne out of challenges posed by ontological inquires. But these challenges have to do with man which remains the catalyst behind ontological inquires. And as a quite necessary generalization, the same way intentionality has had a profound impact on the ways in which we are to interpret existence. Thus, in considering what makes an inquiry ontological, one must determine the extent to which the focus is on man. This is the reason Heidegger draws our attention to Kant. For him, there is no how we can uncover the meaning of ontology without being mindful of Kant's four questions. Before any discourse on ontology can begin, what must be clearly formulated is the question of man. To fix the case more clearly, the Kantian questions are:

1. What can I know?
2. What should I do?
3. What may I hope?
4. What is man?

According to Heidegger, "At bottom, says Kant, the first three questions are concentrated in the fourth, "What is man?" for the determination of the final ends of human reason results from the explanation of what man is"²².

Heidegger's claim may be initially understood as a reassertion of Kantianism, but the relevance of the foregoing is to see whether intentionality as an element drawn from phenomenology (Husserlian) can mesh and produce the best possible response to the concerns of the existentialists whose primacy is to seek to look penetratingly at the question of man. To achieve this, we will need a much more existential conception of intentionality than we obtain from Husserl or Augustine. This is a cardinal statement. More so, it is thus, worth taking a moment to attend to, as the Husserlian or Augustinian conception of intentionality has contributed to bring about the compatibility of intentionality with either monistic or dualistic interpretations. We must take notice of their divergent aspirations which might tempt us to a return to either monism or dualism. On Augustine's view, intentionality requires both a sensory involvements and a Divine Illumination. For him, our sensory involvements cannot preserve intentionality, and as such, outside the frontier of sensory involvements, a Divine light is needed so that we are not robbed of God's knowledge. Our understanding of Augustinianism is that general limitations in sensory

involvements are acknowledged without limits imposed by Divine illumination. This dualistic interpretation of intentionality defended by Augustine purports to show that a modification is required in the thesis of intentionality with the introduction of Divine light with a view to solving the problem of man's finitude. Man, only draws nearer to a knowledge of the Truth by Divine Light. However, this consequence of man's finitude would provide no reason to abandon it, and we now deal with Divine Illumination as a conceptual problem.

On the other hand, for Husserl, intentionality requires the identification of conscious experiences with a meaningful act. This cannot explain the diversity that underlies our different intentionality commitments. For example, a subset of our intentional experiences may be directed at propositions in a way that only propositions can be considered meaningful. For this reason, existentialism needs its own dimension of intentionality which will not portray it as a finished business based on either Husserl or Augustine. This explanatory gap informs the observation of Dan Zahavi: Had idealism been true, had the world been a mere product of our constitution and construction, the world would have appeared in full transparency. It would only possess the meaning that we ascribe to it, and it would consequently contain no hidden aspects... For such positions, knowledge of self, world and other are no longer a problem. But things are more complicated. The subject does not have a monopoly, either on its self-understanding or on its understanding of the world. On the contrary, there are aspects of myself and aspects of the world that only become available and accessible through the other. In short, my existence is not simply a question of how I apprehend myself; it is also a question of how others apprehend me.²³

In point of fact, a common mistake is to presuppose that everyone knows what "intentionality" means without further explanation, let alone, offering how it can yield an existential thesis. This, however, has not escaped Heidegger. For him, he regarded intentionality as one of the ground breaking accomplishments of phenomenology, but all talk about consciousness as intentional is mere metaphor if it does not say anything about the dimension of existence. Heidegger then shows what seems required by intentionality to achieve this. But inasmuch as phenomenology is also defined by its theme (intentionality), it still includes a prior decision on just what, among the manifold of entities, its theme really is. Why this should be precisely intentionality is not definitively demonstrated. We have only an account of the fact that the basic theme in the breakthrough and development of phenomenology is intentionality. Our critical investigation has specifically led us beyond this theme. The neglect of the question of the being of the intentional revealed in itself a more original question, that of being as such.²⁴ As intentionality bears the whole ontological burden on the question of being, it needs to be explained vis-à-vis its critique by the existentialists.

Intentionality of Consciousness: Existentialist Critique and Justification: Consciousness is often discussed without discussing its effect on the object as if it is involved in cognitive venture outside the object, therefore, it is not accompanied by the object. Consciousness, when depicted as an activity directed at inner experiences set all goings-on in the external world at a distance from the perceiver. When viewed

as an inward phenomenon, we ignore concerns raised about realism except when it suits our theoretical purposes. Consciousness is however fortified by the intentional thesis. It is fortified by intentionality. Consciousness is intentional to the extent to which it makes possible the being of that which it is directed. It is a major starting point in understanding what is contrasted as mind and body, or, subject and object. Consciousness is not an activity that is restricted to the domain of the internal. When viewed this way, it is hampered by the concept of intentionality as we remain shaken by the dichotomy between mind and body, and a mind-independent world. The point on intentionality deserves some elaboration so that we do not draw from the temptation of deriving it largely from planning or proposing to do something. Intentionality however can only be evaluated in terms of meaning; for without a meaning, this will undermine the search for its essence. More importantly, it will be difficult to articulate certain conceptions as, the self, other, the world, etc. The key to carrying out this is suggested by Maurice Merleau-Ponty when he adduced to the thesis of the logical positivists. According to him, what has inspired interest in the Vienna Circle consists in the fact that it "lays it down categorically that we can enter into relations only with meaning"²⁵

In any case,

'consciousness' is not for the Vienna Circle identifiable with what we are. It is a complex meaning which has developed late in time, which should be handled with care, and only after the many meanings which have contributed, ... to the formation of its present one have been made explicit. Logical positivism of this kind is the antithesis of Husserl's thought. Whatever the subtle changes of meaning which have ultimately brought us ... the word and concept of consciousness, we enjoy direct access to what it designates.²⁶

Without putting forward any ground for its meaning, the main assumption underlying the phenomenological reduction: consciousness is consciousness of something, will be missing. In the discussion about intentionality, mention should be made of Immanuel Kant whose explanation creates one foundation for understanding it as an internal experience. Here too, reasoning is realized as a typical product of intentionality. The focus of the Kantian notion is similar to the notion of intentionality directed to the inner experience which leaves out of consideration any issue dictated from without or outside. Intentionality is judged on the basis of its supposed, rather than presupposed essence in reasoning. This, include limits imposed by reason and more general limitations in human reasoning. Kant had ranged over one of the dominant problems of traditional ontology especially that of Plato where reasoning is related to two realms of world, one of which is temporal while the other is timeless and eternal. Kant felt that reasoning cannot be interpreted in terms of a theory of two realms. Thus reasoning cannot be judged in terms of Plato's critique.

The recognition of this classical problem is envisaged already by Kant's separation of the *noumenon* from the *phenomenon*. While the phenomenon can be grasped by human reasoning, the noumenon is outside human reasoning. Nothing, however from the noumenon can dictate how the phenomenon is to be grasped, as a result reasoning is limited to the phenomenon and it is directed to the inner. For Kant, there is a famous difficulty which besets any philosopher who ventures to explain ontology in terms of the outer and the inner. This

consists in the duplication of consciousness. If we are persuaded to recognize this, reasoning should not be motivated by external realism. Kant did not identify factors resulting from the outer that could raise in a lasting form the contribution of the external factors in reasoning about something. This is an indication of the fact “that connotes the power to make judgments automatically”²⁷, without the contribution of any element encountered from outside.

Reason is identical with the very spontaneity of mind. From this point of view reason has no object than that which it itself creates.²⁸ For Kant, if we relate this notion of reason to the notion of intentionality that is directed to the inner experience it makes the notion of intentionality intelligible. Nathan Rotenstreich captures the issue at hand particularly well. On the other hand, Kant starts with assumption that reason is a theoretical activity, or at least, partially a theoretical activity. As a theoretical activity reason has to have what in modern, and scholastic, terms has been called intentionality. Reason must be intentionally concerned with something; this feature of it manifests itself in the theoretical field as knowledge of an object. ... Within the limits of the finite understanding, there is no way of showing that any object can be created by reason, that is to say, there is no way of showing that reason *qua* full spontaneity of mind is realized. Hence, reason, which may connote the feature of creation, is outside the human scope. On the other hand, what reason intends to, because of its intentionality, is outside experience and hence reason proper has no object towards which its intrinsic intentionality could be directed. Hence it creates a pseudo-object; ... and thus the method is not one of real creation ...²⁹

Reason, as intentionality, is a great and impressive construction with regard to the ontological approach to intentionality, but it is just one of the convenient labels which must be used with caution because it tends to ignore certain issues. One of these is the mistake of stressing its deductive possibilities too much and thus turning it into “that which creates but it is not created”. Reason is a stumbling block to real creation of objects since it constitutes its own source without mutually dependent upon what it encounters in experience. With these last two points, we have come to the crux of the problem. Rotenstreich has a remark which seems important for the problem we are discussing by according a minimal role to reason in creation because of illusion.

Reason even within the human-finite realm is more than understanding of objects, since it attempts to create objects. Yet their creation is hypostatic only, and leaves reason within the medium of “illusion”. ... Once there is real intentionality, there can be no reification. But where there is no real intentionality, objects are created in a hypostatic fashion in order to prevent the intentionality of reason from becoming void.³⁰

Intentionality is thus a concept that has been subject to repeated critique and repeated resurrection. If Kant’s position on intentionality is understood as outlined above, it runs into serious difficulties among which is the fact that it undermines the power of the external on the internal. According to Merleau-Ponty,

Kant showed, in *the Refutation of Idealism*, that inner perception is impossible without outer perception, that the world, as a collection of connected phenomena, is anticipated in the consciousness of my unity, and is the means whereby I

come into being as a consciousness. What distinguishes intentionality from the Kantian relation to a possible object is that the unity of the world, before being posited by knowledge in a specific act of identification, is ‘lived’ as ready-made or already there.³¹

The Kantian view of intentionality is still problematic as it turns our attention away from the world by depriving “the world of its transcendence ... knowledge of self, world, and other are no longer a problem.”³² In this case and in virtue of the question raised by Heidegger earlier that in what direction is the belonging-together of being to be resolved, Kant’s understanding of intentionality is that the knowledge of self, world, the others, already manifest within human nature without being sustained by how the self and the others are possible means of interpreting knowledge by involvements. Taking a decision on the knowledge of the world, self and others is merely conceptual for Kant rather than being phenomenological in the fullest grasp of the term as already noted in this paper.

If it were true that the trend towards the “inner” and the “outer” is the main feature of intentionality, then, in the light of this, we now say that nothing is beyond intentionality. We may now throw some lights on the meaning of intentionality by taking advantage of the positions of certain scholars, while securing a closer understanding of the problems posed in its earlier critiques. “All consciousness”, as dealt with by Husserl, “is consciousness of something”. What makes possible any interpretation of consciousness is intentionality. Merleau-Ponty agrees with this assessment when he asserts that there is no limit imposed upon it from outside. For him, “It is a question of recognizing consciousness itself as a project of the world, meant for a world which it neither embraces nor possesses, but towards which it is perpetually directed”³³. Intentionality reflects an existentialist attitude. For the simple reason that the capacity of reaching out to an object is problematic does not mean the object does not exist.

Our previous understanding (presupposed) of an object gives no reason that we cannot find an existential *qua* phenomenological principle which can help us to understand how the object could be reached. One of the most important considerations effecting a choice in intentionality confirms its relevance in explaining it as an existential thesis. Every being has a form-or rather, many forms, one substantial form and many accidental forms. These forms have two mode of existence: a natural and intentional mode of existence. The natural mode of existence refers to the way in which the form exists in the physical object. The intentional mode of existence refers to the way in which the form exists in the faculty which knows the object. When we know an object, we possess the form of the object, not the natural form but the intentional form. Possessing the form of that object, we become that object, not naturally but intentionally. We become intentionally all that which we know.³⁴

Broadly construed, by analyzing intentionality, the aim is to reveal its existential meaning in a general context and of the interaction between consciousness and its object. The starting point of the analysis of intentionality is “the analysis of the directness or aboutness of consciousness”³⁵. Although, this is not initially formulated as an approach to intentionality, but the existential-phenomenological formulation concerns itself with how such a starting point may be overly broad to be of

insightful use in existential analysis. For instance, the starting point of intentionality as “directness” or “aboutness” points out that intentionality in the existential-phenomenological sense is such an all-inclusive approach within the broader analysis of intentionality, without leaving a space within which, skepticism can formulate a gap on the dichotomy between the subject and the object. At any rate, before an analysis of intentionality can begin, its “directness” or “aboutness” must be clearly specified. “Just as a river can only flow if there is a direction to the flow, so also the stream of consciousness must tend towards something in order to exist. Indeed it is essentially a tension towards an object.”³⁶

Our present understanding of intentionality gives us no reason to believe that intentionality can be placed on the same pedestal with its customary usage in ordinary discourse such as when “one speak of intending to do something, meaning by that a deliberate action on his part.”³⁷ Once we get beyond this linguistic muddle, we can get to the real issue as clearly establishing standards for ensuring that intentionality is an existential thesis. Part of these standards reflect the judgment that “When one views consciousness as phenomenon (i.e. freed from all presuppositions about the nature of consciousness) one discovers its intentional structure”.³⁸

If we suppose that all this is really the case, then how can consciousness give rise to existence? Up to this point we have postulated in general terms that consciousness is consciousness of something. The rigorous manner in which Husserl outlined the character of the transcendental ego and phenomenological reduction has concealed the presupposition upon which the whole case of consciousness as intentionality rested. We are so accustomed in our theoretical thinking to having ontological problems reduced to existential issues. Thus, the sole immediate object of Husserlian transcendental method is only the subjective. The reason is that the object of consciousness can never be the object of outer perception; for the world has been put in brackets. The whole existence of the world rests on the inner perception of the transcendental ego. At first glance, it may be argued that Husserl had no genuine theory of intentionality as far as the existence of the world is concerned. For, the capacity of the subject to reach the object, even phenomenologically cannot be proven from the point of view of the nature of a transcendental ego.

The existentialist perhaps sees intentionality not as a matter of transcendental phenomenology, but to seek how it can operate in an existential formation. While intentionality is specifically presented to close the subject-object gap, it can also shed light on what is problematic about the existence of the self, subject, object, others, and the world. Transcendental method attempts to interpret intentionality from one limited, contingent point of view, presuming the ego not to be world-dependent. There is no dimension of intentionality that can capture an ego that is at once, both of this world and at the same time transcendental. This leads to conclusions which deviate from what consciousness sees as intentionality. Intentionality, for the existentialists has already expressed many of the concepts they had struggled to articulate against the gain of transcendental phenomenology they had studied. Among these are the concepts of the self, others, *Dasein*, the world, the subject and the object. This explains why “most of the recent phenomenological studies of the self-have avoided Husserl’s transcendental method in favor of a more concrete analysis of the self in its relation to the world.”³⁹ Ruch, as earlier quoted,

devoted a great deal of his work on this point. According to him, in dealing with intentionality,

We are, of course, dealing here again with a non-spatial presence and interpretation. The presence of an object in a particular place has nothing to do with knowledge. In the relationship between subject and object in consciousness “the role of the subject consists in objectivizing and phenomenologizing being, while the role of the object consists in specifying the act of consciousness”. As conscious beings we are a very peculiar “knot of relations”⁴⁰.

It is common complaint among existentialist philosophers that phenomenology has been *mised* by the reconceptualization of the transcendental Ego. But the above passage suggests that our attention should be directed at the dual role that is created for consciousness by intentionality. This means, in effect, that intentionality which had approached the problem of subject-object dichotomy with the metaphor that consciousness cannot be empty stemmed from a profound conviction that nothing should be left unaccounted for. Very interesting from the existential point of view is the synthetic and reflective nature of consciousness. Consciousness is always made possible by intentionality, but to know in depth the meaning of consciousness “the activity of consciousness is essentially synthetic”.⁴¹

In line with the above discussion, the problem of past facts of consciousness has significant bearing when we consider the relationship between consciousness and its objects. Fortunately, the synthetic nature of consciousness is suited in addressing that there are wider issues at stake. Thus,

I am conscious of the relationship that has been entered between myself as subject and object of my consciousness. There is a known synthesis between my mind and the world “outside”... such a synthesis is always partially an expression of my personality, because it is rooted in the experiences which have preceded it. I fit the present fact of consciousness into what is left of past facts of consciousness.⁴²

The case of the fact of consciousness, being a reflective activity provides another reason for the redirection of our focus on intentionality. This intentionality of consciousness should not lead us to forget that consciousness is at the same time reflection.⁴³ “Consciousness,” says Merleau-Ponty, “is neither position of self, nor ignorance of self, but an unveiling of the self to itself.”⁴⁴ The break with the Cartesian and Augustinian modes of consciousness has not been accounted for by most commentators on intentionality as the singular reason for acclaiming intentionality as an existential thesis. Thus,

Like Newton’s famous law, each action of consciousness upon an object carries with itself an equal and opposite reaction within the subject itself. While positing itself as subject in opposition to an object, consciousness simultaneously and by the same act returns upon itself and becomes aware of itself as the knowing subject. I cannot be subject in relation to an object without at the same time being aware of this relation... The sentient subject is dimly and implicitly aware of his sensation; in its purest form this type of self-awareness manifests itself in

dreams: while being incapable of reflective judgments during sleep, I am aware that I am dreaming. When I make a judgment, however, I am affirming not only the content of my judgment, i.e. what my judgment explicitly states, but implicit in this judgment is also the affirmation that I know what I am stating. In other words: the active part played by the subject is much more reflective in judgment than in sensation.⁴⁵

Thus the subject is not only a subject in so far as it cannot find its sense and destiny in the consciousness of its object. All of these considerations joined to shape the focus of consciousness as a reflective activity. In that case, we may limit ourselves to a brief mention of one further point which is often raised with regard to the reflective essence of consciousness. Merleau-Ponty has a remark which seems important for the problem we are discussing. This remark is put forward in the form of: "people go on saying that 'to perceive is to remember.'"⁴⁶ This remark, however, does seem to rest on a misunderstanding. The acceptance of consciousness as reflective does not relocate it as an outer phenomenon which may be reduced to perceptual consciousness. Merleau-Ponty's central line of argument as he outlined it is that:

What is it, in present perception, which teaches us that we are dealing with an already familiar object, since *ex hypothesi* its properties are altered? If it is argued that recognition of shape or size is bound up with that of color, the argument is circular since apparent size and shape are also altered, and since recognition here too cannot result from the recollection of memories, but must precede it. Nowhere then does it work from past to present, and the 'projection of memories' is nothing but a bad metaphor hiding a deeper, ready-made recognition.⁴⁷

This word, reflective has a special meaning as it makes possible forms of consciousness that were hitherto forgotten. It insightfully highlights the frequent confusion between memory and consciousness by placing premium on judgment as earlier indicated. In placing premium on judgment, it is needful to appeal to intentionality. According to Merleau-Ponty,

Perception is built up with states of consciousness as a house is built with bricks, and a mental chemistry is invoked. ... Like all empiricist theories, this one describes only blind processes which could never be the equivalent of knowledge, because there is, in this mass of sensations and memories, *nobody who sees*, nobody who can appreciate the falling into line of datum and recollection, and, on the other hand, no solid object protected by a meaning against the teeming horde of memories. We must then discard this postulate which obscures the whole question.⁴⁸

Perception, in empiricism has become a dogma. Just as Plato noted, empiricism tends to equate perception with memory in explaining the phenomenon of consciousness. The attempt to combine perception with consciousness, and claim to derive intentionality from it is misleading. One must not confuse the basing of memory on perception. The empiricists have sought to have it both ways which is misleading. In Merleau-Ponty's formulation

It is at this stage that the real problem of memory in perception arises in association with the general problem of perceptual consciousness. ... Consciousness can, in

course of time, modify the structure of its surroundings; how, at every moment, its former experience is present to it in the form of a horizon which it can reopen – 'if it chooses to take that horizon as a theme of knowledge' – in an act of recollection, but which it can equally leave on the fringe of experience, and which then immediately provides the perceived with a present atmosphere and significance. ... To remember is not to bring into the focus of consciousness a self-subsistent picture of the past; it is to thrust deeply into the horizon of the past and take apart step by step the interlocked perspectives until the experiences which it epitomizes are as if relived in their temporal setting. To perceive is not to remember.⁴⁹

This looks very puzzling, but Merleau-Ponty goes on to explain that his view resists the opinion according to which consciousness is more consonant to its objects than to its activities. Rather than couch consciousness in the vocabulary of Cartesian ontology which describes the ego as an I, we must note that implicit in our understanding of consciousness is that it transcends itself. In this connection, one is attracted to Sartre because his existentialist inclinations begins with a critique of Husserl's transcendence of the ego. Sartre was captivated by Husserl's idea of bracketing. As we have shown in our previous discussion of Husserlian phenomenology, bracketing may have the effect of suspending existence. If it were true that the existence of a transcendental I derives its subjectivity by distinguishing individual's consciousnesses from each other, the main difficulty we must recognize then is that consciousness will cease to be intentional. For Sartre, intentionality reaches its limits in the transcendental I because "the I can evidently be only an *expression* (rather than a condition) of this incommunicability and inwardness of consciousness". Rather than conceive the I as transcending itself, what transcends itself is consciousness. Whoever says, according to Sartre, "consciousness says the whole of consciousness, and this singular property belongs to consciousness itself, aside from whatever relations it may have to I."⁵⁰ When speaking of consciousness as the ground of existence, "it is needless to appeal to a transcendental and subjective principle of unification which will then be the I."⁵¹ "The object is transcendent to the consciousness which grasp it and it is in the object that the unity of the consciousness is found."⁵²

As a kind of standing compatibility with existentialism, Sartre reasoned that:

It is certain phenomenology does not need to appeal to any such unifying and individualizing I. Indeed, consciousness is defined by intentionality. By intentionality consciousness transcends itself. It unifies itself by escaping from itself.⁵³

The point here is that consciousness should not be taken literally. Consciousness understood in the distinguishable sense of Smith's consciousness can be distinguished from Jone's consciousness is a product of the subjective I, which Sartre had described as "the producer of inwardness."⁵⁴ Given the nature of intentionality, a quite different light is cast upon consciousness. This consideration permits Merleau-Ponty to aver that consciousnesses that are being individualized "present themselves with the absurdity of a multiple solipsism"⁵⁵. Intentionality has an effect of externality upon consciousness. Our present understanding of intentionality gives us reason to believe that it is a way of being that has

been with us but not disclosed. All that has been learnt from Husserl is to ground phenomenology as a presuppositionless enterprise, while Heidegger penetratingly disclosed that fundamental ontology as distinct from previous ontologies is best understood when it is based on presuppositions. For him, being as a thinking thing (*res cogitans*) has been influential. This Cartesian influence however should not be suspended. Descartes literally takes the question of how we can exist without a world to be the problem to which ontology responds through doubting and bracketing of the world. However, the view that the thinking thing does not know the world introduced other problems. If the *cogito* is not of the world, then how do we explain the effect of the outer phenomenon on consciousness whose very nature is intentionality?

Heidegger's point is that Descartes did not understand the full implications of this way of being until what he calls fundamental ontology showed them to us. The problem with this way of being is related to its innerworldly point of view. Our relation to consciousness is so fundamental that we naturally do not reflect upon it. It is this domain that has being forgotten which fundamental ontology seeks to explain. The way of being of the subject is intentionality rendered in consciousness. Consciousness, construed as intentionality, does not symbolise a harnessing of opposites, but a joining of complements. The concept of intentionality already conjoins the two elements of self and the world whose relation has to be explained as a problem according to Heidegger. The task of fundamental ontology is to obtain the relation that is presupposed by this way of being.

Suppose we grant that what is called innerworldliness as gained from Descartes, being participating in another being of Plato and the Husserlian bracketing of the world are all relevant to the domain of ontology, Heidegger has described all of this as basic ways of being (*Wesen*). If all of this were granted according to Heidegger, we have a preliminary notion of ontology. Ontology may be construed in any of these ways indicated above but with a qualification. Ontology has always been with us which accounts for the reason our ideas about ontology were modelled on these ways of being as stereotypes. The upshot would seem to be that ontology has always being with us but forgotten which needs to be retrieved from its layer of forgetfulness. Thus, the task of fundamental ontology is to retrieve that which has been forgotten in a way that we do not return to the ontological view which sees being as innerworldly, being as participation and being as a transcendental ego.

The situation in previous ontologies present us with forgotten theoretical problems and urgent ontological tasks arising from the question of how to restore man to the centre of attention as the Being that discloses our relation to other beings. Yet man generally do not inevitably find the truth of fundamental ontology to be simply evident in these previous ontologies. According to Heidegger, there may be good ontological reasons why this may be so. It has been observed that previous ontologies do not base their conclusions on the comprehension of Being that is apparently envisaged by man as the inquirer of being. Commitments to ontology do not imply surrendering the comprehension of Being. The notion of Being that is at issue is of concern to man. This clears up an issue about the thesis that man is the Being that can ask the question of Being. This brings the idea of the comprehension of Being in favor of man. What is needed, then, "is this comprehension of Being

that for Heidegger most profoundly characterizes man."⁵⁶ It must, of course, be understood that "man is a being who is immersed among beings in such a way that the beings that he is not, as well as the being that he is himself, have already become constantly manifest to him ... manifest that he is, in their Being."⁵⁷

If what to be decided as a result of our attitudes to ontology is existence, "existence for Heidegger, then, means to be in that relationship to Being which we have called "comprehending."⁵⁸ Fundamental ontology do not suppose, then, that it is permissible to derive existence from being of nature (*res extensa*), being of Platonic forms that is timeless, and the being of mind (*res cogitans*). In fundamental ontology, the important issue is how Being is to be comprehended. The first strategy in this venture as considered by Heidegger is the presumption in favor of how "we inquired into the "disclosure of being."⁵⁹ Our earlier remark that fundamental ontology is different from previous ontologies is a way of saying that in acknowledging their interpretations of ontology we must not repeat their oversights. Thus, for Heidegger, "disclosure of beings means the unlocking of what forgetfulness of being closes and hides."⁶⁰

Here too, previous ontological thinking is distinctive once more. For Heidegger,

To be ontological does not mean to develop ontology. Thus if we reserve the term ontology for the explicit, theoretical position of the meaning of beings the intended ontological character of *Dasein* is to be designated as pre-ontological.⁶¹

Being as participation, immutable truths, being as nature, being as detached, being as thinking (*res cogitans*) are matters about which those who have investigated ontology have agreed. On reflection, it is realised that based on these previous ontologies, man might choose to interpret himself in these ways as if they are not avoidable for him. When man chooses to interpret himself in this fashion, he is said to be ontic rather than being ontological. However, the opinions for which man is willing to be understood in his basic existence is different, hence these ontologies are pre-ontological and, *not ipso facto*, fundamental ontology. A fundamental ontology allows no exception to how Being is to be comprehended. It is for this reason Heidegger is preoccupied with an interpretation of our everydayness. Thus Heidegger turns his attention to a way of being more primordial than detached theorizing, which is disclosed in our average everyday practices, our "being-in-the-world" (*In-der-welt-sein*).⁶²

The everydayness is a necessary constitutive condition of existence for man. Everydayness as a way of being is distinct from a detached way of being. By "everydayness", Heidegger wishes to designate that condition in which "There-being first of all and for the most part finds itself in its day-in-day-out contact with beings."⁶³ That opinion may need qualification, however for the purpose of articulation. Everydayness, for Heidegger, should not be construed as averageness because of the intriguing possibility of missing out certain things in the comprehension of Being which is a major pitfall of previous ontologies. One obvious way in which everydayness could matter to existential ontology is that it is upon it that the full effect of employing phenomenology as a method can be felt. When phenomenology explicitly considers our everyday contact with beings, new ground will open for the discussion

of ontologies which have been put in brackets. The intentionality provided by everydayness is desirable for our understanding of existential ontology. Indeed it is the basic strategy employed by Heidegger to retrieve the forgotten layer of being.

Heidegger insists that, prior to any theoretical speculation about beings, we exist, a concerned existence that makes it possible to theorize in the first place.⁶⁴ “The existential nature of man,”⁶⁵ says Heidegger, as Aho puts it, “is the reason why man can represent beings as such, and why he can be conscious of them. All consciousness presupposes existence as the essential of man.”⁶⁶

Heidegger agrees on our familiarity with previous ontologies in another important respect. It is on the basis of this familiarity that we may come up with a mode of contrast between concepts that are in tune with our ways of beings in these ontologies and those that are retrieved as a result of fundamental ontology. Thus we have the following resultant contrasts:

Concepts developed from our pre-ontological ways of being		Concepts that are best suited for fundamental ontology	
1.	<i>Factual:</i> (This includes doubting, thinking, negotiation and self-validation of existence as done by Descartes)	1.	<i>Factual:</i> (Man does not negotiate his existence. His thrownness is not of his own accord. Existence is a given). This factual nature will enable man to comprehend himself as a Being-in-the-world.
2.	<i>Existentiell:</i> (This is a result of unconscious adaptation to a mode of being imposed on us by previous ontologies. Three good examples include: (a). For man to assume that he is participating in another realm of being. (b). For man to think that existence is a spatial relation, that is exist as if water is in a cup. (c). Assumes that real existence is timeless, worldless and detached.)	2.	<i>Existential:</i> (This is derived from facticity. It is the structure which allows man to acknowledge that he is thrown among beings, comprehend these beings, and retrieve his existence as that which has been forgotten, being the questioner of being).
3.	<i>Ontic:</i> (This consists in the temptation to interpret man solely on the basis of these previous ontologies)	3.	<i>Ontological:</i> (It is the view which espoused that having retrieved the forgotten layer of existence, we do not return to our ways of being in previous ontologies. As long as I exist, I am a yet to be).

The import to be gained from above is that fundamental ontology cannot be meaningful without attempting to juxtapose it with the conclusions of previous ontologies. It is only in that way the previous ontologies can do away with its totalizing grips on our understanding of ontology. For example, facts concerning substance and its elevation to an ontology has most times, prompted the view that “the being that exists, including humans, must be understood in terms of enduring presence, a presence that is constant or remains the same without any change of properties.”⁶⁷ The essence of Dasein is not to be found in properties of substance but in existence. Man is a being that has being and his existence lies in his “yet to be”. Thus an alternative to understanding man in the mode of a substance is to conceive him in terms of time relations (the past, the present, and the future) which are not to be studied in isolation.

Above all, Heidegger’s insight about ontology can be gleaned from his perspective of Being-in-the-world. One of the characteristic features of the Heideggerian fundamental ontology consists in the assertion that:

Initially, we supplement the expression being-in with the phrase “in the world,” and are inclined to understand this being as “being-in something.” With this term, the kind of being of a being is named which is “in” something else, as water is “in” the glass, ... By this “in” we mean the relation of being that two beings extended “in” space have to each other with regard to their location in that space.⁶⁸

As an existential phrase, being-in-the-world does not mean to be extended in space or inside something. It means to “dwell, I stay near the world as something familiar in such and such a way.”⁶⁹ As this illustration shows, it is pertinent to present the seminal arguments of three existentialist philosophers most central to the discussion of existential ontology. They are Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Our selective focus on these philosophers is informed by the fact that, unlike other existentialist philosophers, they were directly influenced by Husserl’s phenomenology in accounting for the phenomenon of the world.

Heidegger’s Ontological Setting and Implications of Being-in-the-world as an Existentialist Strategy:

Being-in-the-world is a view of ontology which seeks to make man to be aware of what he is as a factual given and anticipate with resoluteness the constraints he is bound to encounter in his time relations. Being-in-the-world rules out any second-order suspicion about the ontological status of man as a being whose existence has been predetermined by facts outside his being.

In this way, *Dasein* comports itself toward its own Being as a Being-in-time, not to be understood in the light of a thesis of determinism, but as a being that is prone to fallenness especially when it loses itself to the crowd.

Our being in the world is not the structure of consciousness but the premiss for our consciousness. It is the ontological condition of consciousness. Being in the world is how our essence, our being, manifests itself. What Heidegger is attempting to do, then, is to ground the analysis of human consciousness in the here and now flow of time and the reality of the situations in which we find ourselves.⁷⁰

Fundamental ontology presumes to take nothing for granted. It bases itself on a critique of previous ontologies whose upshot is our comprehension of Being. The world as we encounters it impose constraints on our beingness which Heidegger has described as fallenness. Based on the conclusions of previous ontologies, there are occasional disputes about what counts as being, that is, disputes which concern how best to exclude things with spatial relations by focusing only on innerworldly beings. All of this has yielded bracketing, doubting, detachment and phenomenological reduction. All these leave out factors which are important in any full account of existential ontology. Ontologically, given all these conclusions, we are still committed to the existence of such a world.

The being at the centre of all these disputes and the being whose existence remain concealed is man. As previously indicated, fundamental ontology in the Heideggerian sense, is interested in the constraints we encounter in our quest to comprehend Being. These constraints which within our grasps include bracketing, doubting and detachment should not be underestimated as we may be tempted to appeal to them compellingly.

The world has an indefinite number of aspects and relations, many more within what Dasein can notice which include spatial relations. Our present understanding of these constraints based on the conclusions of previous ontologies gives us no reason to think that man will not be able to find one sweeping and complete description about what it means to exist or be in the world. Thus, Being-in-the-world is thought to be the clue for distinguishing man's mode of existence from things that exist outside us "which will do away with skepticism."⁷² The essential features of consciousness that Husserl ignored were what Heidegger according to Anderson, calls "the basic modalities of being in the world: our separation from others, our anxiety about the future, our fear of the certainty of death."⁷³

Being-in-the-world places ontology not just where it belongs, but where ontology should begin, and in so doing, it accords its claim with the preconception of being not as inside something or being-in-the-midst-of-things, but a being with a "yet to be" in its horizon. Being-in-the-world makes the way of beings of other beings possible. It sets the relations that hold with other beings. It is in this sense that we can say the comprehension of Being is rooted deeply in man.

As a matter of fact, it is this pre-conceptual comprehension of Beings, through itself unquestioning that renders the Being-question possible. For to question is to search, and every search is polarized by its term. One could not ask, then, what Being means, unless one comprehended somehow the answer. The task of pursuing the Being-question, then, reduces itself to this: what is the essence of the comprehension of Being rooted deeply in man?⁷⁴

Under these circumstances, as can be seen in the conclusion of the Cartesian ontology, "Dasein as being-in-the-world has the tendency of "initially" burying the "external world" in nullity "epistemologically" in order first to prove it."⁷⁵ Given this, claims of existence cannot be construed spatially, but in what Heidegger calls "transcendence"⁷⁶.

For us the world is disconcerting, because we have seen already that it is profoundly metaphysical in its implications. But we were viewing the matter in retrospect. In this period with which we are dealing now (1927), the author had nothing else but a metaphysical word to work with in grounding metaphysics ...the world means "to pass over." ... For Heidegger ... This comprehending of being, then, is not simply a domain that has been captured once and for all, to be retained henceforth as a permanent possession. Much more, it is a coming-to-pass that dynamically continues, therefore an occurrence which is always in the process of being achieved. The There-being, constituted by ontological comprehension, is essentially not a thing but a happening,

and this happening is transcendence (better: transcending).⁷⁷

In thinking about how to explain how man comprehends the world, we have a need for a term which will account for how man "passes over" the phenomenon of being as inside of something or in the midst of other things. Hence, man whose existence is understood as transcendence passes over the phenomenon of bracketing, detachment and phenomenological reduction. While Plato's ontology, for instance banishes talk about truths in time, the view of Being-in-the-world advocated by Heidegger upholds that it is through time relations that man is really involved in the world with always an horizon of a "yet-to-be".

Sartre's Ontological Framework: For Sartre, intentionality as an ontological tendency, assumes, with an appeal to the existence of others. Sartre's point is that the role plays by the existence of others in the interpretation of ontology should not be undermined. One form of ontology available to the Cartesian is the *cogito*. One strand of thought which often come together with the *cogito* is that consciousness as an existential theme can easily be proven in solipsism. Solipsism creates an irreducible opposition between the ego and the others, an opposition it arrived at by the *cogito*. With this, we gain the idea that the goal of all ontologies is to arrive at selfhood with a presumption that one is determined by his consciousness innerworldly. With this conceptual scheme that shapes our ontology, we assume that the goal of ontology is to arrive at immutable truths. According to Sartre, what our ontological description has immediately revealed is that this being is the foundation of itself as a lack of being; that is, that, it determines its being by means of a being which it is not. He continues, "thus what is released to intuition is an it-self which by itself is neither complete nor incomplete but which simply is what it is, without relation with other beings."⁷⁸

Sartre recognizes that the ontological condition of consciousness is not determined by selfhood, but by the category of the existence of others. If we choose selfhood, we bar ourselves from discovering intentionality as an ontological tendency. If what is revealed by consciousness is selfhood, then consciousness is not ontological. Thus there is a fundamental tension which comes out of this mode of ontological tendency. This tension has encouraged the misreading of the existence of others with a specific example of shame by Sartre to easily prove that it is the existence of others that shape our ontology. Thus,

Shame reveals to me that I am this being, ... When I am alone, I cannot realize my "being-seated," at most it can be said that I simultaneously both am it and am not it. But in order for me to be what I am, it suffices merely that the other look at me. It is not for myself, to be sure; I myself shall never succeed at realizing this being-seated which I grasp in the other's look. I shall remain forever a consciousness. But it is for the other.⁷⁹

It is not something cheering that we cannot explain the nature of consciousness as intentionality based on selfhood. The Cartesian was simply mistaken and we should not be committed to any form of it in explaining the nature of consciousness. As far as the turn of consciousness is concerned, everything is firmly settled for the Cartesian. "Thus to the necessity of ontologically establishing consciousness we

would add a new necessity: that of establishing it epistemologically.”⁸⁰ What the epistemological qualification implies is that certainty is needed in explaining consciousness, but what is needed, for Sartre, is the existence of others.

There is much that is very attractive in Sartre. There seems to be some lack of clarity over the role of consciousness in generating ontological characterizations. If intentionality were the implication for being conscious, how helpful is it for categorizing ontology? It becomes helpful when we take the category of the others as the basic premiss that makes intersubjectivity possible.

Merleau-Ponty’s Conceptions of Everywhere and the Body as the Norms of Ontology: The argument that is often adduced in favor of the empiricist thesis of perception is that it is our windows into the world. Perception aims essentially at objects (colors) which is one way in which the object is expressed. Empiricism in this way has answered the question of ontology. What empiricism rejects concerns the unobservable and the hidden features of an object. What must first occur to us is the question whether all the hidden features of an object can be gained as a point of view in perception. For this reason, if we review a point of view as a norm of perception in the widest range conducive to perception, we will discover there are hidden parts and other things perceived alongside. These hidden features are not debarred from perception by reason of their not being perceived from a point of view. Then, if perception is reduced to a point of view, we will have before us a riskier ontology; for everyone must admit that we are phenomenologically bound to occupy ourselves with these hidden features. The assumption motivating this sort of perceptual argument is informed by the sentiment that what appears is essentially the same as the object of consciousness. Merleau-Ponty’s contempt for empiricism begins at the stage where we choose to treat things as they appear in perception and not as they are. We must first occupy ourselves with the question of how an object of consciousness is fully constituted. It is upon grounds such as these that we are able to discover that “perception owes nothing to what we know in other ways about the world.”⁸¹ What in the first instance is known to us without an object of consciousness fully constituted is brought into being through a perceptual field created for the object. When a perceptual field is created for an object, it becomes what Merleau-Ponty has described as a phenomenal field, because every perception thus begins at the stage of attention to the object; for “we have present at this moment, to us a perceptual field, a surface in contact with the world, a permanent rootedness in it.”⁸²

This latter mention of phenomenal field makes the demand for a higher form of field which Merleau-Ponty has described as a transcendental field. The transcendental field brings to clear perception, the second-order phenomenon, or better still, phenomenon of phenomenon. Because one must have something to say about the hidden features of a perceived object, we speak of perceptual consciousness if consciousness is consciousness of something. What the perception gives is not just the parts of the object but the object itself. We give our consciousness entirely up to the impression that what it is perceived is what appears in perception. The respect in which the object of consciousness is fully constituted accounts for Merleau-Ponty’s notion of everywhere meaning that the object is known from all its dimension. For, since this notion of everywhere does not rest on any inclination of the subject to a

phenomenal field, the infinite subject and object dichotomy is shattered. Thus, what is divided as subject and object of perception becomes not for itself, but for phenomenological reflection. “So, if I wanted to render precisely the perceptual experience, I ought to say that one perceives in me, and not that I perceive.”⁸³

At the same time we find as regards the notion of everywhere:

Through it every empiricist thesis is reversed: the state of consciousness becomes the consciousness of a state ... For the constitution of the world, as conceived by it, is a mere requirement that to each term of the empiricist description be added the indication ‘consciousness of ...’ The whole system of experience – world, own body and empirical self – are subordinated to a universal thinker charged with sustaining the relationships between the three terms. But, since he is not actually involved, these relationships remain what they were in empiricism ... Now, if one’s own body and the empirical self are no more than elements of the system of experience, object among other objects in the eyes of the true I, how can we ever be confused with our body?⁸⁴

The body is at first taken to mean that I am in the world not like any other objects. It is however consciousness only in reference to my being bodily. Consciousness does not consist in the dichotomy between mind and body. It is in this phenomenological sense that we speak of the body as being lived. According to Merleau-Ponty, the body is a confirmation of the following:

The body is the vehicle of being in the world, and having a body is, for a living creature, to be intervolved in a definite environment, to identify oneself with certain projects and be continually committed to them. In the self-evidence of this complete world. ... the cripple stills find the guarantee of his wholeness. But in concealing his deficiency from him, the world cannot fail simultaneously to reveal it to him: for if it is true that I am conscious of my body *via* the world ... it is true for the same reason that my body is the pivot of the world: I know that objects have several facets because I could make a tour of inspection of them, and in that sense I am conscious of the world through the medium of my body. It is precisely when my customary world arouses in me habitual intentions that I can no longer, if I have lost a limb, be effectively drawn into it, and the utilizable objects, precisely in so far as they present themselves as utilizable, appeal to a hand which I no longer have. Thus are delimited, in the totality of my body, regions of silence ... Our body comprises as it were two distinct layers, that of the habit-body and that of the body at this moment.⁸⁵

Here, the problem lies with the resultants fixity and determinism which the non-existentialist accepts in his/her ontological inquiry. The body unlike any other object in the world creates the ontological possibility of avoiding the resultant confusion of fixity as a wrong approach in ontological inquiries. The very fact that differences are expressed in our bodily constitution provide for the possibility of division in existentialist ontology, if at least a difference in order and status of the bodily norms has been admitted. This acknowledgement of a difference provides the ground for division in existentialist ontology in a way that still makes it

distinguishable from non-existentialist ontology. While the unchangeable ontological credentials of the non-existentialist create an understanding that immutability permeates all experience, existentialist ontology provides the ontological possibility of avoiding this temptation. For this, we will examine with a comparative brevity elements of ontological division in existentialism in a way that it can be sufficiently characterized as a genuinely alternative view to the demarcation ontology of the non-existentialist.

Making Sense of the Appropriateness of Division in Existentialist Ontology: The conception of division adopted in existentialism is to determine the existential status of the knower in order to arrive at an unswayable use of consciousness. One will perhaps have some difficulty in accepting the claim that all beings are conscious. Sartre's rejection of this idea had led him to distinguish between being-for-itself and being-in-itself, that is, being of consciousness and unconscious being respectively. Equating both to mean the same is possible to be the result of unintended mistake, "the same absolute which the rationalists of the seventeenth century had defined and logically constituted as an object of knowledge"⁸⁶. The distinction between conscious beings and unconscious beings needs to be explained in virtue of its incursion into existentialist theorizing. Demarcation ontologists, such as Plato and Kant attempts to interpret the difference between these beings from a contingent point of view, presuming being is measured by knowledge of both categories of being thereby subjecting being to a dimension of common meaning in dual existence. The point here is that there exists no irreducibly existentialist explanation that man as a being-for-itself requires a changeless epistemology in the same way a being-in-itself requires a changeless epistemology or in the same way, a being-in-itself is to be conceived.

Wherever one stands on this issue, one will agree with Sartre that the demarcation ontologists pursued the question of being in the name of imitation. According to him:

The first orientation of consciousness is on the general situation: it is disposed to interpret everything as an imitation. But it remains empty, it has but one question (who is going to be imitated?), only one directed expectation.⁸⁷

Thus, existentialist ontology can by virtue of the Sartrean distinction vindicate the status of its own aptness for consciousness unlike in Plato where consciousness is an issue to be raised at a meta-sphere in his realm of Ideas.

Conclusion

It has been the goal of this paper to bring to the fore some facts about existentialist ontology and intentionality of consciousness. Thus, it has already been shown that a multivalent ways of knowing is based upon intentionality as can be seen from the existentialist critique of demarcation ontology which emphasizes that intentionality is always directed at a fixed and an invariant truth. A degree of concentration in the directness thesis of intentionality has facilitated a better understanding of the borderless criterion as a requirement for truth-generations. This borderless criterion is the point of departure for existentialism vis-à-vis previous ontological frameworks. It is via the borderless orientation that

we can sustain a diversity of views about the nature of ontology, and objections to the views which encourage the invariant notioning of truth as fixed and immutable. By this, it addresses the general question of how multiplicity of truths based on existentialist ontology and the architectonics of intentionality as a category is justified.

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- The immediate agenda of the existentialists notably Sartre in his *The transcendence of the ego*, Heidegger And, Merleau-Ponty is to arrive at a fullest grasp of phenomenology as an intentional thesis. Husserl, for the existentialist, understands phenomenology along a bipolar dimension. In one breathe, intentional experience is directed at the lived –world (*lebenswelt*), while in another breathe, it is directed at the *eidōs* (essences). The two –sided dimension is a major line of objection to the phenomenological thesis developed by Husserl. When Husserl speaks of the eidetic reduction, he suggests that the lived – world needs not be described or at best, sees it as a rationalistic way to improve our understanding of the lived – world by being detached from it. Husserl failed to leave it open whether a return to the Kantian noumenon could be a candidate for phenomenological inquiry. The transcendental ego is a failure in the household of phenomenology if referential relations between the lived – world and eidetic reduction cannot succeed.
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