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ABSTRACT

THE UNITARY CONSCIOUSNESS: TOWARD A SOLUTION FOR THE ONTOLOGICAL CRISIS IN MODERN THEORIES OF THE SELF

By: Mahmoud Khatami

The overall aim of this research project that is done in the field of Phenomenology and Ontogenetic Epistemology, is to investigate the possibility of employing the Illuminative elements for solving the Ontological Crisis in Western epistemology of the self.

Descartes, the father of modern western thought, gave through his *Meditations* a priority to *Cogito* over *Sum*, and this historically became a turning point for the movement that crystallised in Kant's Copernican Revolution by which metaphysics was identified with epistemology indicating that epistemology can thereafter be considered without any need for ontology. One of the immediate consequences of detaching epistemology from ontology in this history has in the main been the dismissal of the 'being' of the self in modern theories.

In parallel to the existential phenomenology's purport to supply this lack in modern epistemology of the self, this research attempts in its own way to achieve a solution by delving into the Persian Illuminative school and by seeking even to assign a new role to its philosophical system to gain a new vision of the self and consciousness.

To remedy, first a reconstruction of the Illuminative Method is introduced. This embodies the claim that although legitimate in itself, epistemology that is based upon the theory of essence cannot be detached from ontology. This method ultimately appeals to a very subtle and special field, *the Ontetic Field*, under which everything is reduced to Being and is grounded by it.

Applying of this method provides an entry to considering the problematic of the self in *the ontetic field* in which the being of the self is encountered as an epiphany of Being that is immersed in and, at the same time, present to Being. The keen relation of 'Being' and the 'being' of the self is exposed as a performative, existential experience called *the unitary consciousness*. This moment implies that there is no subject (mind, etc.) in modern subjectivistic sense; the subject is only a self as *unitary consciousness*.

In this context, the Illuminative philosophy is also directed to answering some major problems that arise from modern subjectivism, including our consciousness of private states (esp. senses and body), reflective ([Subject-Object]ive) knowledge and our grasping of the reality of objects.

On this basis, some immediate conclusions are set forth, including (i) a refutation of a triple trap which follows from the ontological crisis: skepticism, solipsism and idealism; (ii) the agreement of the Illuminative theory with common sense; and (iii) a suggestion as to how one could read the authors of modern theories of the self in an Illuminative context.

UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM

Faculty Of Art

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

The Unitary Consciousness:

*Toward A Solution For The Ontological
Crisis In Modern Theories Of The Self*

A Thesis Submitted In Candidacy For The Degree Of Doctor Of Philosophy

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February, 1996



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Mahmoud Khatami

February, 1996

To:

Maryam

With Love and Gratitude

*Your Straightforwardness of thinking
is the product of this Illuminated regions;
the distortion in your thought, likewise,
has its origin here.*

Hakim Sanai
(From his *Sair al-'Ibad*
Trans. D. Pendlebury)

*Open the eye of the heart that thou mayst behold Being,
that thou mayst see that which is not to be seen...
Thou seekest a candle whilst the sun is on high:
the day is very bright whilst thou art in darkest night.
If thou wilt but escape from thy darkness
thou shalt behold all the universe the dawning-place of
lights.
Like a blind man thou seekest guide and staff
for this clear and level road.*

Hatef of Isfahan
(From his *Tarji 'band*
Trans. E.G. Brown)

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Preface

In the pages that follow, I have originally proposed to examine in a comparative way whether the Persian school of Illuminative philosophy could contribute to remove the ontological crisis in modern epistemology of the self. In carrying out this, I felt it was imperative to step beyond the traditional confines as well as Orientalistic boundaries of reading Islamic/Persian philosophy. I tried, therefore, to redirect the Illuminative school to examine its ability to contribute. To remedy this, I attempted first to reconstruct the illuminative method: Though in the practical trend of the illuminative literature, this method is actually applied here and there, a theoretical formulation of it has not as yet been found. The philosophical introducing of this method here appears to be the first. Through this introducing, I disclosed in a comparative way that the Illuminative method already employed some sorts of modern philosophical methods such as Phenomenological Reductions and Deconstruction. However, the main aim was to introduce *the Ontetic Field* in which the subtle relation of consciousness with the “being” of the self is realised as the “Unitary Consciousness.”

The notion of the unitary consciousness which I am presenting was born from my analysis of the Illuminative philosophy, on one hand, and, on the other, from rethinking of my M.A dissertation⁽¹⁾ in which I tried to read Husserlian-Schelerian version of transcendentalism in an Illuminative context. I think that this notion, when exactly elaborated, could have its appropriate applications in the related fields. We will see some of its applications in this research (Ch. 6-8); I have also examined it in a separate work⁽²⁾ to justify the Mystical Consciousness, and am now thinking of its moral application.

It is perhaps obvious without saying that reconstructing and redirecting of an old and sophisticated philosophy with its hugely widespread traditional literature, to bring out from it something new to solve a fundamental problem in modern thought, could not be simple and easy; specially when it is the first step in a new field of comparative philosophy that has not as yet been pursued at all. I hope that the main idea of the present research will open a window to a non-Western but rich philosophy and will help to stimulate some thinking in a constructive direction toward the solution of a fundamental problem that is vital for modern philosophy.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The problematic of the self in the modern thought is hidden in an ontological gap in the epistemology of the self. In this introduction, we present a delineation of this gap; then we elucidate it by retracing selectively three main movements in western thought concerning the self, through a rapid study of Descartes, Hume, Kant and Husserl. At the end of this chapter, we briefly draw the aims and design of this research.

1. 1. Primary Considerations:

Among several interpretations of the nature of modern western philosophy, there is one in particular that considers it as a history of subjectivism. There are, of course, different versions of this standpoint. It seems enough here to mention, for example, those of Geunon,⁽¹⁾ Schoun,⁽²⁾ Gilson⁽³⁾ and Heidegger.⁽⁴⁾ We are not concerned in this research with these interpretations and their critical remarks on the nature of modern thought and its probably dramatic implications. What concerns us here is to see a general point on which these critics agree despite their different outlooks: that there is a crisis in the basis of modern thought.⁽⁵⁾ What is of significance for our study is this crisis so far as the nature of the self is concerned. Seen from this particular angle, the crisis is rooted in an ontological gap in the epistemology of the self. What is this gap? Let us provide a brief answer.

Descartes, the father of modern western thought, gave through his *Meditations* a priority to *Cogito* over *sum*, and this became a turning point for the movement that crystallised in Kant's Copernican Revolution by which metaphysics was identified with epistemology -- the official neglecting of '*sum*' which detached epistemology from ontology indicating that it can be considered without any need for the latter, and finally dismissed. As a whole, existence became a *category* of our understanding along with and among the others. It is ultimately a *copula* picked up from judgement.⁽⁵⁺¹⁾ True, it has somehow been understood often thereafter in a nominalistic way through western thought. (aside from the existentialist movement.)

One of the immediate consequences of detaching epistemology from ontology in this history has in the main been the dismissal of the 'being' of the self. In such context, the dramatic destiny of the self depicts a divergent line of thought in the West; since the history of modern western thought was established on the Cartesian *Cogito* whose *ego*, at least as its historical fate testifies,⁽⁶⁾ was uprooted from its being even in the same well-known phrase: *Cogito ergo sum*. The profound ontological gap felt in the basis of modern thought is hidden in this uprooted ego, in this *Cogito* detached from *sum*: the beingless self, or in Heidegger's term the worldless subject. The Cartesian *Cogito* dismissed the realm of existence and reduced the self to a *res cogitans* that implicitly erased all properties traditionally assigned to the self as soul;⁽⁷⁾ and put it in contrast to *res extensa*. Contemporary thought has suffered from the weight of difficulties raised by such a dualism: *Cogito*, the turning point of western thought, plunged into the maze of the subject-object dualism in which, as these critics say, modern thought has been involved.⁽⁸⁾

Looking from this standpoint, and relying on the authority of these thinkers here, we can depict since Descartes, from Cartesian Meditations to Husserlian Meditations, the following dialectical line of reasoning invoked by western philosophers (who remained in the Cartesian maze) so far as the nature of the self is concerned: (i) A thesis indicating that the self is a positive conscious thing, a *res cogitans*. To this thesis all rationalists give credence. (ii) An anti-thesis indicating that such a self can not logically be found (Hume) and is void (Rorty); it is psychologically (Hume) or verbally (Rorty)⁽⁹⁾ supposed. (iii) A synthesis indicating that such a self should be supposed over or beyond our thought and actions, although we are not able to found it; it is transcendently a logical condition for our thought and actions (Kant, Kantians and Husserl). These three positions can be classified as the major lines of the subjectivistic theories of the self in modern thought. All three have become trapped in that ontological gap we mentioned above; that is to say, all of them have neglected the 'being' of the self, the *sum*, and devoted themselves to the order of conceptual reflective knowledge, the *Cogito*, presupposing the distinction between epistemology and ontology, and the priority of the former to the latter.

Thus considered, one may see the modern epistemology of the self as a continual challenge over the same problem: Descartes posited an isolated substance, a beingless subject, as 'I'; and the epistemologists after him challenged for or against

this 'I'. In this research we consider Husserl, whose *Cartesian Meditations* end up with a radical idealism on the self, as characteristic of this subjectivistic movement.

Our purpose is to fill the ontological gap in the modern theories of the self using insights from the Illuminative tradition in Persian philosophy. Before expounding an Illuminative account of the self, we offer in this introduction a brief analysis of the three major lines of western subjectivism identified above. For convenience we term these *the substantialising of the self*, *the psychologising of the self* and *the transcendentalising of the self*. They will be explored through the writings of Descartes, Hume, Kant and Husserl. The first aim of this analysis is to clarify the problematic within diverse and conflicting modern thoughts about the self. The second aim is to prepare a proper context for our later proposal (Ch.8) that many of these apparently conflicts can be integrated and brought to completion on the basis of the apparently widespread experience of the self identified in the Illuminative philosophy. We will suggest that these apparent conflicts can be resolved by underpinning them with an Illuminative account of the self.

1. 2. Substantialising of The Self:

The substantialisation of the self has a history as old as that of philosophy firstly presented by Plato, then systematised by Aristotle. However in modern times it has gained fresh significance through/since Descartes methodological meditations. In the *Meditation* Descartes engaged in a search for knowledge that might prove absolutely certain. He employed skepticism as a method, doubting everything he could in order to see if anything remained as certain and stable.

“Archimedes asked only for one fixed and immovable point so as to move the whole earth from its place; so I may have great hopes if I find even the least thing that is unshakeably certain.” (10)

Using his method, Descartes felt that he discovered an absolute, unshakeable foundation for knowledge in the knowledge of his own self-existence.

He doubted everything, and then noticed that the very act of doubting was his act, and that even doubting his own non-existence would therefore prove his existence. For “if I did convince myself of anything, I must have existed,” and similarly, if anyone else convinced him of anything, he must also still exist.

“Thus I . . . must at length conclude that this proposition ‘I am’, ‘I exist’, whenever I utter it or conceive it in my mind, is necessarily true.”⁽¹¹⁾

On this argument, then, “I exist” is a necessary truth whenever thought or uttered. It is true whenever conceived, and its contradiction “I do not exist” is false whenever conceived (for the very act of conceiving it implies its falsity).

Having established self-existence as indubitable, Descartes asked “what is this ‘I’ that necessarily exists”?⁽¹²⁾ He noted that his body and even the entire physical universe might conceivably be mere dreams, “nonentities” in themselves. As such they stand in sharp contrast to the certainty of his own consciousness. For while these possibly illusory objects of awareness might disappear from his consciousness, his own consciousness itself could not. Thus:

“At this point I come to the fact that there is consciousness. . . of this and this only I cannot be deprived.”⁽¹³⁾ “What then am I? A conscious being.”⁽¹⁴⁾

“That is, a being that doubts, asserts, denies, understands a few things, is ignorant of many, is willing or unwilling; and that has also imagination and sense. . . In these few words I have given a list of all the things I really know, or at least have so far observed that I know. . . I am certain that I am a conscious being.”⁽¹⁵⁾

Thus, Descartes argued that his own existence as a conscious being is necessarily indubitable. From this beginning Descartes attempted to derive a knowledge about knowledge, God, and the world. Our concern here, however, is only with his theory of self. Let us turn to three major corollaries about the self which Descartes felt the above line of reasoning established:

(i) I am a thing that thinks, an “intelligent substance” that can exist “as a whole” being, independently of any of the various faculties of thinking or consciousness (e.g., imagination, perception, etc.) which I find in me.

(ii) I am “one and the same mind that wills, feels. . . understands,” etc.⁽¹⁶⁾ That is, I am the same person, the same “conscious being” throughout all of my activities and experiences, “a single and complete thing, “non-extended, without parts, and “wholly indivisible.”⁽¹⁷⁾

(iii) I am non-picturable and non-imaginable, and “nothing I can comprehend by the help of imagination belongs to my conception of myself.” For, Descartes argued, one’s nature as a conscious self is radically different and logically distinct from all the contents of perception and imagination,⁽¹⁸⁾ and

“The mind’s attention must be carefully diverted from these things, so that she may discern her own nature as distinctly as possible.” (19)

These conclusions about the self have proven very troublesome. From Descartes’ time onwards philosophers have questioned them, asking:

(i) What reason do we have to infer the existence of some conscious thing or substance existing above and beyond the various contents of consciousness displayed by introspection?

(ii) What is meant by the “sameness” of self existing throughout its various activities, and what evidence (other than ordinary common-sense intuition) do we have that there is one selfsame thing that persists?

(iii) What concept can we have of something absolutely unimaginable and unpicturable?

These three questions, about the self as a conscious thing, the same conscious thing, and unimaginable conscious thing, have dominated discussions of self for over three hundred years. Descartes’ meditations on the self, however plausible they might at first seem, have raised more questions than they settled, and his Archimedes’ point is not yet at all secure and immovable.

We will later see if the Illuminative theory we will be discussing provides us with a useful perspective for re-evaluating these difficult questions about the nature of the self. Rather than attempting to apply this Illuminative knowledge here, however, let us continue our examination of modern philosophical theories and problems of self as they developed after Descartes.

1. 3. Psychologising of the Self:

The substantialisation of the self was accepted not only by Cartesians, but also by some philosophers who objected to his philosophical system (e.g. Berkeley). Only Hume who pushed empiricism to its extreme, rejected the nature of the self as a substance. Due to his empiricist principles, he ultimately described the self as a psychological ‘I’. It does not mean that by such a position, he refused to consider the knowledge of the self; rather, like Descartes, he regarded knowledge of the self to be of supreme importance. In the introduction to his *Treatise on Human Nature* he declared

Here then is the only expedient, from which we can hope for success in our philosophical researches, to . . . march directly to the capital or centre of these [i.e., all the] sciences, to human nature itself, which being masters of we may every where else hope for an easy victory.⁽²⁰⁾

It is obvious that Hume was concerned with developing philosophical knowledge that was scientific. He subtitled his *Treatise* “An attempt to introduce the experimental method of reasoning into moral subjects, “ that is, into subjects dealing with mind, knowledge, and human nature. By “experimental method of reasoning” he meant reasoning that was experiential in orientation. All concepts that could not be derived from experience, that is from our “impressions” (or perceptions) and the relations observed to hold among them, were to be discarded as unscientific; only those the meanings of which could be fully explicated in terms of experience were to be accepted as significant and useful for gaining knowledge.⁽²¹⁾ Let us now see how Hume applied his “experimental method” of analysis to the self.

Hume, responding to Descartes’ analysis,⁽²²⁾ noted that it is supposed certain that the self has a “perfect identity and simplicity,” is “invariably the same through the whole course of our lives,” and is neither an impression nor perception but rather “that to which our several impressions and ideas are supposed to relate.”⁽²³⁾ According to Hume, however, this notion of self, which at first seems to appear commonsensical, is not supported by the facts of our actual experience. For we have no impression that is constant and invariable,⁽²⁴⁾ and no experience of self (or anything else) as distinct from perceptions or impressions.⁽²⁵⁾ Therefore, Hume argued, we have no experiential basis for any concept of self as single, simple, or continuing. This commonsensical concept of self that is supposed, therefore, according to Hume, is simply “fictitious.”⁽²⁶⁾

Thus, on the basis of Hume’s analysis, if we remain true to our experience we are forced to acknowledge that the self in reality “is nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions which . . . are in perpetual flux or movement.”⁽²⁷⁾ For introspection only displays collections of such perceptions, and no perception or collection is perceived as constant. This observation, and its apparent conflict with our sense of self as constant and abiding naturally prompted Hume to ask

“What then gives so great a propensity to ascribe an identity to these successive perceptions [constituting one’s self], and to suppose ourselves possess of an invariable and uninterrupted existence through the whole of our lives?”⁽²⁸⁾

Hume's answer is that our various perceptions are so closely connected by two relations, "contiguity" (being "next to") and "resemblance," that our attention naturally passes among them so smoothly that we generally do not notice their separateness and distinctness, and that as a result we simply take them unreflectingly to be aspects of a single thing, namely, one's self-identical mind or self. Self-identity is only a (naturally occurring) fiction. ⁽²⁹⁾

Hume at first considered this "relational" account of the genesis of our concept of the self "perfectly decisive." ⁽³⁰⁾ He asserted:

"When I turn my reflection on myself, I never can perceive this self without some one or more perceptions. It is the composition of these, therefore, which forms the self. ⁽³¹⁾ We have no notion of it distinct from particular perceptions. ⁽³²⁾ And we have no impression of self or substance as something simple and individual. We have, therefore, no idea of them in this sense." ⁽³³⁾

Thus, Hume reasserted, there can be no sense to the idea of a single, abiding self to which our various individual perceptions and thoughts are related or connected.

"So far I seem to be attended with sufficient evidence. But having thus loosened all our particular perceptions, when I proceed to explain the principle of connection, which binds them together and makes us attribute to them a real simplicity and identity; I am sensible, that my account is very defective." ⁽³⁴⁾

That is, Hume's earlier attempt to unify the "loosened perceptions" and account for the "felt" unity of self by means of relations observed to hold between them is now explicitly rejected as "very defective." ⁽³⁵⁾

The logic of Hume's difficulty may perhaps require some explanation. Hume argued that each of our "perceptions" or "impressions" (that is, each component of our inner and outer experience) is a logically "distinct existence." For each of them, in logic if not in actual fact, can be had independently of any and all of the others. That is, there is nothing in any of our perceptions which necessarily connects it with any other. By recognising this we have, in Hume's terms, (conceptually) "loosened" each of our perceptions from all the others. Thus if we reflect on the set of perceptions that comprise the experiences of our own lives we see that there is nothing within these "loosened" perceptions that can account for their connectedness. This means that there is nothing in them that can account for the fact that each of us "feels" that they are connected by being "bound together" as one's own.

Hume's argument here, of course, is only about perceptions as perceptions. Taken by itself it does not imply anything about what we naturally take to be objects of and causal processes underlying the perceptions themselves. For example, the fact that the contents of the left and right portions of one's visual (or auditory, etc.) field exist and are related in the way that they presently are (as left and right, being experienced now by oneself, etc.) presumably is the result of a long causal sequence of events. Given that objective causal sequence, what is experienced on the left must be experienced there. But on the basis of Hume's analysis,⁽³⁶⁾ if we consider the perceptions just as perceptions, we can readily imagine, for example, seeing the left portion somewhere else, in a different context, or even entirely by itself. For each portion is

"distinguishable, and separable, and may be conceived as separately existent, and may exist separately, without any contradiction or absurdity."⁽³⁷⁾

One might have dreamed of having perceptions that are connected, or disconnected, in the ways that are different from the ways that they actually are. But recognising that (considered purely as perceptions) there is nothing in them that requires them to be connected in the ways that they are, or even to be connected at all, makes it apparent that there is nothing in them which can account for the fact that they are connected together as one's own. Hume accordingly felt constrained to conclude that

"all my hopes vanish, when I come to explain the principles, that unite our successive perceptions in our thought or consciousness. I cannot discover any theory, which gives me satisfaction on this head."⁽³⁸⁾

Hume's introspective analysis and conclusion that he could find neither any constant perception nor anything distinct from perceptions, and therefore nothing which could correspond to the notion of a single, abiding self, has proven very influential since his time. His analyses of the varieties of perceptions and their relations and his attempt to construct a theory of self in terms of relations and collections of perceptions accordingly have prompted philosophers and psychologists alike to offer a variety of theories of the self as a bundle, collection or other association of perceptions related in various ways (e.g., by continuity, similarity, memory-connectedness, etc.). Hume himself, however, not only rejected his own

collection theory of self, but also apparently felt that no such theory could succeed. For his rejection, as we saw, was formulated entirely in general terms, without even mentioning any of the specifics of his own earlier theory.

Hume's rejection of bundle or collection theories of self was based on his observation that our perceptions, considered purely as perceptions, are separable and re-combinable. This observation also provides the basis for an explicit general argument against the possibility of any adequate "collection" or "relational" theory of self (see also Ch. 4). The idea behind the argument seems to be simple. When we recognise, as Hume did, that any imaginable perception (logically) could be had independently of its relationships to other perceptions, it becomes apparent that any such perception (logically, if not in fact) could be had by anyone, including oneself. Perhaps the world would have to be very different (as in a dream, "science fiction," etc.) for one to actually have some particular very unlikely experience, but if one can imagine anyone's having it, one can imagine (without logical contradiction) having it oneself. To this extent, then, it appears that we naturally conceive of ourselves as experiencers somehow independent of the restrictions imposed by particular experiences and their relationships. It seems obvious that neither collections of such experiences nor their relations can be expected to capture this independent aspect of our ordinary concept of self.

The full general argument, intended to cover all possible cases, naturally is highly abstract.⁽³⁹⁾ Its basic idea, however, is simply that when a relation R between perceptions is defined, it will be incapable of grasping the nature of one's self.⁽⁴⁰⁾ This is because in attempting to specify the collection of perceptions -- that , suppose, constitute one's self -- the relation will always imply that it is (logically) impossible for one to have perceptions that he (logically) could have. The following examples serve to make the significance of this general argument clear.

Suppose, as a variation of Hume's original "contiguity" and "resemblance" theory, that for any thing to be a perception it must be experienced as associated with our own body, and in a place connected with those of our prior experiences. If the relation R is defined in this way, then any perception that is not experienced as (a) associated with our body and (b) in a place connected with those of our earlier experiences will be a perception that R excludes. This means that it is a perception which we cannot have. It is easy to see, however, that people not only can but actually do have such excluded perceptions. If our body is moved to a completely

unfamiliar place while we are unconscious, our perceptions of surroundings upon waking will not be connected with those of our prior experiences. Furthermore it is obviously possible to have experiences where our body is not noticed at all, and in dreams we can not only not notice our body but even have experiences which are associated to all appearances with a different body, or even with no body at all. These are all common kinds of experiences. Yet the relation R defined above implies that we could not have any of them. Thus each of them shows that the relation being evaluated is incapable of defining the collection of perceptions that we can have.

The relation evaluated and rejected above was defined, in the spirit of Hume's original suggestion, in terms of relationships between our perceptions. But the general argument against collection theories implies that relations which are expanded to refer to physical objects (such as our body) as well will still always have counter examples. For example, it is often held that an experience must be had by means of (or at least in association with) our body, whether or not we notice this fact. Thus the relation R could require our body as a condition for a perception. Then, any experience, had before our body existed or after it ceases to exist, cannot be one had by ourselves. Now consider some (logically) possible experience occurring after our body ceases to exist. Then the relation R now being examined implies that one cannot have this experience. While it may well be true in fact that we cannot have any experiences after our bodies cease to exist, the majority of the people in the world not only appear capable of imagining that they have such experiences, but are often even very concerned about having and/or not having them, as the history of the world's religions (not to mention the texts of Plato and other philosophers) shows. Since this concern, held so deeply by so many ordinary people, is about their having such experiences themselves, it is clear that this relation (R) is incapable of capturing, and indeed is contradicted by, our ordinary concept of self as it is reflected in these widespread religious fears and aspirations.⁽⁴¹⁾

The relations used in the above examples could of course be refined and revised to accommodate any given counter-examples. The general argument, however, implies that every empirically significant relation will have such counter-examples. It rejects all such relations at once, and implies that whatever relations may hold between our various perceptions, these relations are unable either to define the self by specifying the collection of perceptions proper to it, or to express what is involved in our perceptions being, for each of us, our own. Thus they cannot serve as the

“principle of connection” uniting perceptions into a collection adequate to defining the self. Hume’s skepticism about the possibility of developing a bundle -- or collection-theory of the self was thus well-founded.

“Did our perceptions either inhere in something simple and individual, or did the mind perceive some real connection among them, there would be no difficulty in the case. For my part, I must plead the privilege of a sceptic, and confess, that this difficulty is too hard for my understanding.”⁽⁴²⁾

The “capital or centre” of knowledge clearly has not yet been captured.

1. 4. *Transcendentalising of the Self:*

Descartes’ and Hume’s theories posited a third possibility in the history of modern thought: transcendentalisation of the self. This possibility is firstly examined by Kant and followed by the majority of philosophers in post-Kantian period. Here we summarise two outstanding figures in this line: Kant and Husserl whose positions on transcendentalisation seem to arise differently from a tension between Cartesian and Humean trends.

a) **Kant:** Hume’s critical analyses had a profound impact on Kant. Reading Hume, Kant wrote, woke him from his “dogmatic slumber”⁽⁴³⁾ and caused him to re-evaluate the foundations of what he had formerly taken to be knowledge. Hume’s analyses convinced Kant that the relationships we observe in experience are always contingent (that is, dependent on various factors and conditions), and that experience therefore cannot display necessary, universal truth.⁽⁴⁴⁾ This forced Kant to question his earlier dogmatic convictions radically, and ask how, and even whether, knowledge which is certain and universal could even be possible. In his *Critique of Pure Reason* he responded that we can in fact have knowledge which is certain and universal, and that universal certainty is a reflection of the invariant aspects of the nature of the knower, rather than of the changing contents of whatever one may know or experience.⁽⁴⁵⁾

Kant offered an analysis of the self as “the original synthetic unity” of all knowledge and experience, a unity which serves as “the Supreme Principle of all Employment of the Understanding.”⁽⁴⁶⁾ Kant’s analyses of these concepts are detailed

and quite sophisticated, but a few basic observations can usefully be made here. Kant noted that our experience is always in space and/or time, and, furthermore, it is always of extensions in space and/or time, never of isolated points.⁽⁴⁷⁾ (Any isolated point, having no extension, would, of course, be too (infinitely) small ever to be perceived.) Every experience, then, is composed of a synthesis of parts. And all the parts must be experienced by a single experiencer. ⁽⁴⁸⁾ Otherwise they would not be parts of an experience, and the original experience itself would simply not exist. For example, in order for the letter “F” at the beginning of this sentence to be seen, various parts must be seen together in specific relations. If each different part was seen in isolation by a different person, the letter would be seen by no one. Thus the very existence of seeing the letter implies that various parts are seen together (synthesised) by a single experiencer. Similarly, for any thought to be thought, its parts, too, must be synthesised in the experience of a single thinker.⁽⁴⁹⁾ Thus, Kant concluded, for any thought or experience to exist, its parts must already have been synthesised and presented to a single conscious self. The individual self according to Kant thus represents “the original synthetic unity” underlying all thought and experience, and, as underlying all thought and experience, its unity is the “supreme principle of all employment of the understanding.” In Kant’s terminology the “identity of the self,”⁽⁵⁰⁾ the unity of “transcendental apperception” or “pure original unchanging consciousness,”⁽⁵¹⁾ is thus the universal condition presupposed by all experience and thought. Being presupposed by experience it is not given by it; it represents the supreme unifying contribution of the self. Furthermore, Kant argues, since our analysis has shown that this must be true of all experience, independent of all particulars of content, we know it with “a priori” certainty, that is, with a certainty which is logically prior to and independent of all the changing contents of experience.

Kant thus appears here to have located a fundamental truth about the self and its relation to experience, namely that the self must be a unitary, synthesising referent for all of one’s experiences.

“It must be possible for the ‘I think’ to accompany all my representations: for otherwise something would be represented in me which could not be thought at all, and that is equivalent to saying that the representation would be impossible, or at least nothing to me.”⁽⁵²⁾

But, Kant adds, there is an important way in which even this knowledge gives no knowledge about the self itself, for

“the perception of self. . . this inner perception is nothing more than the mere apperception ‘I think’ . . . in which no special distinction or empirical determination is given.”⁽⁵³⁾

Our concept of the self thus appears to be “empty,” for we seem to know nothing about the self other than that it plays the role of the conscious synthesising or unifying pole of our experiences. As Kant puts it:

“the simple, and in itself completely empty, representation ‘I’ . . . we cannot even say that this is a concept, but only that it is a bare consciousness which accompanies all concepts. Through this I or he or it (the thing) which thinks, nothing further is represented than a transcendental subject of the thought = X. It is known only through the thoughts, which are its predicates, and of it, apart from them, we cannot have any concept whatsoever.”⁽⁵⁴⁾

Kant’s conception of self thus raises two important, related questions:

(a) Why according to Kant, must the “I” be a completely empty representation? And (b) why is it that the self cannot be known as it is in itself?

We can readily extract answers to these two questions from within Kant’s system. The answer to the first question emphasises the relation of the self to experience, and the second emphasises the nature of the self in itself. I say “extract” two answers because while Kant’s conclusions are clear, his reasoning here seems to be not spelled out.⁽⁵⁵⁾ We can nevertheless fairly see how his conclusions follow from his general position.

(a) First let us see why Kant would hold that the “I” is in itself simple and empty, and that it is obvious that in attaching ‘I’ to our thoughts we designate the subject of inherence transcendentially, without noticing in it any quality whatsoever.⁽⁵⁶⁾

Kant’s point is not that we simply do not notice any quality, but that there is no quality to be noticed. Whether or not this is “obvious,” it can readily be shown to follow within Kant’s system: My having an experience implies that it is my experience that is already subject, in Kant’s terminology, to the “transcendental unity of apperception.” Therefore if we add “I” it doesn’t mean that we add what was not there already. Since this is true for every possible experience, there is no quality the “I” can ever add to any experience; therefore it has no quality of its own to add, that is, “no special distinction or empirical determination” which can serve to distinguish it within the field of experience. We thus see how Kant could reasonably maintain that

the universal applicability of the "I" (of "I think," "I experience," "I am," etc.) precludes it from having "any admixture of experience,"⁽⁵⁷⁾ from being characterised by any "empirical data"⁽⁵⁸⁾ or "special designation,"⁽⁵⁹⁾ and from being "accompanied by any further representation."⁽⁶⁰⁾

(b) Now let us see what the representation of "I", empty as it may be, is supposed to be of (namely the self which combines or synthesises experiences and thoughts into its own unified whole). In the first place, it is clear that Kant thought of the self as (somehow) outside the whole field of experience. For insofar as the self is that which combines or synthesises experiences, it must lie outside of them, for "combination does not lie in objects [that are combined], and cannot be borrowed from them."⁽⁶¹⁾

The self as the unity of apperception is thus, in Kant's terminology, "transcendental," ever associated with, yet never to be found in, the field of appearances. Furthermore, Kant's analysis of experience and the unifying activity of the self leads necessarily, according to his arguments, to the concept of the self as a self-identical thing-in-itself independent of space and time -- in Kant's terminology a "noumenon." For the self, using space and time as its matrices to integrate all of its experiences, must somehow be independent of these matrices it uses (as well as of objects it integrates).⁽⁶²⁾ But, Kant argued, if the self (as noumenon) must be outside of time, there can be absolutely no possibility of experiencing the self as it is in itself, for it is a given (although unexplainable) fact of human nature that absolutely all of our experience is of appearances in space and/or time.⁽⁶³⁾

In short, for Kant (a) the "I" (of "I think," "I am conscious," etc.) is an empirically empty concept precisely because it is necessarily compatible with and presupposed by every possible experience, and (b) we can have no knowledge of the self (the "I") as it is in itself, because it is (necessarily thought of as) outside of appearances in space and time, and our experience, the basis of knowledge of particular things, is always and only of appearances in the field of time.

This, for Kant, results in a highly unsatisfactory situation: (i) reasoning about thought and experience leads to the conclusion that a simple, self identical, absolutely unconditioned⁽⁶⁴⁾ self, a thing-in-itself beyond the field of appearances, must be presupposed, yet (ii) reasoning about this concept shows that it is vacuous and gives us no factual knowledge, for it has no empirical content, and there is no possibility of

experiencing any object corresponding to it. While logical coherence requires thinking of the self as the simple, self-identical subject⁽⁶⁵⁾ of our experiences,

“such a way of speaking has no sort of application to real objects, and therefore cannot in the least extend our knowledge.”⁽⁶⁶⁾

And in particular it yields “nothing whatsoever towards the knowledge of myself as an object.”⁽⁶⁷⁾ We thus are here involved in what Kant calls a “transcendental illusion,” an “inevitable illusion. . . [springing] from the very nature of reason.”⁽⁶⁸⁾

“I think myself on behalf of a possible experience, at the same time abstracting from all actual experience; and I conclude therefrom that I can be conscious of my existence even apart from experience and its empirical conditions.”⁽⁶⁹⁾

But this is an error, for

“In so doing I am confusing the possible abstraction from my empirically determined existence with the supposed consciousness of a possible separate existence of my thinking self.”⁽⁷⁰⁾

and inner awareness can

“furnish nothing to the object of pure consciousness for the knowledge of its separate existence.”⁽⁷¹⁾

This dilemma, according to Kant, is inescapable.

“Even the wisest of men cannot free himself from [this] illusion which unceasingly mocks and torments him.”⁽⁷²⁾

The unity of the self, the “supreme principle of all employment of understanding,” thus, according to Kant, inevitably involves us in illusion.

b) Husserl: Descartes discovered the self as the indubitable subject of all thinking. He clearly saw that the self is not a person but only that which did the thinking which he then called the self a *res cogitans*. Hume denied that there was any such self to be discovered through experience or reason; but he could not avoid referring to himself while writing to explain this theory. Kant tried to reply to both

Hume and Descartes. He suggested a “self” which is non-empirical but which captures the insight of the *Cogito*, a transcendental self.⁽⁷³⁾ Husserl once again tries to introduce a transcendental self, a non-psychological ‘I’. He says that Descartes falls into an inconsistency in regard to establishing his own ego as transcendental.⁽⁷⁴⁾ The transcendental which is as a pre-condition for the object of enquiry to exist (perception in this case), Husserl thinks, is what escapes from the field of consciousness:

“As a natural man, can I ask seriously and transcendently how I get outside of my island of consciousness.”⁽⁷⁵⁾

The answer to this question, according to him, is positive:

“By the method of transcendental reduction each of us, as Cartesian meditator, was led back to his transcendental ego.”⁽⁷⁶⁾

“If I put myself above all this life and refrain from doing any believing . . . I thereby acquire myself as the pure ego.”⁽⁷⁷⁾

This is indeed so because:

“The transcendental ego emerged by virtue of my paranthesing of the entire Objective world and all other (including all ideal) Objectivities. In consequence of this paranthesizing, I have become aware of myself as the transcendental ego.”⁽⁷⁸⁾

and finally:

“In such [self-] experience the ego is accessible to himself originaliter. But at any particular time this experience offers only a core that is experienced with strict adequacy, namely the ego’s living present.”⁽⁷⁹⁾

Since Husserl insists that phenomenology should be restricted to pure description, we can easily see why the notion of a transcendental self puts him in a trouble. This is because the transcendental self who is the subject of all experiences cannot be the object of any possible experience; if so, then there is nothing which can be described.

In his early works,⁽⁸⁰⁾ thanks to his faithfulness to the idea of pure description, Husserl reject the notion of the pure or transcendental self. In this stage he, following Hume, identifies consciousness simply as a bundle of acts; there is no need of a

“referential centre”. Later, in *Ideas* he speaks of *Cogito* somehow in Cartesian manner and regards it as “necessary”. Applying the *epoche*, the method of withdrawing, the *Cogito* remains unbracketable, and he says that this *Cogito* is the self. In this stage Husserl still maintains that we can not describe the self. With Descartes, Husserl argues that the self remains after any doubting or reduction and that it is the pure ego which performs the acts of constitution which yield the world.

“The experiencing ego is still nothing that might be taken for itself and made into an object of inquiry on its own account. Apart from its ‘way of being related’ or ways of behaving’, it is completely empty of essential components, it has no content that could be unravelled. it is in and for itself indescribable.”⁽⁸¹⁾

Later,⁽⁸²⁾ Husserl ignores the notion of the self in the form of “Ego” and describes it as “soul” which is passive for the most part. The self here is described as a functional centre, and as a polarity to which intuition happens. Thus understood, Husserl says, the self constitutes itself. The idea that the self is a centre and mostly passive which constitutes itself puts Husserl’s thesis in line with Kant’s thesis of *Cogito*. This self is not a substance, not describable apart from its necessary role in perception, and it is as necessary for the existence of (its) objects as its objects are necessary for it. In formulating the self here, Husserl seems to follow Kant in his “Refutation of idealism” in the first Critique.⁽⁸³⁾ The self and its objects are polarities each necessary to the other. The self is active so far as it provides the forms of intuition and categories of understanding within which objects can be known. The self, however, is passive so far as intuition is concerned and can not be said to create its objects.

In his later works, relying on Descartes, Husserl seems to regard the self as an Archimedian point. He speaks of the self as ‘absolute’ meaning that all objects exist only by relation to it but not vice versa. He introduces the transcendental reduction which reduces all objects of intuition to products of this self. Ultimately, Husserl describes this self as a “monad,” an absolute ego, a total self which “includes also the whole of actual and potential conscious life”.⁽⁸⁴⁾ It is for this monad that all things exist:

“objects exist for me, and are for me what they are, only as objects of actual and possible consciousness.”⁽⁸⁵⁾

This ultimate result, of course, leads Husserl to a kind of solipsism⁽⁸⁶⁾ and idealism⁽⁸⁷⁾ -- as accepted by him in Cartesian Meditation:

“Phenomenology is *eo ipso* ‘transcendental idealism’.”⁽⁸⁸⁾

and,

“Without doubt . . . [phenomenology] condemns us to a solipsism.”⁽⁸⁹⁾

Husserl’s theory of self also leads to a radical subjectivism, instead of a transcendental empiricism.⁽⁹⁰⁾ What Husserl builds in his later works is a castle for the transcendental subjectivity to which all true knowledge belongs.⁽⁹¹⁾ The idea of an absolute self, a monad, also threatens Husserl with skepticism, for the idea that everything is relative to the self and all knowledge is knowledge of the transcendental subjectivity entails this consequence that we can not know anything except our own subjectivity.

1.5. On The Way To Fill The Gap:

The analyses of Descartes, Hume, Kant and Husserl have raised serious problems for our ordinary notion of self. Descartes, reflecting common sense, argued that the self is single, simple, abiding, and different from its varying perceptions. Hume rejected this characterisation on the grounds that we have no corresponding experience. Yet he concluded that this rejection, along with the consequent attempt to account for our concept of self by means of collections of perceptions, leads to a “labyrinth” of inconsistencies.⁽⁹²⁾ Kant on the other hand argued that we necessarily have to think of the self as single, simple and abiding, but he also argued that the fact that we have no corresponding experience necessarily renders this concept problematic. The result is a concept of self which, as vacuous, “unceasingly mocks and torments” even “the wisest of men.”

To make our difficulty even worse, the above discussion of Kant led to the conclusion that the self, the “I” that we necessarily think of as present throughout all of our experiences, cannot properly be characterised by any empirical quality. And the above discussion of Hume led to the related conclusion that the self cannot be properly characterised even by collections of or relations between our perceptions. It thus appears that it is not possible to characterise the self in terms of empirical

qualities, their collections, or their relations. Our analysis so far thus seems to imply that our concept of self is, as Hume suggested and Kant insisted, meaningless.

Husserl seems to remain in a continuous tension between Humean and Kantian demands, from one side, and Cartesian demand from the other side, and ultimately ends up in a radical subjectivism.

It could be said, on the basis of the above discussion that it is the ontological gap in the epistemology of the self in modern thought that raises the lack of any experience corresponding to our ordinary concept of self as single, simple, and abiding. This lack appears to make it impossible to develop any philosophically satisfactory notion of self. And if epistemology of the self is the “Archimedes’ point,” the “capital or centre” of all knowledge, and the “supreme principle of all employment of the understanding”, as Descartes, Husserl, Hume, and Kant respectively indicate, then the absence of a satisfactory ontology of self points to a profound gap at the basis of modern thought. That is to say, the ‘being’ of the self is repeatedly ignored from Cartesian meditations to Husserlian meditations. This is what we mean by the ‘ontological gap’.

Now, *if* there is such a gap in the basis of modern theories of the self, how could we fill it? There are, of course, a few suggestions offered by western critics to fill this gap -- either by appealing to the far eastern schools, as we see in early Geunon who detected a moral self in Hinduism, or by reconsidering the western traditional philosophy, as we see in Existentialism. We will consider Existentialism as an example of such an efforts throughout this research.

Though all these efforts to fill the gap are praiseworthy, however, in this research we are about to test a new way by exerting it from an old tradition in Persian philosophy: the Illuminative tradition. As we depicted the problematic of the modern notion of the self as an ontological gap, it will, then, be supposed that we need a return to the ‘being’ of the self to fill the.⁽⁹⁴⁾ This is needed simply because if we want to remove the gap we should consider the self’s being anew; that is, its ontology. It means that instead of reflectively, epistemologically theorising the nature of the self as a *concept*, we need a live, performative, factual and existential notion to indicate the *experience* of the self. Such a notion is exactly what will be built up in this research.

We suggest that the Illuminative theory can fill the ontological gap in the epistemology of the self because it assigns to the self a special kind of “being”, one which, to my knowledge, has no corresponding notion in Western thought since

Socrates. This kind of being, as we shall see in Chapter 3, remains apart from (and prior to) any distinction between ontology and epistemology, and so automatically fills the gap.

1.6 Aims of This Research

This research has one principle, and several subsidiary aims.

I) The **principle aim** is to present a theory of the self which draws upon the Illuminative tradition, in order to fill the ontological gap in modern theories of the self.

II) The **subsidiary aims** divide into two ranks, comprising attendant topics which are (a) exclusively discussed and (b) only outlined.

(a) *The explicit subsidiary discussions* cover applications of the Illuminative theory to the following:

(i) Our consciousness of private states. Here the Illuminative theory offers insights upon private states in general, and draws us into an encounter with body-consciousness as well as sense-consciousness. The aim here is to show that our private states, existentialised in general, provide evidence in support of the Illuminative approach.

(ii) The root of reflective knowledge and our knowledge of the external world. Here the aim is to show how an Illuminative theory yields an account of the Subject-Object relationship, by providing an existential explanation of the root of the reflective knowledge.

(b) *The outline subsidiary discussions* have three aims:

(i) To draw an introductory comparison between the Illuminative philosophy and the continental European philosophy. Though limited in scope, this is the first such comparison to be made, in Persian, Arabic, English or French scholarship;

(ii) To reveal some novel aspects of an old method and tradition through this comparison;

(iii) To suggest that this tradition of the Illuminative school, with its philosophical and mystical aspects, can suggest solutions to modern problems and offer valuable services to modern thought.

1.7 Design Of The Research

Since the aim is to reveal how the illuminative school fills the ontological gap in the epistemology of the self, we shall begin, in Chapter 2, with a general introduction to the Illuminative Method. This embodies the claim that epistemology which is based upon the theory of essence cannot be detached from ontology. Rather, the former is grounded by the latter: epistemology (which belongs to the eidetic field) can never be a starting point. Their method ultimately appeals to a very subtle and special reduction, under which everything is reduced to existence and is grounded by it.

Applying this method of reduction, this school reached a sort of existentialism. Their specific theory of being provides an entry to considering philosophical problems in general, and the problematic of the self in particular. We shall follow this procedure and study the “being” of the self according to this school. For convenience we divide this study into two principal discussions: one concerning the ontology of the self, in Chapters 3, 4 and 5; and one concerning some applications of the theory, in Chapters 6, 7 and 8.

In chapter 3 we encounter some general principles of the illuminative theory of Being which yield an interpretation of the “being” of the self. This interpretation, considered in Chapter 4, opens into (i) an elucidation of the special kind of existence the self possesses, and thereby (ii) the self’s access to the reality of beings through a “purely existential touch.” The latter is exposed as a performative experience: that of a unitary consciousness. Chapter 5 discusses the major characteristics of this unitary consciousness.

Chapters 6 and 7 consider some applications of the theory. In Chapter 6 private states are accounted for as cases of the unitary consciousness. In Chapter 7, the relation between the unitary consciousness and reflective knowledge is discussed. Finally, in Chapter 8, we draw some conclusions and make a suggestion about the possibility of reading the authors of modern theories of the self in an Illuminative context.

CHAPTER TWO

Introducing the Illuminative Method

In this chapter we would introduce a general overview of the outline of the Illuminative method on the basis of the doctrine of *Al-Sayr wa al-suluk* to put together the elements of the Illuminative method that are diversely developed through the Illuminative literature and somehow often hidden from the eyes of modern investigators and orientalists. The chief aim of this introduction, however, is to present, through a comparative description of the Illuminative method, a special notion of reduction. This notion is crucial for our discussion of the nature of the self, because it is through this reduction that the Illuminative philosophy brings the ontology and epistemology of the self together, and this is what we need to fill the gap in the basis of modern notion of the self. We will discuss this reduction as the ultimate application of the Illuminative method. This will concern us in detail. However, before starting our description of its method, it will be useful to have a brief remark on the emergence of the Illuminative school -- though it is not, of course, our intention here to study the history of this school or to evaluate its various historical aspects.

2. 1. Primary Considerations:

The Illuminative school is the name of a philosophical movement founded and fulfilled by Persian philosophers in response to a historical need: a return to the original elements of wisdom (actually the pre-Islamic Persian wisdom), in contrast to the Greek philosophy.

In the preface of his last, but unfortunately uncompleted, work, *The Philosophy of the Illuminated Orientalists (Hekmat al-Mashreqyyin)*,⁽¹⁾ Avicenna has hinted that he wishes to establish a philosophy to be purely orientalised in principle. This is understood by his commentators as a clue to a philosophy based on the ancient Persian wisdom. Because of his death, he could not elaborate such a philosophy however. This task fulfilled later by another Persian philosopher Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi entitled Shaykh Ishragh (master of Illumination) [myr. 1191]⁽²⁾, who despite a short life of thirty-eight lunar years established a new philosophical system

on the notion of Illumination and Light⁽³⁾ based on the ancient Persian wisdom and terminology. He created an isthmus between discursive thought and mystical intuition. The school founded by Suhrawardi soon found its capable followers and commentators who delivered many different versions of the Illuminative philosophy but remained faithful to the Illuminative elements, method and goals.

The best and most systematic among the versions, belongs to Sadr al-Din Muhammad Shirazi, entitled Sadra (b.1640, Shiraz)⁽⁴⁾ who presented in an absolutely different manner a new description of the Illuminative philosophy interpreting Light as Being. His version of the Illuminative philosophy is identified today as the Illuminative existentialism. Sadra himself called his philosophy the Transcendent Philosophy -- a name that is the title of his major book *The Transcendent Philosophy Concerning the Four Journeys of the Self*.⁽⁵⁾ The phrase "four journeys of the self" is symbolically used here in reference to the four ecstases of the self undertaken by Gnostics and Mystics in the Islamic mysticism. He, however uses this symbolism to depict the intellectual process whereby the self gains the pure knowledge (*m'arefah*) following his existential transformation. Since Sadra's time onward, his philosophy has influenced all aspect of Persian philosophical and theological thought. Though his philosophy has had this great impression, it is a common belief in Persian scholars today⁽⁶⁾ that the fruitful season of his special existentialism has still not arrived. He has set forth a lot of discussions to some of which the modern philosophy reached later and of course in different manner. It seems to be enough to mention here only the titles of some of his theories in which modern philosophy is involved: his special theory of Being; his interpretation of human existence; his theory of self; his theory of the corporeal emergence of the self (soul); his theory of consciousness and knowledge; his theory of the unity of the knower, known and knowledge; his theory of creative imagination; his theory of the existential (substantial) movement; his theory of time and space and his theory of world -- among the many others. Hidden over centuries and remaining beyond the grasp of those who work not in theology or mysticism, hold Sadraeans, those aspects of his philosophy that can contribute to our living issues in modern philosophy and human sciences are not explored at all or, at least, not presented enough in such a modern language that helps us, if at all, to revise this or that problem in modern philosophy.

Today, in living Persian philosophy, Sadra's transcendent philosophy dominated over all philosophies, and is identified as the perfect form of the Islamic philosophy

whatsoever. Unfortunately, we can not speak here of Sadra's philosophy in full; nor can we speak here of his epistemology in detail. All what we would do here in the present research is to present anew, in our own turn and to some limited extent, some aspects of his philosophy that seem to contribute to fill the gap that we mentioned in modern subjectivism (see Ch.1). Nevertheless, it does not baffle us to refer sometimes to Suhrawardi as well -- a philosopher who has elaborated an epistemology of presence and to whom Sadra has a great debt as a whole. However before attempting to discuss those aspects, let us "extract"⁽⁷⁾ a descriptive illustration of the Illuminative method on which the Illuminative epistemology of presence is based.

2. 2. *The Illuminative Method:*

The Illuminative philosophy has different philosophical, theological and mystical aims. As for these aims the Illuminative school has chosen a synthetic method. This is so, because for this school, philosophy, as investigating and interpreting every kind of phenomena, natural, inward-human, and metaphysical, seeks the profound foundations of these phenomena. Therefore, as can be inferred from the Illuminative tradition as a whole, philosophy should conduct its search by having at its disposal all methods of obtaining knowledge. This philosophical activity implies the presence of a problem or a variety of problems in need of a solution; and since a method is "a device or a procedure, to solve a problem or answer a question",⁽⁸⁾ and since problems or questions vary in kind, the methods for solving them will also vary. The free manner in which the Illuminative philosophy utilises these methods compels us to believe that this school does not consider that philosophy has only one distinct method of its own. On this point the Illuminative philosophy completely agrees with M. Farber who writes in this respect:

"[The plurality of methods] signifies that no one type of procedure is to be regarded as the correct method exclusively. . . . An unlimited number of methods restricted at a given time only by human ingenuity and the extent of knowledge, is the response to an unlimited number of types of problem. The principle of the co-operation of methods applies, whether the methods be objectivistic or subjectivistic, 'longitudinal' [historical or evolutionary] or 'cross-sectional' [conceptual and formal]."⁽⁹⁾

Such is the Illuminative point of view as well; specially when the world 'historical' in Farber's text can be replaced by 'existential'.

Let us now read this in the context of the Illuminative terminology: The Illuminative literature that covers the meditative as well as the speculative aspects of the Illuminative school, is full of dissertations and epistles discussing the method to achieve the truth. A general title for such a methodological discussion is in their words *al-Sayr wa al-suluk* (literary meaning: sightseeing and conduct). There are two interrelated kinds of *al-Sayr wa al-suluk* in general: *Afaqi* that belongs to the horizon of Being, and *Anfusi* that is vertically directed toward the purest point (or the source) of Being (see Ch.3). These two kinds of *al-Sayr wa al-suluk* realised for a Truth-seeker (*talib al haqq*) in four stages of an existential *experience* that indicates four ecstases of the self to achieve the unitary consciousness.⁽¹⁰⁾ Generally considered, however, we may summarise their wide discussions on these stages by philosophically depicting them in the following form:

Each stage implies a reduction: (a) Reduction from appearances (*dhawaher*) to their essences (*mahiyat*); (b) Reduction from essences to the knowing self (*nafs al 'aref*); (c) Reduction from the knowing self to the self as unitary consciousness (*al nafs 'ayn o m'arefateh*); (d) Reduction of the unitary consciousness to Being which implies a new return to the things (the phenomenal world) through Being itself, with a different outlook; considering neither their appearance (as Phenomenalism says) nor their essence (as Phenomenology says); rather, their reality as the emanative entities.

The reductions (a) and (b) belong, in their terminology, to the horizontal lines in the structure of Being (below, 3. 2); and we can classify them as the *eidetic* reduction (in Husserlian sense) because they belong to essences, to the eidetic field. The reductions (c) and (d), on the other hand, belong to the vertical line in the structure of Being and we can classify them as the *ontetic*⁽¹¹⁾ reduction because they concern only with the pure being. This eidetic-ontetic distinction we suggested, is based on Sadraean special understanding of essence-existence distinction of which we speak later in this and in following chapters. In the eidetic field, in which we are reflectively seek for the essences and their interrelations as they appear in our reflective constituting consciousness, the Illuminative school employs a plurality of methods: induction, deduction and other logical methods, while in the ontetic field, in which there is no reflection but a pure presence in the mystical symphony of Being, it employs method of the ontetic touch and contact.

Such the Illuminative philosophy, methodologically speaking, has intended to bestow objectivity, inevitableness, freedom from presuppositions, and a radical beginning for its philosophy. It is this that is of significance for us in this inquiry.

By such a method, and so far as the Illuminative epistemology of presence is concerned, the Illuminative school suggests a radical beginning in which the Truth-seeker (*talib al haqq*) return to freshly know himself, world and God and the whole system of Being anew. Such a starting implies to pass from appearances or phenomena (*dhawaher*) to their real truth. However their real truths are conceptually constituted as essences through our mind. This is because we remained on the horizontal line of Being, that is, in the eidetic field in which we reflectively journey (*al sayr al afaqi*). Though this is one dimension of Being constituted as essences for us, one can not claim that he reached the reality in this level, that is by reducing the appearances to their essences; simply because their realities, Sadra argues, equal their beings (not their essence) and this is crucial for him to reduce essence to existence as we will see later in this chapter: Meanwhile, we are on the vertical lines of Being, that is, in the ontetic field in which we are non-reflectively immersedly melted and existentially experience ourselves, beings and God -- in one word, Being. This brief description of the Illuminative method suggests to us a triple discussion on it in this chapter: We start with the ideal of a radical beginning, then continue with the eidetic reduction in which the logical and reflective rules and methods are employed, and end with the ontetic reduction by which the existential aspects of Sadraean discussion are revealed. On this, then, we would now describe the Illuminative idea of a radical beginning.

2. 3. *The Radical Beginning:*

As hinted above, the Illuminative method starts with an ideal for a beginningless commencement. This can easily be seen in its emphasis on *tawbah* meaning return as suggested by the Illuminative doctrine of *tahdhib al nafs*, meaning purification of the self. This means for them to be released from what is done as yet; and to start again with a hope to achieve the truth. To this Sadra points when writing: “ Oh, my friend! begin [to philosophise]. . . first of all by purifying your ‘self’”(12).

The Illuminative philosophy suggests that in order to catch the truth and to identify with being, the Truth-seeker (*talib al haqq*) should practically purify himself

from what has occupied him through the personal, environmental and social history.⁽¹³⁾ The mystical aspect of the Illuminative epistemology is hidden in this point, because there are systematic rules and norms for practice to achieve the ultimate truth and to identify with Being. The first step is to give up all educated and learned issues, to purify from what occupied the self, to abandon the past and the future and to pick up the present moment. We would be, in this mystical outlook, alone on our existential site to have a new look. Unmolded by human conventions or by the social values, manner and philosophical system of long-lasting history, we would then be free of all prejudice, misconceptions, and assumptions of characteristics of the socially born humans. This implies to disembodify the human personality of the entire cultural, social, and political complex of traditional society.

This doctrine philosophically indicates for Sadra a radical beginning and a presuppositionless commencement. This is so because this doctrine has direct bearing on the method of philosophising, the beginning of a fresh outlook on philosophical problems, and the explanation of man's encounter with his environment. Let us read these words here from Sadra:

“No body can catch it [the truth] except those who have been alone, isolated from the others, variously meditating, and absolutely withdrawn from their ordinarily culture, social customs, habits and worldly behaviours and concerns, suspending the traditional believes and the public morals in full.”⁽¹⁴⁾

We must avoid to “take the traditionally accepted thoughts, because” he argues “such taking is imitation and formal, keeping the way to the truth closed up”.⁽¹⁵⁾

By such a removing of man from the social situation, Sadra had done what Descartes, Hume and Husserl did. Of course resemblances to these thinkers should not be overstretched; for to render the Illuminative philosophy in modern garb more than its thought really permits leads to a methodological blunder. When done within legitimate limits, however, a comparison between this school and certain moderns would show that what some consider to be the revolutionary attempts of the latter are not entirely new, and that previous masters were aware of the importance of such attempts though in outline and not in detail or conscious elaboration.

Moreover, we may see that the Illuminative school invokes a raising sense of doubt (*maqam al hayrah*) which is just prior or along with “return” (*tanvabah*). This

doubt (*hayrah*) can be encountered here to complete the ideal of beginningness. For this school this doubt implies to attempt a hypothetical destruction of the surrounding world of tradition and early education. It was shattering the mold that captures the very fabric of the self at the moment of birth and fashions it according to the patterns of the past and the present. In this, the Illuminative school was trying to give a fresh and radical beginning to its philosophy. By “radical” we mean what Husserl meant by the term, namely, the ideal of emancipation from all presuppositions. This means beginning with the ambitious task of knowing things without any a priori adoption of epistemological, metaphysical, ontological, or value principles.

Man, the truth-seeker (*talib al haqq*), is there on his existential site. By allowing his existential capacities to unfold, excluding any intervention from without, and by exploring the freshness of what is now seen to be a puzzling world with puzzling phenomena, the Illuminative school is proclaiming to philosophers the Husserlian maxim before Husserl: “back to the things themselves,” see, perceive, observe and describe phenomena afresh -- a maxim which ultimately sounds for the Illuminative philosophy a return to their beings not (as Husserl did) to their essences; it is urging them to overthrow the artificial and sophisticated barrier of schemes and values between man and the “life world” developed by humanity throughout the ages. The “things in themselves” are “beings” with which we are in touch. In this sense at the beginning everybody is a radical and naive empiricist (see Appendix I). In his everyday life, he is in touch with the surrounding world as it appeared to him or as he encountered it in immediate experience. This is the Husserlian world, the “life world, “the ordinary world in which one lives, works, and plays. Like Husserl, the Illuminative school is judging things in their own terms as experienced. From beginning of consciousness of facts until cognisance of Being, the Illuminative method partly is a descriptive one, that is phenomenological; namely, before theorising advises us to experience.

The Illuminative school suspends all preconceived commitments and places the entire world of conventions and traditions in abeyance. Here again this school’s ideal of freedom from presuppositions is like Descartes’, Hume’s, and Husserl’s. For the Illuminative school as for these thinkers, this ideal is a preparatory stage to examine all beliefs and noetic processes for evidence, validity, and consequences. The examination of these is accomplished by breaking away from them and, thus, dislodging them temporarily in order to find out whether philosophy in its fresh start

from “things” in experience to reach the indubitable truth, confirms or disconfirms these beliefs. Moreover, through this radical method, this school pushes its search and enquiry to its extreme consequences. Sadra, for example,⁽¹⁶⁾ depicts our “blank” and receptive mind as constituting and perfecting itself, and struggling to obtain far-reaching conclusions entirely on its own. Our progressive ascension, Sadra holds, has a tint of inevitableness and necessity. Seemingly without any preconceived notions we achieve cognisance of causality, God, eternity of the world, and mysticism. It appears as though any mind will reach the same truths if it took as its point of departure the unsophisticated given of experience and followed the canons of consistency. Thus, Alfred North Whitehead’s well-known dictum that in philosophy there is no method that surpasses common sense and real insight would be considered almost true by the Illuminative school.

Such an approach, to begin with, places the Illuminative school among the early pioneers whose ideal was the establishment of philosophical propositions on the radical method of the freedom from presuppositions. Had this school been philosophically more prolific and had it utilised such a method to its fullest, we would have been in a better position to pronounce more emphatic and elaborate assertions concerning this important and valid method.⁽¹⁷⁾ Thus, as we have partly seen so far and as we shall still find out in this section, behind the new words and expressions of Descartes, Hume and Husserl to give a radical start for philosophy, stands the old philosophical and methodological practice of the Illuminative school. In comparison with the ancients, this method seems to be entirely novel and was not a familiar item in the household of ancient philosophy.

Plato, for instance, could not even conceive of philosophy or philosophers operating outside the social order. Philosophising must begin with the already presupposed concepts and values available in the polis; given ideas can be changed and melded to establish a better life in the polis and to improve the moral life of the individual. However, such concepts as justice, courage, and virtue were taken for granted by Plato, although he examined their lexical meanings and formulated (stipulated) his own. Aristotle, on the other hand, although he was a ruthless examiner of the beliefs of his predecessors and an empiricist rationalist in his approach to philosophical problems, did not conceive of the method of suspension of the traditional world of conventions and values and of the “natural view of the world.”

From a methodological point of view, the resemblance between the Illuminative school, Descartes, Hume, and Husserl perhaps is not so much in detailed outlook as it is in the insistence of these authors upon an ideal of a radical beginning. We are emphasising this point again in order to avoid any possible misunderstanding of our comparative remarks. Our intention is not to identify the ideas of the three modern European thinkers and the Illuminative school, but to show that it was aware and had attempted to apply “radicalism” in beginning its philosophy, a view that has been correctly and emphatically endorsed by these moderns.

The Illuminative school was as acutely aware of the impossibility of reversing or annulling the cultural achievements and beliefs of humanity by such a method, as were Descartes, Hume, and Husserl; but it was, as they were, more than certain that this method furnishes man with a new perspective in his outlook on things. The suspension of any kind of belief by these writers was only theoretical, in order to clear the way for their philosophising from any preconceived prejudice. Mystical (practical) aspect of the Illuminative philosophy furnishes such a possibility.⁽¹⁸⁾

It may be remembered that Hume disregarded all beliefs and metaphysical assertions and “bracketed” all the assumptions of scientific procedure, e. g., causality, placing in abeyance the epistemological investigations of former philosophers and the sophisticated framework of the world of tradition. He started from the very fundamentals and questioned all habits of the mind and of the conceptions of the phenomenal world. His ideal was an assumption-free description of appearances or impressions. Through his rigorous descriptive method, he found out that there is no reason or guarantee in experience for the necessary connections between ideas. Demonstrations depend on the relations of ideas, and prove only what is conceivable or inconceivable and not what is in fact the case. Apart from relations of ideas, all that we perceive and all we can demonstrate is the existence of our perceptions. There is no reason to suppose that our impressions are supported by a material world, or a subjective self.⁽¹⁹⁾ Thus, Hume’s attempt at a presuppositionless beginning led him to a universal skepticism in all knowledge. At best our impressions can yield probable knowledge, and certain knowledge is an unattainable goal. In his caution to keep his assumptions to the minimum, Hume could not re-establish the natural world, the everyday world. His remained a chaotic world of approximations. Hume did not suspend beliefs and all traditional facts in order to reinstate them again at the end of

his analysis. He tried to go as far as his radical method permitted him to go in tracing his source of evidence in experience.

On the other hand, by removing man from the context of traditional beliefs, the Illuminative school practically “bracketed” these beliefs⁽²⁰⁾ for examination by leaving nothing except the self and his confrontation with experience and Being. Like Hume, this school examines the means to know the surrounding phenomena in order to lay control over human environment (*sayr al afaqi*). Its unsophisticated radical empiricism advises in the first instance to study the connections and relationships of items of experience and to study the sources and evidence for changes in phenomena. It, of course, did not explore phenomena with the same epistemological rigor as Hume. But the fact that it started with an assumption-free attitude in exploration and a method in the first instance similar to Hume’s seems to be certain. However, the Illuminative philosophy does not remain in the state of ignorance -- suspension of belief. It achieves perfection in knowledge and establishes its view of reality. The world of beliefs, conventions, and values that is temporarily shattered (through *tawbah*) by removal from the traditional environment is rebuilt and established by an independent enquiry. Hume was not willing to assert a certain proposition about any external or internal entity outside or inside the mind except the proposition: only impressions exist; whereas the Illuminative philosophy, as is clear from its mystical aims, arrives at the questions about the very foundations of things: Who am I? Are there beings like me? Where am I going? What purpose is there for my life? What is my relationship to the surrounding world? Starting with an unbiased background it tries to find answers for these questions. By these questions, one is supposed to have known that he had accepted many false opinions through tradition and that were he to attain truth and certainty for himself he should momentarily paralyse the effect of all inherited dogmas and previously held opinions.

The Illuminative school is like Descartes, who also sought a temporary release from the engulfing world of misty tradition:

“I would have to undertake once and for all to set aside all opinions which I had previously accepted among my beliefs and start again from the very beginning. . . . I have found a serene retreat in peaceful solitude. I will therefore make a serious unimpeded effort to destroy generally all my former opinions. In order to do this, however, it will not be necessary to show they are all false.”⁽²¹⁾

As Descartes found peaceful solitude conducive to the application of his methodical doubt, so did the Illuminative thinkers.

Again, like Descartes, an Illuminative philosopher has not to prove that all the opinions of his predecessors are false. The extrication of the mind from the corpus of available beliefs through presence is not a mark of skepticism or agnosticism but a mean of search for truth and certainty. By the same token, methodical doubt does not mean that Descartes was either a skeptic or an agnostic; but instead, wishing to find certainty he was forcibly led to demolish his old opinions down to their very foundations, because he realised how untrustworthy these opinions were. An Illuminative philosopher in his practical philosophising provisionally wishes to suspend every concept and judgement about God, the world and the body by making himself begin his search without any such conceptions. Descartes also wished to “bracket” concepts and judgements about God, the world and the body.⁽²²⁾ Not because he, or the illuminationists, really doubted the existence of God, the world or the body, but because everything they had learned about them had to be examined even if it happened to be something that is true. Of course, the Illuminative philosophy differs from Descartes in that it did not doubt the reality of the external world nor did it bother to prove its existence. For this school, the proposition, “The world is,” is true. Nor is this school intending to establish a “wonderful science” of philosophy in the manner of Descartes and Husserl. Again, while pointing to the preceding significant resemblances between this school and those authors, one should be aware that these resemblances are not meant to blur the important differences between them. It is true that the Illuminative school’s aim, like Descartes’, is to commit us to the slow and laborious search for certainty and truth. However Descartes wanted to found his radical approach to truth and certainty using the deductive method in mathematics and pure reason; in contrast, the Illuminative school used a plurality of methods, e.g., the experimental, intuitive, deductive, and behavioural. Here we are not maintaining that the Illuminative school used the method of systematic doubt with the same efficacy and conscious elaboration as Descartes or Husserl. What we are advancing is that this school equally knew the importance of starting all philosophising with a radical beginning and was awake to the impulse of Cartesian Meditations before Descartes.

“The same spirit was responsible for the continuing radicalisation of his own philosophy” “free from presuppositions”⁽²³⁾

Also, in so far as Husserl derived his inspiration from the spirit of the Cartesian Meditations, the same resemblance's that were discerned between Descartes and the Illuminative school can be discerned between the latter and Husserl:

“ . . . then is not this a fitting time to renew his [Descartes'] radicalness, the radicalness of the beginning philosopher: to subject to a Cartesian overthrow the immense philosophical literature with its medley of great traditions, of comparatively serious new beginnings, of stylish literary activity. . . and to begin with new meditations. . . at first we shall flit out of action all the conscriptions has been accepting up to now, including all our sciences.”⁽²⁴⁾

As was remarked earlier, both the Illuminative philosophy and Husserl's phenomenology emphasised the notion of going back to the things themselves; the reaction against tradition that harbours unwarranted beliefs, dogmas and authoritarianism are shared by both philosophies. It is true that the Illuminative school was not after a universal radical science of philosophy like Husserl. In so far as it stressed a radical beginning to philosophy and the description of surrounding phenomena afresh, the Illuminative philosophy was a phenomenology. However, apart from other considerations, the significance of phenomenology as propounded by Husserl was not as a philosophy perhaps, but as a method, discipline or a tendency.⁽²⁵⁾ The Illuminative school, in stripping man of all beliefs and in making him start from the “beginning” by appealing to a direct encounter with and description of facts, can be considered aware of the phenomenological tendency and its far-reaching significance. In our discussion of the Illuminative epistemology, we shall point out the Illuminative employment of other aspects of the phenomenological method, such as the phenomenological reduction.⁽²⁶⁾

Whether the above comparative remarks are accepted or not, it must be granted that the Illuminative school, through the attempts to comprehend the “secrets” of the universe, believes in the description and analysis of the aspects, qualities, and relations of experience in the world. The Illuminative school believes, as instanced by Sadra,⁽²⁷⁾ that while theories may interpret facts, at the same time they abstract from the realities of the surrounding world as we encounter them in the locus of immediate experience. Pure theories, without concrete embodiment and without seeing them in their actual operation, estrange the mind from its natural dwelling place, the world of experience.

The Illuminative school, like other systems of mystical philosophy, does not content itself with the deductive procedure to the exclusion of other procedures. Instead, it tends itself to a plurality of methods characterised by a gradual yet vital growth of movement, a movement of the totality of the human self in its attempt to comprehend and exercise mastery over its surroundings.⁽²⁸⁾

However, although in substance the intimate nature of reality and experience is not altered when using these diverse methods, our attitudes, knowledge, and emotional cosmos progressively and drastically change; and these, in turn, determine our behaviour. For Illuminative school, therefore, knowledge is not a bare conceptual understanding of reality and the systematisation of its laws alone.⁽²⁹⁾ Abstraction or pure theory impoverishes our significant relationship to nature and leaves us suspended in the intellectual landscape of semi-real possibilities with our inwardness remaining unkindled and dull. On the other hand, true knowledge for this school, as for Socrates, Plato, and Kierkegaard, is that form of understanding that seeps into the depth and breadth of the personality and transforms the whole man: man is a mystic by nature. For Plato the philosophical enterprise culminates in love; for Kierkegaard it ends in an intense leap to the other “end,” namely, God; for the Illuminative philosophy it becomes a passionate yearning to become Him.⁽³⁰⁾ The insistence by this school that scientific observation and the givenness of rational processes should in the final analysis embrace the ego in its totality and grip the individual in his very core, places this school among the forerunners of existential thought.⁽³¹⁾ Consequently, this school emerges as a typical mystical philosophy that takes Nature as its departure (*al-Sayr al-Afaqi*). It believes in the method of the natural sciences but is certainly conscious of the dynamic value of human emotions if they are directed to the right goal. This goal is God, the being, the embodiment of perfection and beauty.

Along with all the preceding emphasis on a radical beginning of philosophy by the mentioned philosophies, must go the understanding that absolute radicalness is an ideal short of complete actualisation. The Illuminative school, Descartes, Hume, and Husserl, despite their emphasis on radicalism, could not start their philosophising with an absolute beginning, that is, without any presuppositions at all. Should our enquiry permit an examination of their views on this point, it would not be hard to show that their own views are based on certain presuppositions too. The temporary “relief” from established dogmas may help facilitate the clarity of the philosopher’s task, but cannot effect a long-lasting overthrow of these beliefs. The complete freedom from

presuppositions, as it is clearly shown in the history of philosophy and other compartments of human knowledge such as the sciences, is a misconception and a myth; or, as Marvin Farber says:

“Supposedly radical procedure may turn out to be a means of reinstating a vested tradition of long standing. That positive . . . findings of real worth may be attained in the process does not alter the fact that such a procedure serves special interests if it finally accords with . . . any vested tradition.”⁽³²⁾

The claim that philosophy must have a presuppositionless beginning, Farber says, can itself be judged as the greatest presupposition. It is simply impossible to remove oneself from one's natural and cultural framework that is “a basic immediate fact of philosophy.” For instance, to be able to detect the Illuminative school's presuppositions in his radical attempt, one must try to discern the motives behind its systematic mystical aims. The same applies to Descartes, Hume and Husserl. These motives are generally culturally conditioned and inspired.

One of the Illuminative school's presuppositions was the intention to present the reader with the “secrets of Illuminative philosophy” whose basic tenets it believed are true; on the other hand, in Descartes, Hume and Husserl, the motive of certainty was assumed from the very beginning. Descartes' radical beginning culminated in reinstating the culturally acquired conception of God, the existence of the external world, and the traditional conception of the soul. Hume's strict empiricism presupposed certainty in sense experience and restored the empirical tradition and the psychological atomism of Locke; whereas Husserl's radicalism assumed the stream of cogitations, or pure consciousness and indubitability of immediate experience as the starting point of philosophising. He also reaffirmed the basic spirit of German idealism in general. The Illuminative school, on the other hand reinstated the long-standing tradition of Persian-Muslim philosophy of mysticism. It shelved or suspended the traditional beliefs, only to reaffirm them again and in substance in its painstaking search for the truth. The Islamic Persian mystical conceptions of emanation, creation and eternity of the world, immortality of the soul, union with God, were suspended by the radical beginning only to reappear in a different style. Despite their determined efforts to dislodge the Sisyphus rock of traditional beliefs and cultural setting, philosophers seem to be endlessly tied to it.

2. 4. *The Eidetic Reduction:*

What we called the eidetic reduction in the Illuminative method, as we have seen (above, 2. 2), consists of two sub-reductions (i) from appearances to their essences and (ii) from their essences to the essence of the knowing self. Such reductions are reflective and we entitled them eidetic simply because they concern at any rate essence (eidetic means here ‘essential’; derived from ‘eidos’ meaning ‘pure essence’). In other words, the residuum of such reductions are essences -- in the former reduction, essences of things, and in the latter, essence of myself as ‘I’. Since the word “essence” is central here in the eidetic field, it may be useful if we first know what essence means for the Illuminative (Sadraean) philosophy. Sadra has largely discussed essence attending it in its full details in his huge volumes (I, II, IV, V) of his grand work *Asfar*. Obviously, a detailed discussion of his theory of essence does not concern us here simply because it is beyond the boundary of this research. We will instead refer to it when necessarily applicable. For the time being, regarding its meaning, we would mention here that essence has two senses for Sadra: (i) concept (*mafhum/wujud dhihni*) (ii) limit of existence.⁽³³⁾ The eidetic reduction concerns with the first sense by which our mind reflectively constitutes the essences of things including our ‘selves’ of which we reflectively have a knowledge. Whereas, the ontetic reduction, as we will see, concerns with the second sense of essence which is elaborated by Sadra for the first time, due to his special theory of being (see below, 2. 5. 4 and 3. 2). Let us speak of these senses a bit more.

2. 4. 1. *The Sadraean Notion Of Essence:*

Essence (*mahiyyah*) is discussed by Sadra with regard to existence. However, the traditional distinction of essence-existence is finally dissolved by Sadra to the benefit of a special kind of existentialism (see 2. 5. 4). It is a methodological habit for Sadra to start with the traditional doctrines and then to push them toward his own theories through wonderful interpretations and logical discussions in terms of the Illuminative method and aims. It is the case when he starts with this traditional distinction. He argues⁽³⁴⁾ that this distinction is reflectively made. When we are in the level of reflection, we suppose that a thing has an existence and an essence. This distinction is good enough to phenomenologically justify our knowledge of ourselves, things and world;⁽³⁵⁾ because temporarily, and just for the sake of knowledge, we withdraw (like Husserl) the external existence of ourselves, things and world (even God) to describe their essences; that is, to catch, as far as we can, a clear concept (*mafhum*), that is, a mental existence (*wujud dhihni*) of this or that thing with which reflective knowledge can only be possible. This epistemological approach to essence

indicates that essence is concept and nothing more. Essence, in this sense, is an answer to the question: “what is it?” (*ma hoo/hi?*). (For example, when one asks: “what is it?” questioning a particular shape and we answer: “triangle”.) The answer to this question determines the essence of the thing under question. Sadra says that the answer to such a question is a universal concept, a genus which can be crystallised for example in Aristotelian table of categories. Since it is concept, the categorical analysis of things, however, is in all ways conceptual. It is valid only if we remain in the order of concept. Nevertheless, when we turn away from this order and attend the order of being the meaning of essence differs: In the latter case, essence is no longer a conceptual answer to the question: “what is it?”; rather, it is the special being of the thing under question: It is that by which the thing is thing (*ma bih al shay' shay'*); and that by which a thing is thing is, for Sadra, its special being.⁽³⁶⁾

In the latter sense, Sadra deduces essence from Being. Essence in this sense is the limit of a particular existence; that is to say, what demarcates a thing from the others. Of course, this demarker, essence, is not for Sadra here a concept; rather it is the particular being of that thing. Sadra tries to demonstrate this point through several discussions in detail.⁽³⁷⁾ He concludes that the special being of a thing is the principle of its particularity and individuality⁽³⁸⁾.

It is true that every thing has two folds: one is its existence and another is its essence. However, Sadra explains, these two are not separated in the external reality, but their separation is in our mind; in the external reality and as a matter of fact, its essence is nothing but its very existence; this is our mind that reflectively understands a thing as a twofold fact. Essence as separated is only produced by the formal reflection and is merely concept; then so far as it is considered as mental, it has an epistemological function. Belonging to the order of concept, epistemology as well as any description (including phenomenology), therefore, concerns only with essence. This point concerns us later (2. 5. 4 and next Ch.). For the time being, we would mention that essence in the sense of concept on which all epistemology, reflection, formalism, logicism and subjectivism are grounded requires us to pick up different methods to achieve, to justify and to demonstrate reflectively what we *have* and catch existentially through our everydayness experience and ontetic presence. It is what we would attend in the following section.

2. 4. 2. *The eidetic field and plurality of methods:*

As already hinted, the Illuminative school advocated a plurality of methods of inquiry in the field of the eidetic reduction, and that these reinforced one another in the processes of noetic elevation no attempt was made to fully designate these methods among which we may mention the Inductive, Deductive, and Introspection. In employing the first and the third, this school displays a tempered form of the phenomenological tendency and a tint of its notions (see 2. 4. 3). These methods belong to and are applied in the eidetic field that is, in Illuminative terminology to *sayr al afaqi* in which we reflectively discover ourselves, surrounding world, and even God, through these plurality of methods and, on this discovery, we build experimental and speculative sciences which all concern with essences (concepts). Experimental sciences are fundamentally based on 'induction', while speculative sciences employ 'deduction'. However, there is a cooperation between them. The inductive and deductive methods cooperate continually until we discern the unity of all bodily and animal species. We move from the visible to the invisible by cooperation of induction and deduction: an intellectual jump from a limited number of observations to a universal and unlimited number, to the universe as a whole.

Moreover, the inductive method prepares us to discover God deductively; the proofs for both the eternity and creation of the world and the like are also instances of the Illuminative school's rigorous application of the deductive method promoted by the loyal help of inductive inquiry.

Not only this; the method of introspection is also applied in this field as well, and co-operates the inductive and deductive methods. Introspection fundamentally is a psychological method for self-knowledge (*'ilm al nafs*) which interrelates with induction and deduction. From an eidetic point of view, I reflectively intuit myself as an 'I' of the essence of which I have a knowledge -- that is I have a concept of my own self. This is reflective of course; simply because I constitute my essence as 'I', not in the sense that I existentially create it (as done, we will see, by the ontetic reduction); rather, in the sense that I conceptually abstract an essence as 'I' through introspection of myself as the agent who reflects and thinks and then exists (*Cogito*).⁽³⁹⁾

On this, we may see that this method of introspection seems like Husserlian eidetic intuition by which he grasps the bare essence of the self and constitute the

essences in the reflective consciousness. However as we will see this is not the final grasp for the Illuminative philosophy as it is for Husserlian phenomenology: the eidetic intuition, according to Husserl guarantees the certainty of knowledge; whereas for the Illuminative philosophy, what we grasp by introspection as well as induction and deduction are grounded by a deeper level of our existence in which we are in touch with beings, contact Being; we have not only vision as inspired by intuition (as we see in the history of philosophy); we also live with Being and continually experience beings with which we are in ontetic touch (see Ch. 3). It is this deeper level that, according to the Illuminative philosophy, grounds our constitution of essences. We will see the mechanism of this grounding later (see Ch. 7). Though Husserlian phenomenology ends up with this eidetic reduction which implies the constitution of pure essences through an eidetic intuition, and does not pass, as does the Illuminative philosophy, toward a deeper reduction of essences to being -- i.e., the ontetic reduction, there seems yet to be similarities between these two schools regarding the eidetic reduction. In next section we will briefly depict a comparison between them to show these similarities.

2.4.3. The Illuminative And The Phenomenological Eidetic Reductions:

We have already hinted that in applying its method to the eidetic field, the Illuminative school has implicitly adopted procedures partly similar to those fulfilled in phenomenology. Now, we would have a closer look here at this point to mention the similarities between these schools and to describe the Illuminative notion of the eidetic reduction in parallel to and in comparison with the phenomenological reduction. In doing so, we are, however, cautious not to sacrifice precision and coherence in interpretation by a random free mode of association imposed by our mind on the facts imbedded in this school's work. Nor are we trying to "overmodernise" this philosophy, thus rendering our comments disproportionate with the original. We are simply showing the modern relevance of an old method and its implications.

There is solid evidence in the Illuminative epistemology to uphold the contention that it is implicitly aware of the basic themes and some significant aspects of the phenomenological tendency. It is so because along with the Illuminative insights go certain phenomenological elements that are employed without calling them such. These elements are: the three aspects of the phenomenological reduction,

descriptive procedure, intentionality, the noetic and noematic processes of the mind. The Illuminative philosophy did not utilise such elements of the phenomenological tendency to the extreme in order to establish, like Husserl, a descriptive science.⁽⁴⁰⁾ However, in the Illuminative approach, the affinities, resemblance to, and anticipations of Husserl's phenomenological procedure are basic and genuine. The difference between the two schools is one of emphasis, degree and full active application.

The first of the three reductions has already been discussed in connection with our comparison of both thinkers on the issue of the radical beginning of philosophy. We shall categorise this early stage of the Illuminative thought by the stipulative phrase: "cultural reduction"; it is characterised by the Illuminative hypothetical destruction of all varieties of cultural expression and traditional beliefs; this constituted a break between him and the intersubjective world of human achievements.⁽⁴¹⁾ Similarly, Husserl described the initial stage of his phenomenological reduction as the "disconnection" of

"All varieties of cultural expression, works of . . . the fine arts, of the sciences, also aesthetic and practical values of every shape and form. . . also realities of. . . moral custom, law, and religion."⁽⁴²⁾

Both schools considered the telos of such a reduction as man's freedom from all traditional and transphenomenal beliefs; this reduction leaves only the immediately given and thus excludes the conviction in an independent metaphysical reality. From the outset the self possesses only the freshness and immediacy of objects.

Now, in a Husserlian vein, the Illuminative school says that we commence our descriptive procedure of phenomena. This procedure ultimately leads us to two kinds of phenomenological reductions which one may call 'essential' and 'transcendental' reductions: these will soon become apparent.

The naturalistic method is, according to the Illuminative philosophy, intertwined with a strain of subjectivity from the beginning; it entailed reflection and inward appropriation of the results of the experimental search. For instance, soon after we discerned the essence of the man, and other essences as well, our mind becomes infused with yearning (*shanyq*)⁽⁴³⁾ for them. Thus, our attention is turned away from particular objects to their essences. These essences are eidetic, to borrow a term from Husserl. Here our initial performance of essential reduction of our experience can be observed.

One can consider here that Husserl's phenomenological reduction, the *epoche*, is not new.⁽⁴⁴⁾ As the Illuminative school depicts, every movement of our mind in describing phenomena contains a reduction of natural objects to pure types, structures or essences. This is why we categorise this movement of thought as essential reduction, a step on the way to purifying phenomena. This method is, therefore, simple, being designated as a persistent description of objects, intuiting their essences and deflecting attachment from these objects to their structures and the individual "thisness" or "thatness" of entities is progressively eliminated. It is obvious that this essential reduction is similar to Husserl's eidetic reduction, which is also a matter of universality versus individuality.

For the sake of summary, let us highlight the chief points in the Illuminative eidetic reduction, as we called it, only to mention the possible similarities between these two schools:

a) In this Illuminative manner, our mind and experiences possessed a definite intentionality (devoted to the eidetic field) that fulfilled itself in apprehending purified essences.

b) We, as an illuminationist, bracket the natural world, perform a continual radical suspension of the previous objectifying position, and comprehensively placed the physical world in abeyance.

c) We complement the essential reduction, previously noted, by performing what one may call a transcendental reduction; thus, we not only suspend the physical world and natural attitude, but also reflectively bracket the essences themselves and intentionally focus on the ultimate source of both the natural and "essential" modes of being. For us, as an illuminationist, the experience resulting from this reduction is, as Husserl says, "The only experience which may properly be called internal."⁽⁴⁵⁾

d) Every time we discern an essence we rise from the immediacy of particular objects to the level of conscious generality, progressively conceptualise nature, and reduce it to "essential" structures; our mind transforms seeing and perceiving into conceiving. This involves the apprehension of essences and a reference to their denotations. In mind, therefore, there is a bifurcation. From "one point of view" these essences denote (intend) a multiplicity of individual things, from another they connote transcendent structures. Accordingly, for mind essences are both conceptual and ontological and are both immanent and transcendent.

e) With respect to point (d), mind performs two functions: an “upward” and a “downward” movement. In apprehending essences, mind is elevated above material objects, bracketing these only temporarily; to confirm our apprehension of essences mind goes back to material objects. Hence there is a two-way traffic between mind and objects: the experiencing from which result the essences, and in turn the reference of these essences to their object-referents. As Spiegelberg summarises, the first aspect is that in which “an act [is] directed to an intentional object (*noema*)”, while the second is “the object-referent of a noetic act (*noesis*)”.⁽⁴⁶⁾ Husserl named these two aspects of the cognitive process the noetic and the noematic.⁽⁴⁷⁾ Thus, the words are new, but the contents are old. The Illuminative philosophy was aware of these two processes of the mind, or at least, it permits such an interpretation.

Furthermore, the types or essences apprehended by mind are stripped of their material contents. Similar to its processes in points (d) and (e) mind through these purified essences “intends” physical phenomena and discover a higher level in which the internal meaning of these essences and that of the entire universe are constituted. As we will see (see Ch. 3), this higher level is, according to the Illuminative philosophy, Being that is the hidden meaning of every descriptive experience and every thing.

In its essential reduction of phenomena, the Illuminative philosophy does not completely abandon the naturalistic attitude; it has a constant recurrence to it. On the other hand, phenomenology claims to be a non empirical science; but, it seems, as long as the contents of the mind stem from the description of facts, phenomenology cannot divorce itself from the naturalistic world completely. The Illuminative philosophy, wisely perhaps, did not go as far as Husserl. Reduction did not categorically cut off the empirical facts from which the essential structures are discriminated. Husserl probably was aware of this point, but for motives of his own, did not subscribe to it.⁽⁴⁸⁾ It seems that the complete flight and freedom from natural facts is, indeed, a view precipitated by an uncontrolled mode of fancy touching the fringe of lunacy.

2. 5. *The Ontetic Reduction:*

In the above description of the structure of the illuminated method (2.2, above), We saw that there is a special kind of reduction to which there is no correspondence in phenomenology -- even perhaps in modern western philosophy as a whole. This

reduction that we called it Ontetic Reduction is that keystone on which the Illuminative philosophy is founded. We confine ourselves here to present it so far as our research is concerned. Therefore, introducing the notion of the ontetic reduction in a comparative way, we try to show how the Illuminative (Sadraean) philosophy goes beyond the eidetic reduction and reduces all essences to existence and how it puts us in the context of being in touch with Being and in a current existential experience of beings including ourselves. The latter issue will however concern us in the next chapter; then in the rest of this chapter, we would attend the former issue -- that is, the reduction to existence.

What is this reduction? A return to Being as such; a return of things to their reality in general; a return of the self to its principle. In the latter case, this reduction, as hinted, consists of two sub-reductions. Compared with Husserlian phenomenology, the ontetic reduction is not in parallel to the eidetic reduction; rather it goes to extend beyond the eidetic reduction. While the eidetic reduction ends up in exploration of essences to reflectively *understand* the reality of things, this ontetic reduction passes from this level to a deeper ground; to the root of that level to touch the reality (being) of things. Again while the eidetic reduction ends up in discovery of a transcendental self, a monad, that implies a radical subjectivism, the ontetic reduction tries to escape from this subjectivism by justifying our knowledge on the basis of the special mode of our being. However, before attempting to understand the Illuminative (Sadraean) approach to existence/Being, it will be useful to see the place of the notion of existence in phenomenology.

2.5.1. *Husserl Excludes Existence:*

“Like the neo-Kantian” Ricoeur writes “Husserl lost the ontological dimension”.⁽⁴⁹⁾ In fact, Husserl’s phenomenology clearly implies essentialism, excluding the notion of existence and Being. The suspension of belief in the existence of a phenomenon or the explicit doubt (following Descartes) that the phenomenon exists, is what Husserl referred to as “bracketing”. This procedure is to concentrate on “what” of the phenomenon in order to ascertain its essential content.⁽⁴⁹⁺¹⁾ Therefore, the preconception that we possess about the nature of existence has to be put aside.

E. Fink has stated that Husserl avoided the notion of existence and Being or the 'ontological problem' -- the problem of "how the pure being of an existent is related to the being-an-object of this existent". As Fink states, this problem has been rejected by Husserl as a 'falsely put problem'.⁽⁵⁰⁾ This seems to be the result of his subjectivism that based on the notion of essence.

Every fact, every individual subject, according to Husserl, has an essence, a permanent cluster of essential predicates by virtue of which it is what it is *and is* able to receive accessory and contingent determinations: a quid may be converted into an idea, and eidetic intuition is always possible. But how does one pass from the essence to the individual? Husserl makes this transition by means of the notion of the eidetic singularity. This notion presupposes that the eidetic individual is not the empirical individual existing here and now: Essence, even if singular, is not existence, although both are irreducible substrata for every new syntactical form. Yet there is an essence of the existing particular, under which the particular is immediately subsumed -- subsumption being understood as the transition from the eidetic to the empirical plane rather than as the subsumption, within the eidetic realm, of the species under the genus. For us to apprehend this essence, concrete eidetic singularity must be distinguished from abstract eidetic singularity: the abstract is the object related to a whole as a dependent part. Species and genus are necessarily dependent, hence abstract; but the concrete is the independent essence that, without being contained in a whole, contains dependent essences within itself: the phenomenal thing, which is a concrete essence, contains the abstract essences of extension and quality. The individual is thus the this-here whose material essence (or whose eidetic singularity) is a concrete⁽⁵¹⁾ and which hence merits being termed "individual," that is, indivisible. By granting such an extension to essences,⁽⁵²⁾ Husserl turns to existence as such. He certainly does not deduce existence from essence (as Sadra does in the section of Phenomenology of Mind [*Wujud Dhjihni*]), and it is worth noting that the notion of dependence is interpreted in such a way that the general depends on the singular, just as the formal depends on the material: The purely logical form, for example the categorical form of object, is dependent with respect to all that is the matter of objects⁽⁵³⁾. The individual is, therefore, primordial individual.

Existence as such is, it follows, independent from, or as Spiegleberg puts it, opposite to essence; just "the thatness of things" is independent from and opposite to "the whatness of things."^(53, 2) Existence, for Husserl is not the radical other of essence.

Since the truth of a thing is its essence which is constituted in consciousness through an intentional bracketing, and, on the other hand the thing (the object) itself is only an example, then, it follows that existence remains somewhat nominal. ⁽⁵³⁺¹⁾

Husserl ends up in a kind of essentialism that, considered from an Illuminative point of view, has no exit from the maze of reflection. If essence is true and not existence, an Illuminative philosopher like Sadra may ask, how can we go out from the trap of subjectivism? Husserl's ultimate appeal to the eidetic intuition gives us nothing but essence, and essence is the truth of consciousness and the subject. Moreover, the nominalistic approach Husserl has taken regarding existence seems, from a Sadraean standpoint, the fundamental error. We will mention later in this chapter the Sadraean analysis of the essence that leads to existence. But let us have a glance at the existential phenomenology's response to Husserl, before attending Sadra's theory.

2.5.2. *Existential Phenomenology Encounters Existence:*

The existential phenomenologists purport to supply the lack of existence or Being in the Husserlian Phenomenology. "In Fink's view", Farber writes, "this is the most fundamental problem which phenomenology omits because of its shrinking from speculative thought."⁽⁵⁴⁾

Heidegger also complains that the "question [of Being] has been forgotten",⁽⁵⁵⁾ and "as long as the truth of Being is not thought all ontology remains without its foundation."⁽⁵⁶⁾ He applies phenomenology to detect an answer to this question. "Phenomenology is the name for the method of ontology"⁽⁵⁷⁾ and therefore, the phenomenological reduction for him sounds a different meaning and task:

"For Husserl the phenomenological reduction . . . is the method of leading phenomenological vision from the natural attitude of the human being whose life of consciousness and its noetic-noematic experiences, in which objects are constituted as correlates of consciousness *for us*. Phenomenological reduction means leading back from the apprehension of a being . . . to the understanding of the being of this being."⁽⁵⁸⁾

Husserl introduced an explicitly 'transcendental reduction', which reduced all objects to products of the transcendental self. It is on this point that Heidegger makes his most radical break with Husserl and the subjectivistic thought. We need not

postulate a “thinking substance” or “ego” as this subject, as Descartes did. Nor need we even accept this notion of ‘I Think’ as a necessary condition or a ‘unifying principle’ for knowledge, as Kant did. In short, we do not accept a distinction between subject and object. Heidegger suggests the rejection of this distinction, and with it the rejection of the innumerable epistemological problems which have plagued modern philosophy. According to Heidegger there is no self. There is simply “Being-in-the-world. “The world is no more ‘bracketable’ than the transcendental self is necessary. Once we rid ourselves of the transcendental self we save ourselves from philosophical skepticism as well. It is here that Heidegger speaks of *Dasein* instead of the self. Considering the being of the self, Heidegger calls human being *Dasein* (literally translated “Being there”):

“Dasein is an entity which does not just occur among other entities. Rather it is distinguished by the fact that, in its very Being, that Being is an issue for it. . . . It is peculiar to this entity that with and through its Being, this Being is disclosed to it. Understanding of Being is itself a definite characteristic of Dasein’s Being.”⁽⁵⁹⁾

Dasein has “being in such a way that one has an understanding of Being.”⁽⁶⁰⁾ Because of this essential relationship of Dasein (human being) to Being, the problem of Being must be approached through an investigation of Dasein;

“Therefore, fundamental ontology, from which a/one all other ontologies can take their rise, must be sought in the existential analytic of Dasein.”⁽⁶¹⁾

“If to interpret the meaning of Being becomes our task, Dasein is not only the primary entity to be interrogated; it is also that entity which already comports itself, in its Being, towards what we are asking about when we ask this question.”⁽⁶²⁾

The claim that we may come to understand Being through an analysis of Dasein looks dangerously similar to the traditional Cartesian approach to philosophy. Descartes wanted to capture (necessary) truths about the world (Being) and began with the discovery and analysis of the subject, of the *Cogito*, of experience and knowledge. Similarly, Kant approached his theory of knowledge by examining the subjective or a priori conditions for experience and knowledge, and Husserl began his phenomenological investigations with an examination of the reduced ‘pure’ ego. Now, in spite of his departure from these philosophers, it might appear that Heidegger is also beginning his investigation with an examination of the subject of experience and

knowledge, for the analysis of Dasein is explicitly presented as an answer to the traditional metaphysical question of self-identity. It is of the utmost necessity, therefore, that we understand that the analysis of Dasein for Heidegger is not the examination of a subject, or an ego, or consciousness, and that the “self-identity” which becomes a problem in the question “Who is Dasein?” is a very different problem than it becomes for Descartes, Kant, and Husserl. The nature of Dasein thus becomes the focal point of *Being and Time*, for it is with this new conception of human being that Heidegger intends to defend his attacks on Husserl’s conception of phenomenology, to commence his answer to the “problem of Being,” and to attack the whole of Western philosophy as misguided.⁽⁶³⁾

Other existential phenomenologists like Sartre have more or less followed Heideggerian track to supply the lack of existence or Being in the Husserlian phenomenology. Objecting against the existential phenomenologists, Farber says:

“It may be observed that if Husserl missed this problem [i.e., Being or existence], then so did the existentialists. Only Husserl had a right -- and in fact an obligation -- to ‘miss’ it and they did not.”⁽⁶⁴⁾

A discussion as to how far the existential phenomenology’s attempt to supply that lack has been successful is beyond our present research. However, in order to distinguish some differences between the existential phenomenology’s and the Illuminative philosophy’s approaches toward existence or Being, we would preferably remark a point: while they claim a return to Being or existence, what is discussed by the existential phenomenologists is not actually existence or Being as such; rather, it is ultimately confined to a special being, that is, to *sum* of *Cogito*. For instance, as we saw in the above quotation from Fink, he devoted the “ontological problem” to the “being of the existent”. Heidegger who anew projects the question of being, also discovers it in the being of Dasein, namely the subject considered as a special existent; in the kind of being of the transcendental ‘constitutor’. He says:

“The question of the meaning of being is the most universal and the emptiest of questions, but at the same time it is possible to individualise it very precisely for any particular Dasein.”⁽⁶⁵⁾

Perhaps it is why Husserl critically remarks: “Thus existence (Dasein) in man is equivalent to understanding of being”; and he infers from Heidegger’s text that existence may well be identified with “understanding of being”.⁽⁶⁶⁾ It may also be the

case when one remembers that the notion of Being is the “emptiest” for Heidegger and he then returns to the notion of “nothing” in his *what is metaphysics?*⁽⁶⁷⁾ (also Sartre). Thus considered, Being is always grounded by Dasein (at least in *Being and Time*) and risen in the “horizon of time”: “Our provisional aim”, he writes, “is the interpretation of time as the possible horizon for any understanding whatsoever of Being”⁽⁶⁸⁾

Apart from evaluation of Heideggerian (thus Sartrian etc.) notion of Being, and despite the probable similarities, the above concept is not completely employed by an Illuminative philosopher like Sadra who considers Being as such, and as we will see, sets forth a new sense of Being. A bit more clarification in this respect will be found in the following section and next chapter.

2.5.3. *The Illuminative Notion Of Being:*

As we have pointed out, Husserlian phenomenological reduction dismisses Being or existence and contains the eidetic reduction applying it to discover the essences constituted by/in consciousness. Interpreting the phenomenological reduction, the existential phenomenology passed toward existence and Being to avoid the Husserlian subjectivism. In parallel to this existential phenomenology’s effort, and in an absolutely different manner and aims, the Illuminative (Sadraean) philosophy aims at Being reducing all entities, essences, consciousness, and even the self itself (mind, subject, spirit etc.) to Being. This reduction is what we called the ontetic reduction. Applied to the self, this reduction implies a mutual relationship between the self and Being. This relationship which is the residuum of the ontetic reduction will be discussed in next chapter. Here, however, we would rather speak of a few comparative points concerning this reduction proposing more clarification:

Like Heidegger, Sadra turns to Being saying that Being is the subject of philosophy.⁽⁶⁹⁾ However, contrary to Heidegger who discovers the meaning of Being by analysing of Dasein -- i. e., being of a special kind of beings⁽⁷⁰⁾ -- Sadra keeps himself dealing with Being as Such. In the opening of his major work *Asfar*⁽⁷¹⁾, he tries to demonstrate the primordially of Being: Being is the root. He fundamentally distinguishes Being from quiddity, existence from essence, and asserts that nothing is real except existence or Being -- No Being, then no reality or truth; no Being, no beings; nothing ever emerged.

Again, like Heidegger, Sadra says that existence or Being which is reality or truth, is never captured by the mind which can only capture essences and general notions. This does not mean for Sadra, however, that we have no access to the reality of Being (as one may say about Kantian noumenon); rather, we are living in /with/by Being -- says Sadra. Since we are rooted in Being and our mind is emerged from/by Being as its constantly sprung manifestation (see next chapter), we then are always living with/in it.

According Sadra, we are 'at home with' Being, to borrow a phrase from Heidegger. He expressly says: "The ways toward Being are as numerous as the selves".⁽⁷²⁾ This way to Being, however, is prior to and root of all supposed aspects of a being. In other words, these aspects are whatsoever in fact primarily reduced to Being, because they are determinations (*ta'ayyinat*) of Being manifested as this or that being. If there is an understanding of Being, as Heidegger maintains,⁽⁷³⁾ it is because we already are *in touch* with Being. To be sure, it is not subject to a logical analysis. However, like Heidegger who tries to achieve an analysis of understanding of Being, Sadra also holds that it is possible to try for an analysis of our mysterious, non-reflective living with-in Being.

To do this, Sadra uses the Illuminative method; as Heidegger uses the phenomenological method. Heidegger's employment of the phenomenological method, of course, implies a reorientation of that method.⁽⁷⁴⁾ Interpreting phenomenology as a method for ontology, Heidegger adds to Husserlian reduction two new stages: construction and destruction; and he combines them in an expression: de-construction;⁽⁷⁵⁾ because

"construction in philosophy" he says "is necessarily deconstruction, that is to say, a de-constructing of traditional concepts".⁽⁷⁶⁾

As a conclusion one may conclude that the de-constructive method is the fruit of the phenomenological method when applied to ontology.

Without confusing the issue,⁽⁷⁷⁾ one may consider that the ontetic reduction which Sadra actually uses, in its turn, underlines a leap in parallel to Heidegger's de-construction. De-construction by which Heidegger goes back to history of philosophy to discover the meaning of being in the horizon of time, means for Sadra, if at all, deconstruction of essentialism and ontetic reduction to Being. This means that we should demarcate, in Sadraean manner, the realm of essence -- which is subject to

eidetic reduction and, as Sadra maintains,⁽⁷⁸⁾ structures the subject or the mind and reflective thought -- on one hand, and the realm of Being -- which is ground and reality of, say, the self and its unitary consciousness -- from other hand. According to Sadra, only by this manner -- to borrow Heidegger's term, by deconstructing essentialism -- can we reach the source of knowledge.⁽⁷⁹⁾ We will consider Sadra's existential analysis of essence in the following section; but before shifting to that section one question may be answered here: Why does Sadra emphasise so much, so to speak, the deconstruction of essentialism? We can readily extract answer to this question from within Sadra's system. We say 'extract' because he is not asked such a question, then, there is no answer to such a hidden question expressly. We can nevertheless see how an answer follows from his general position.

What is real and truth is only Being. Essence is not real and truth in itself; rather its truth or reality comes from its mental *being*. It is what Sadra says. What is essence then? Mind's abstraction of external or internal objects; they are constituted in our mind by imagination and then they constitute our reflective consciousness and thought. Sadra maintains that our reflection occurs only through essences. As already hinted, he holds that our reflection always analyses an entity in two aspects: its existence and its essence. But in external world there is no essence; the external entity, Sadra says, is a manifestation of Being, then its reality is pure being, so it has no essence, or if has, this essence is nothing but its existence. (Sadra tries to demonstrate this by establishing a few principles like that of conservation of Being and that of the hierarchical structure of being.[see Ch.3]) If so, essences are constituted in the mind by imagination through the process of perception, and the mind categorises them so that it can reflectively think. In short, according to Sadra, the structure of thought is essentialistic (eidetic in Husserlian term). But how can we escape from the maze of reflection? (Why escape? note that he wants to justify an ontetic consciousness which is the base of the mystical apprehension.) The answer is simple: By breaking down the palace of essentialism. If essence forms the texture of reflection, and reflection is supposed to be surpassed, then there is no way is for Sadra but deconstructing essentialism. Now in the following section of this chapter we will see his analysis of essence in particular.

2.5.4. Sadra's Existential Analysis Of Essence:

As yet, it might be clear that, contrary to Husserl, existence is not somehow nominal and void for Sadra. He strongly asserts that nothing is real except existence. But this existence, which is sole reality, is never captured by the mind which can only capture essences and general notions. Hence there is a fundamental difference between general notion of being or existence and those of essences. Since, for him, essences do not exist *per se* but only arise in the mind from particular forms or modes of existence and hence are mental phenomena, they can, in principle, be fully known by the mind; but the general notion of existence that arises in the mind can not know or capture the nature of existence, since existence is the objective reality and its transformation into an abstract mental concept necessarily falsifies it. In other words, what exists is the uniquely particular, hence it can not be known by the conceptual mind, whereas an essence is by itself a general notion and hence can be known by the mind. No wonder then, that philosophers who operated by an abstract notion of existence, declared it to be an empty concept, for it is true that to this abstract concept as such there is nothing that strictly corresponds in reality. But their capital mistake was to think that the reality of existence is just this abstract concept:

“All notions that arise from [our experience of] the external world and are fully grasped by the mind, their essences are preserved [in the mind] even though the mode of their existence changes [in the mind]. But since the very nature of existence is that it is outside the mind and every thing whose nature it is to be outside of the mind can never possibly come into mind -- or, else, its nature will be completely transformed -- hence, existence can never be [conceptually] known by any mind”⁽⁸⁰⁾

It is true that there is an abstract notion of existence arising in the mind out of different existents, but it is equally true that that abstract notion, far from giving us the real nature of existence, falsifies that real nature. If existence was to be treated only as an abstract general notion, then it must be regarded as some sort of essence, of the order of a genus. We have forbidden this earlier on the ground that existences are unique and no general notion can do justice to the uniqueness of real beings. Further, being static, each instance of an essence is identically the same. No instance of an essence is a unique individual but only a case and yields indifferently the same result as any other instance of the same essence.

Essence, Sadra says, is nothing in itself, whatever being it possesses is due to its being manifestations of and relation to the absolute existence:

“They [i.e., essences], so long as they remain unilluminated by the light of existence, are not something to which the mind can point by saying whether they exist or not. . . . They eternally remain in their native concealment [of non-being] and their original state of non-existence. . . . They cannot be said to be or not to be -- neither do they create, nor are they objects of creation [objects of creation being the contingent existences, not essences]. . . [contingent]existences, on the other hand, are pure relations [to absolute existence]; the mind can not point to them either when they are considered out of relation with their sustaining Creator, since these have no existence independently. However, in themselves, these existences are concrete realities, uninfected by the indeterminacy [of essences], pure existence without [the admixture] of essences and simple lights without any darkness.”⁽⁸¹⁾

By ‘conjoined’ or ‘united’, Sadra does not mean that as a matter of fact two things or realities come together and are united, since, according to Sadra, essences possess no reality of their own: It is the modes of existence that necessarily give rise to essences, wherein existence is the real, essence, the subjective element. When existence becomes further and further diversified into modes, these modal existences generate diverse essences.

Let us now revert to the Sadraean analysis of essences which ends up in pure existence. The steps in this analysis are: (i) the genus is identical with or parallel to the potentiality of matter, while the differentia is identical with the actualised form; (ii) that genus, because of its imperfection and indeterminacy, requires and is perfected by the differentia; (iii) that differentia is the only reality, since genus, as a pure potentiality in the nature of matter, can not form part of the actual existence; (iv) that, hence differentia equals existence; and (v) that what is called ‘species’ or ‘specific nature’ is nothing but a classification of objects by the mind since actual existents exhibit certain characteristics whereby the mind is able to compare and contrast them and put them in different classes.

^t In his discussion of the Aristotelian dualism of matter-form (in the object) or that of genus-differentia (in the subject), Sadra attempts to insert this dualism logically into the concept of essence; that is to say, he assigns it to the phenomenology of mind (Husserl’s).⁽⁸²⁾ His analysis of these dualisms ends up in a sort of existence he called differentia so that its Sadraean sense differs from the

traditional sense. Whereas matter refers to something in the real world, genus is in the realm of concepts; but in either case, what concretely comes to exist both in the real world and in the mind is the differentia for both matter and genus 'lose themselves in its concreteness'.

If we consider more closely the relationship between genus and differentia, it appears that the Aristotelian distinctions here are purely mental, for in the reality only the differentia exists. This is brought out clearly by a consideration of 'simple' differentia as opposed to composite ones. In the case of 'black colour', e. g., what exists is black and apparently there is nothing in reality corresponding to 'colour'. In view of this, some philosophers have denied that, in the case of colours, there is either a general genus or a genuine differentia. This, however, is a capital mistake. For although the analysis into genera and differentiae is only a mental operation, there is some warrant in reality to make these distinctions and classifications. Nevertheless, what this shows is that existential reality is not composed of genera and differentiae but of modes of existence, i. e., simple differentiae. For, in truth, there is no such thing as a composite differentia in reality; there are only successive modes of existence. In this context, Sadra asserts that the whole reality is nothing but a succession of differentia which, in turn, are nothing but successive modes of existence.

Based on the Aristotelian matter-form formula, but by transforming it into a genus-differentia formula, the status of the differentia has been assigned a far greater importance in the system of Avicenna, and particularly by declaring differentia to be simple and irreducible, it has become allied to the unique and unanalysable fact of existence. But differentia, for him, is not identical with existence which in some sense stands outside the matter-form or genus-differentia formula even though the differentia helps bring the genus into an existential situation. Differentia, indeed, as part of the specific essence (composed of genus and differentia) is subsumable under a genus and is, therefore, part of what Aristotle called 'secondary substance'.

For Sadra, on the other hand, the differentia is neither a substance nor an accident, since it is identical with individual existence. To support this last proposition, Sadra develops an argument which interprets the genus-differentia formula in accordance with his doctrine of the emergent existence or 'substantial change' and thus assimilates it to essence-existence principle.

In the progression of reality, we see that the movement is from the potential to the actual where every prior is matter or genus for every posterior: wood, e. g., is matter or genus for a chair. Now both matter and form are described as secondary substances by Aristotle. In the case of primary matter itself -- which does not exist -- one can distinguish a quasi-genus and a quasi-form element. For, primary matter is characterised by pure potentiality; hence, it is something that has potentiality, where something stands for genus and has potentiality stands for the form, but of course, the conjunction of the two is still a mere potential, without actual existence. Sadra, therefore, insists that prime matter is not a pure genus but a species, since it does possess a differentia and it is thanks to this differentia that it has a positive tendency of potentiality which brings it out of pure nothingness and, further, that this species is restricted to one individual, i. e., that something which has the potentiality of existence.

Just as prime matter has only a potentiality for existence, so is it the case with every genus relative to its form or differentia, the only difference between prime matter and other genres being that prime matter, even with its differentia, is only potential, whereas other genres become actual when a differentia becomes available. Now, since a genus is only a potentiality relative to its differentia, and since genus at the same time is 'secondary substance', it follows that a secondary substance does not exist. It is a mere 'something', a mere logical subject, not a real subject. Real subjects are only existential objects, which are the differentiae, not genres. Further, since the potential is caused and actualised by something real, it follows that genus is brought into existence and actualised by the differentia. The differentia is the final cause, the perfection of genus. With the differentia, genres such evaporates and is taken upon it. It is not the case that the differentia is simply 'added to' or exists alongside of the genus in a thing; it *is* the actualised genus; it is the thing. Hence Sadra equates the differentia with existence and pronounces it to be a mode of existence.

In the entire progression of existence, the preceding mode of reality becomes genus for and 'loses itself' in the succeeding differentia:

"It has become clear to you from what we have said . . . that that whereby a thing is constituted and exists. . . is nothing but the principle of the last differentia wherein all the preceding differentiae and forms which become united in it come to be nothing but potentialities, conditions and instruments for the reality that is the last differentia."
(83)

Thus, this movement represents a progressive diminution of essence and preponderance of existence until we reach the pure existence without essence.

From this account follow the unreality of species, or specific essences. A species is obtained by the mind by combining a genus with a differentia and subsuming the latter under the former. But existentially, the case is exactly opposite: there the genres lose themselves in the concrete reality of the differentia and vanish without a trace; they become simple and unique modes of existence. How does the mind then carry out its analyses and produce definitions with their multiplicity of concepts? Sadra's reply to this question is based on his view of the disparate nature of the realm of existence and the logical or conceptual mind. In the existential world there is existence or modes of particular existence where every existent is basically unique. When, however, these existents are presented to the conceptual mind (as opposed to the true nature of the mind which is a member of the transcendental existential Intelligible realm), the latter extracts from them certain 'essential' and 'accidental' qualities whereby it classifies them. This classification, although it certainly does not exist in the external world, is, nevertheless, warranted by it for the mind. That is to say, it is only an operation of the mind although not a fictional one

“The reality and being of the differentiae consists only in a particular and unique existences of the essences, which are true individuals. What exists externally is, therefore, only [modes of] existence but, thanks to sense-perception, they give rise in the conceptual mind to certain general or specific notions (i. e., genres and differentiae), some of which are attributed to their essence and others to their accidental qualities. The mind then attributes these existentially to these objects.”⁽⁸⁴⁾

It can be concluded from Sadra's discussion that in the reality, there is nothing but existence, and all essences (then all conceptual, representative thought) that our mind constitutes in the eidetic reduction are in fact the determinations (*t'ayyonal*) of existence and epiphanies of Being. This idea is the Sadraean turning point toward the ontetic reduction in which only is the notion of Being central, and through which all beings are only emanative entities manifested from Being.

Thus understood, applying the method of ontetic reduction, Sadra reached a sort of illuminative existentialism. In fact, It is from this specific theory of being that Sadra considers the philosophical problems in general. It is, however, the nature of

the self that concerns us in this research. Following this procedure to reconstruct the illuminative theory of self, we should first detect some general principles of Sadraean illuminative existentialism in the ontetic field on which the ontology of the self can be built. This will be done in next chapter .

CHAPTER THREE

Being And Beings: Some Principles Of A Theory

Since our objective is to see the nature of the self in the light of Sadraean Illuminative theory of being, it will be helpful first to present some general elements of this theory. In this chapter; however, we might first remind ourselves of one point. Sadra discussed his theory of being essentially in first volume of his major work *Asfar* and applied it to the problems of philosophy and theology through the rest of the work (Vls. 2-9). He also wrote widely books and dissertations on his theory of being and its applications. Our intention here is not of course to study his theory comprehensively; but only in so far as it is applied to build up an existential theory of the self. Therefore, we will study his theory of being from a peculiar angle. We have already said something as regards the Sadraean Illuminative notion of being; now, we will reconsider this notion to remind that it somehow differs from modern understanding of it. Relying on this reminder, we will then consider the relation of Being and beings in general, underlying the reality of beings, the structure of Being as well as the modality of the existence of beings in general. These issues are crucial to give an account of the special ontetic structure of the self. This application of the Sadraean theory of being will be given in the following chapter.

3. 1. *Being As Light:*

We have already said (Ch. 2) some words concerning the notion of Being in the Illuminative philosophy. Now, since we describe in this chapter some general principles of the Illuminative theory of being, we remind first of an important, and interesting point concerning this notion. Being for this school is not a logical concept, a category, an essence, or a name. It is (the only) truth of every truth, (the only) reality of every reality. Its Concept (*mafhum*) for our mind is the clearest; however, its reality (*Kimh*) is the unclearest, hidden from our reflective thought.⁽¹⁾ It lives with us and we live in/by it, nevertheless, we cannot describe it in deed. We can speak of it only metaphorically. For this reason, and to distinguish this notion from the Platonic-Aristotelian (Occidental) concept of being, Being is considered in the Illuminative philosophy as Light, and its manifestation as illumination. It is interesting to note that

Suhrawardi , the Master of Illumination, wrote a metaphoric Recital called “*Occidental Exile*” in which he symbolically refers to the light of Being as set down in the horizon of the Occident.⁽²⁾ It is why he *oriented* to the Persian horizon to see the flash of Being in the brightness of wisdom-dawn. This means that the notion of Being as Light is special, subtle and crucial for this school. Therefore, insofar as our discussion here about the Illuminative thesis of being is concerned, some interpretation of the technical word *Light*, on the basis of which the notion of Being and its manifestation is understood and described, is needed.

The word “light,” as Suhrawardi elaborates at the very beginning of his metaphysics, is not used in an entirely epistemological sense, for what is clearly understood by the intellect, nor in such a restricted sense as when it is applied to the physical world. It is intended to mean that of which physical light is primarily a mode. He believes that when something is so clear and luminous that any explanation or practical investigation to make it any clearer is redundant, it should be called “apparent” Thus “apparentness” or “appearance”, in this language, does not mean that there is something else behind this appearance showing its surface to us but not its whole reality. Having said this, Suhrawardi then asks what could be really more “apparent” than light itself. Would it not be a real absurdity to shine a light on light in order to see it? It therefore becomes true to say that anything than which nothing more “apparent” can be given in definition or explanation must be truly and even literally called “light.”⁽³⁾ This description is also given for the notion of “light” when resorting to the empirical essentialities of lights: A physical light is an instantiation of light because it has in common with other lights that in the case of seeing nothing is more apparent than the light itself.

Given this understanding and interpretation of light, he seems to consider that physical light, as a mode of light like any other, can have this description predicated of it: that is, “than which nothing more apparent can be given in definition or explanation,” and thus that definition or explanation becomes totally redundant. Furthermore, by establishing such a descriptive principle for his Illuminative philosophy, Suhrawardi feels quite justified in placing the reality of being human in this category, and treating it as an actual mode of the notion of light in such a way that it can be easily characterised by all the intrinsic characteristics and qualities of light, such as apparency, simplicity, indivisibility, indefinableness, and so on.

After having done this, he goes on to further elaborate the designation of his principal technique of light in opposition to darkness, which probably points to an ancient Persian religious orientation. First he divides what he believes in this way to be “light in the very reality of itself” into a mode of light which is genuine, unadulterated, and non-inherent in anything else, and another mode of light which is accidental and subsists in something else. What is not light in the very reality of itself falls naturally into the category of darkness. Darkness is also divided into a mode of darkness that does not occur in another thing and therefore is pure and independent, and a mode which does occur in something else and is not independent. The example of the former is “prime matter” (*hyle*), which is called in his Illuminative language the “obscure substance” (*al-jawahr al-ghasiq*)⁽⁴⁾, the principle of receptivity and passivity. Examples of the latter are all material objects that count as accidents in the Aristotelian manner of thinking.

In Suhrawardi’s philosophy there are also things which are neither counted among the modes of light nor of darkness, but are rather dealt with as being somehow in between. They are called “intermediate objects” as, for example, “material substances,” these are, in his words, neither light nor darkness, but are rather in such a state that if rays of light are cast upon them by which they can come to the light, they thereby become “apparent;” but if these rays do not reach them, they fall back to absolute darkness and disappear.⁽⁵⁾

These remarks should be taken, at least at the present time, simply as a matter of terminology and as a verbal explanation of some technical words. But we must remind ourselves of the point that this sort of philosophical discourse involves, in the first place, a linguistic colouring from the ancient Persian dualistic terminology of “light” and “darkness” is concerned. Of course, being conscious of metaphysical and religious consequences, Suhrawardi emphatically confined himself to the “language game” of this dualism and conventionally equated the meaning of “light” with “being” and the meaning of darkness with “nothingness.”⁽⁶⁾

In the second place, this terminology leans firmly in the direction of a reformulation of the famous Platonic distinction between “being” and “becoming” in terms of modes of “light” and modes of “darkness.” Suhrawardi tries to avoid attaching any positive sense to his notion of “darkness” and confines that notion to the far side of the square of opposition, which is the direct contradiction and absolute negation of the notion of “light” and “being.” Given this linguistic achievement, one

can suppose, in his favour, that “light” can be substituted for “being” in Plato’s doctrine. But whether a purely negative sense of “darkness” can also be accommodated to the other Platonic thesis, namely “becoming,” is a question to which Suhrawardi has committed himself and is acutely aware of. However, in this research, this question (and the like) does not concern us. What we would like to mention here is that this Suhrawardian notion of light was interpreted later by Sadra with an absolutely new understanding of “Being”. Interpreting Light as Being, Sadra gave a new (ontetic) meaning to the Suhrawardian notion of Light as well. In fact, his interpretation of Suhrawardian notion of Light as Being not only put it away from being a mere metaphor, but also bestow a different sense to the philosophical word “Being”. The novelty of Sadra’s theory of Being in comparison with the western theories of Being (from Aristotle to Heidegger), it seems, is hidden in this crucial interpretation of Light as Being.

It is, of course, appreciated that the term “Light” has been used by some philosophers, both in the ancient and modern philosophies, for example, in works of philosophers like Plotinus, al-Ghazali, al-Razi, Ibn-’Arabi, Eckhart, Magnus Albertus, Aquinas, Bonaventura, Roger Bacon, Descartes, Bergson, Husserl and Heidegger; however, to my best knowledge, none of them employed “Light” in Sadraean sense of “Being”. Concerning this issue, two principal points may be reminded here: One is that the word “Light” is used in history of philosophy, somehow in a physical sense and, then, taken as a metaphor -- and not as an ontology. The other is that in the history of philosophy what is almost meant by ‘ontology’ is ultimately ‘cosmology’, and then by ‘being,’ ‘the world’. It is obvious that such senses are not what Sadra meant by these two words, ‘Light’ and ‘Being’; Neither does ‘Light’ merely mean physical, nor does ‘Being’ equal the world. Since Light is, according to him, the very ‘Being’, every speaking of it belongs to the ontetic field and indicates a profound ontology (to use modern terminology). At the same time, ‘Being’ is *the mere source*, and never equals the world; it is both the world and more than the world -- ontology, in its proper sense, is not cosmology.

It is this understanding of Being as Light (and Light as Being) that among and along with the other consequences, allows us to establish philosophically a non-reflective, ontetic field of consciousness in/by which the nature of the self, as well as its reflective knowledge, is constituted -- a consequence that hits upon the importance of replacing and avoiding the epistemological (the eidetic field) as foundational, and

treating Being (the ontetic field) as the most primordial root, long before a technique was discovered by philosophers like Heidegger and Sartre. This particular “existentialist” consequence will concern us in detail from next chapter onward. Here we discuss those principles of the Sadraean theory of being which have direct implications for the theory of the.

3. 2. *The Reality Of Beings:*

In the previous chapter we saw that Sadra by applying the ontetic reduction removed essentialism to the benefit of a special kind of existentialism. By this removal, he also tried to escape from all implications of the eidetic reduction by which we remain in the level of intentional, reflective, constituting consciousness of the self. He maintained that by such a removing, by the ontetic reduction, we face the realm of the reality, of the Being. By this he means that the notion of existence can accommodate all terms and degrees of reality in general and overcome the Platonic distinction between “being” and “becoming” in particular. Accordingly, the word “existence” is equivalent to the word “reality”, and like its equivalent is applied to the existence of God with the same univocal meaning as when applied to the existence of any phenomenal object. Like Heidegger who by relying on an analysis of *logos* maintains that knowledge is a grounded mode of Dasein’s existence, Sadra also holds that there is no good reason for separating the order of “being” from the order of “intelligence”, or from any kind of “knowing.”

In brief, anything which *comes* from absolute nothingness into a degree of being, no matter how weakly it may possess the light of realisation, or which is, from eternity, in the world of reality, is truly to be considered as an existence.

This univocity of existence in the philosophy of Sadra is what makes up the “innermost” feature of that concept. On the “outermost” of the same concept, there is nothing but gradation and variation of the same sense of univocity. For the sufficient reason that this outermost variation belongs to the very innermost univocity, Sadra maintains it does not jeopardise the univocal application of existence. In this sense existence is true of appearances and things in themselves supposed to really exist. It is that by which all beings are illuminated, and on which they are dependent without the inter-mediation of matter, instrument, or time. But that which is preceded by non-existence in time can never dispense with a mediator. The act of Being, the

illumination, therefore, has superiority and generation. The light of Being is so luminous and so radiant that it sheds light on everything. Sadra says:

“All existents that take ‘possibility’ as their logical modality, and all realities which are related, and belong, to the Other, are to be considered as different values (*i'tibarat*) and different features of the existence of the Necessary Being. They are rays and shadows of the same Self-Substantive Light. These shadows are, from the standpoint of their individuation (*huwiyah*), far from being independent. It is impossible even to conceive of them as unrelated and independent entities. This is because ‘subordination’ and being ‘owned by’ the Other, as well as poverty and dependence on the Other, are the whole constitution of their reality. It is not however true to suppose that they are something in their essence liable to the occurrence of being related to and owned by the Other, and thus dependent upon the Other; not at all. But rather the only conceivable truth of their reality is to describe them as a pure ‘dependence’ on the Other, not even something dependent on the Other. Thus understood, they have no reality in themselves conceivable by our intellectual power other than to be mere subjections and subordinations of one Reality. From this it becomes clear that there is nothing in the world of reality but one single Reality. Anything else other than this counts for nothing but a manifestation, an exhibition, a perspective, a specific manner, a ray of light, a shadow of the luminosity and a visage of the endless profundity of this One Reality.”⁽⁷⁾

The above theory means that all beings, including the self, are the manifested forms of one reality; they are emanative entities by their nature -- though their portions of that unique reality are different depending on their level of manifestation. This is the meaning of ontetic reduction in the Illuminative philosophy.

Now let us see Sadra's position on the mode of being which the emanative entities in general possess. This mode of being in general means for Sadra nothing but a “relational” (*rabti*) and “hangingful” (*ta'alloghi*)⁽⁸⁾ one of which he metaphorically speaks of as the prepositional being. This means, according to him, that their nature is a ‘pure need’, an ‘absolute possibility’; then, like Sartre who says that the essence of man is “a lack”, Sadra also says so.⁽⁹⁾ However, unlike Sartre who releases this man of lack, an existent in full need, to the storm of nothingness and in the darkness of nihilism, Sadra tries to hang it to a safe platform and to bring it into light. One can however ask what the meaning of this hangingful, this relational being is. The meaning of this kind of being is very subtle for Sadra. He has devoted pages upon pages to clarify its meaning appealing to logical, grammatological and philological illustrations. Among the illustrations he puts forward, we can refer to a grammato-philological one.

He compares the meaning of emanative being with the meaning of prepositions. In Persian and Arabic, and perhaps in Language as such there is a triple division of word into noun, verb and preposition. Putting aside their functions in a statement, the first two have independent sense, but a preposition has no independent sense; its sense only appears in its function in a statement when is taken with nouns or verbs. For example, 'book' or 'went' have their independent senses which they indicate so that an audience understands their meaning; but a preposition like 'by' (*ba* in Persian and Arabic which has several meanings depended on its functions in statement) has no definite meaning until it function in a statement. Then, its meaning is depended on the other, that is on nouns or verbs; and this means that its meaning is hanging on and relational to the others without which it never makes sense. According to Sadra, the same case holds good for the emanative beings; because their being is hanging on and relational to the Other (God in theology). It is on such an illustration that, starting with the problem of the relation of Being to the multitude of the universe, what Sadra's perspective of emanation gives us is simply expressible by a *prepositional* phrase such as "proceeding from. . .," "depending on. . .," "illuminated by. . .," and so on. All the words that he has used in the definition of emanation stand for nothing but a pure, immanent act issued by the agent as a manifestation of a substantive truth. Sadra says that the reality of emanation is analogous to the meaning of connectives and prepositions, in that it has no distinct definable sense in itself separated from its substantive principle -- that is Being itself. Thus it cannot be defined in terms of either verbs or nouns; rather it can only be understood in the light of Being, just as a preposition is only accurately and meaningfully understandable if one can connect it to its own appropriate nouns and verbs. However the truth of emanation lies for Sadra in Being, and its whole reality is no more than a prepositional expression such as "by otherness". Since the status of the act of emanation is by nature thus prepositional, the only independent reality which really is in-itself and can function as a substantive noun to which all prepositional entities are related is, in Sadra's eyes, Being which does not in itself come from another principle, and therefore, is not dependent on anything at all. This is the unique principle of emanative beings. ⁽¹⁰⁾

3. 3. *The Structure Of Being*

Now one of the important pillars of Sadraean ontology comes into force: the hierarchic (*Tashkiki*) structure of Being⁽¹¹⁾. Of course, the scope and applications of this thesis is widely spread in Sadraean system; however we shall encounter it here to see how Sadra applies it to justify the reality of the self. Before attempting to see this justification, it would be helpful to briefly study this thesis.

The whole multitude is, according to Sadra, designed as but one manifestation of Being. And as a shadow of its face, it always remains entirely dependent upon that light of lights. This indicates, as Sadra tells us, that there is an unbroken vertical line connecting all emanative beings to Being, the principle of manifestation, in a strictly existential unity. And there are also horizontal lines along which the manifested beings are to be regarded as different from one another and characterised by multiplicity in rank, in essence, in species, and in individuation. All these belong to the factual texture of Being itself. For the sake of distinction, the vertical line is called the “inner order” of existence, and the horizontal lines the “outer order” of existence. The former is that which mystical experiences and ontetic apprehensions are concerned with, and the latter, is what reflective philosophy and the eidetic sciences account for. In dealing with the problem of mysticism and ontetic field, all philosophy can do is to account for the interpretation and conceptualisation of mystical experiences and ontetic apprehensions. Being representational, these interpretations and conceptualisations will fall into the order of the horizontal line, whereas factual mystical experiences and ontetic apprehensions always remain in the vertical dimension of emanation and belong to the inner order of the world of reality. They are not, strictly, representational.

On this ontology, the light of existence flashes out from the source of light at the vertex all the way down to the base which is supposed to be the world of material objects. While all the rays and arrows emanate from the simplicity of Being without any interruption of nothingness or a void, they all enjoy the strongest existential connection and unity with Being at the top. But they are, on the other hand, widely diversified when they are considered as being at the base or at any point between the base and the zenith where the horizontal levels converge into an absolute unitary simplex.

There are two distinct kinds of diversity which are to be noted. These rays or shadows of existence can be divided by the mind of a philosopher into different fragmentary emanations according to the degrees of proximity to Being. But this sort of division, being a mere intellectual reflection on the gradation of one simple thing does not jeopardise the simple unity of the emanation with Being. They are also actually separated and diversified in essence as well as in individuation, etc. ; but since this separation and diversity which occurs in the horizontal order does not happen in the vertical order - the order of unity - it does not drive them to pieces and has no impact on the inner system of their continuity and unity with Being. In other words the multitude of the horizontal order has no bearing upon the unitary connection of the vertical order.

This description of the Illuminative ontology, together with the distinction between vertical and horizontal lines within the structure of existence, is taken by Sadra in order to analyse the philosophical problems in general, and in our special case the being of the self. It is of fundamental importance to his philosophy to understand the "inner unity" in relation to the "outer diversity" so that one can appreciate the problem to which Sadraean theory seeks to give an answer. Let us continue our depiction of Sadraean thesis.

There are various ways and approaches by which Sadra tries to show, the plausibility of the claim of his theory of existence to demonstrate the existential identity of emanation with their ultimate principle, i. e., Being. The law of "transitivity" or the "hypothetical syllogism" is one of the approaches he uses to show it. The logical form of this law is:

$$A \supset B$$

$$B \supset C$$

$$\therefore A \supset C$$

As one can see, this law is based on material implication as its logical connective. To apply this law to the theory of emanation, Sadra says, one needs to substitute the emanative notion of "dependence" for material implication. To depend totally, both in truth and in conceivability, on the truth of another is taken to mean being overshadowed by, and included in, the truth of another being. Logically, this existential relation is expressed by material implication, such that the truth of an emanative being consists analytically in the truth of its undetachable principle. Thus

“dependence” is here equated with the “undetachability” and “indistinguishability” of the emanation from its principle both in thought and in truth. ⁽¹²⁾

Now Sadra says that any given degree or mode of emanation A, will entail, by material implication, its immediate principle B. Since B is in its turn an emanation dependent, in the same manner, on its own immediate principle, it also logically implies its own principle; and so on, until the range of emanation ends in the ultimate principle C -- i. e., Being.

In this way the unbroken chain of emanation is traced back from the lowest mode of emanation A to the intermediate grade B, and finally, to the ultimate source of emanation C. This is the logical strategy of transitivity. While these modes and degrees of emanation, following one upon the other, appear in their own particular stages to be different from one another in terms of such hierarchical levels and proportions of closeness and remoteness to the ultimate principle, they all constitute only one single and indivisible vertical line from the base up to the zenith of the existence.

Sadra also turns to take an objection to this account. One of the objections he critically puts to himself helps to clarify his thesis and it would be useful to encounter it here. The objection is made to the strategy: that the implication of transitivity does not bring out the claim of this theory, which calls for nothing other than the existential identity of all the gradations and modes of emanation. All the rule of transitivity can do is to help us know that there is an unbroken relation between any lower degree or mode of emanation A, through an intermediate mode B used as a middle term, to the ultimate principle C. But whether or not this relation is an identity relation, making the whole massive system of the gradations of emanation and its principle one existential unity, is beyond the logical parameters of the hypothetical syllogism.

The answer Sadra gives to this objection is that the existential relation between an emanation and the source from which it has emanated is nothing but an “Illuminative relation”⁽¹³⁾, which is unitary and belongs to the order of being and not the order of conception. In point of fact, it is this “unitary” relationship which accounts for the sort of existential identity which the emanation has with the source of emanation. Within the context of this unitary relation Sadra applies the rule of transitivity in order to lead from one occurrence of this relationship at the base to the ultimate one at the zenith of the hierarchic structure of existence. In other words, the operation of material implication in the system of Illuminative relations results

logically in a kind of existential unity subsisting from the lower class of emanation right up to the ultimate principle and source of the Illuminative emanation without any disruption or any extraneous mediation.

3. 4. *The Existential Possibility of Relational Being:*

In the above context Sadra takes a decisive step forward to logically support his theory. He considers here the modality of the emanative being. Investigating it in a difficult discussion, he tries to set up an argument designed generally to obtain the modality of a concept in connection with its reality and the consideration of its existence, whether the concept is empirical, transcendental, or merely illusory.⁽¹⁴⁾ In other words, given anything as a subject term in an existential form of proposition, Sadra tries to determine the modal structure of such a proposition and decide whether that subject is “necessary,” “possible,” or impossible.” As an example, Sadra considers the transcendental concept of God in comparison with the predicative concept of existence in the light of this argument. Putting the idea of God as the subject term and the meaning of existence as the predicate, we get a complete proposition in the form: ‘God exists. ‘ Then, from the standpoint of “modality”, this statement is subjected to the question: Is God’s existence necessary, possible or impossible? When any two of these alternatives -- in the case of God’s existence, possibility and impossibility -- are ruled out the remaining one is kept as the truth value of the modality of the proposition. Then the statement becomes: ‘God exists necessarily.’ Sadra maintains that the same modality decision-making procedure can easily be set up for every concept present in our mind, whether it be through our sense-experience, our intellect, or our imagination. On this, he concludes that everything, no matter whether it be in the order of essence or in the order of existence, is either necessary, possible, or impossible. This amounts to the generalisation that all forms and degrees of existence will come under the same consideration of modality as all the varieties of essence normally do.

It should be noted that the validity of the argument is based upon the exclusive sense of this alternation, because it has already been established in this philosophy that all of these primitive terms (i.e., necessity, possibility and impossibility)⁽¹⁵⁾ are triadically contradictory. Possibility in its special sense (*al-imkan al-khass*), as Sadra depicts it, is a twofold negation: the negation of ‘to be’ and the negation of ‘not to

be'⁽¹⁶⁾. That is to say, the status of a possible entity to existence and to nothingness is, by itself, 50:50; in the sense that 'existence' is not exigency for this entity in itself, just as 'non-existence' is not exigency for it. Possibility, therefore, contradicts both necessity and impossibility. The contradiction of necessity and impossibility on the other hand is clear from their definitions: necessity is the exigency of 'to be' and impossibility is the exigency of 'not to be'⁽¹⁷⁾. In fact each pair can be reduced and translated into the general form of the law of the excluded middle.⁽¹⁸⁾ It is logically impossible, says Sadra, that any concept, no matter what it may be, can ever be entirely outside this exclusive alternation. It is equally impossible that a concept can ever assume any more than one of these alternatives. That is, every concept must "at most" and "at least" be qualified by one of these primitive forms of modality.

This kind of alternation is called the "complete disjunction"⁽¹⁹⁾ meaning that "at least and at most" one of the disjuncts is true. This is to be distinguished from the two incomplete disjunctions. First, there is the disjunction in which "at least" one of the disjuncts is true but all of them may be true as well. This is called the "inclusive disjunction".⁽²⁰⁾ Second, there is the disjunction in which "at most" one of the disjuncts is true, even though it may happen that none of them is true. This is called the "restrictive disjunction".⁽²¹⁾ The complete disjunction may be exemplified by two or more exclusive disjuncts. An example of two exclusive disjuncts is: 'Every number is either odd or even,' which implies that no number can be both and no number can be neither.

The same pattern of complete disjunction can be exemplified in a three-disjunct formula like this: "Everything is either necessary, possible, or impossible."⁽²²⁾ According to the exclusive sense of the complete disjunction, this statement is taken to mean that "at least and at most" one, and only one, of these modal predicates is true of a thing.

The three-disjunct form of the complete disjunction is applied by Sadra to the existential feature of an emanative entity where to be entitled to intellectually distinguish between the essence and the act of existence of that entity. Setting aside the problem of its essentiality which is withdrawn by the ontetic reduction, Sadra comes to the point where he directs this disjunctive question to the pure existence of the emanative entities. The question, however, is not whether a being such as the self is necessary, possible, or impossible. Rather, it deals only with the actual existence of the self as it has specifically issued forth from Being, regardless of its essentialities,

which belong to the order of its conceptual definition. The question asks if such a form or degree of existence can be qualified by necessity, possibility, or impossibility. In other words, if the existential feature of an emanation be considered as a thing distinct from essence, then what is its modality? Such an existence cannot be placed in the rank of necessary being which has no causal connections with anything. The very meaning of emanation implies that it is a form of existence which has supposedly proceeded from Being standing as the source of its emanation.⁽²³⁾ With regard to the existence of an emanative entity, e. g., the self, Sadra suggests that such an existence must enjoy the modality of possibility. More specifically, he considers the self as a possible being.

A crucial point, however, arises from this conclusion: what is the meaning of possibility in reference to the question of the existence of the self as an emanative entity? Regarding the meaning of possibility Sadra distinguishes between several kinds of possibility among of which only one is applicable here. It is what is called in Islamic philosophy *al imkan al khass* meaning that the bearer of such possibility may existentially either be or not be. This is what Sadra calls the “existential or ontetic possibility” (*al imkan al wujudi*) in contrast to the “essential or eidetic possibility” (*al imkan al mahowi*)⁽²⁴⁾. The Sadraean thesis on the existential possibility somehow sounds Heideggerian-Sartrean. We know how much Heidegger and Sartre lay emphasis on the same aspect of the reality of human being. Both of them try to discover our existential possibility in language of “facticity”. Sartre who may be clearer than Heidegger in this respect, defines it for us in a closely Sadraean tone:

“On one hand, while it is necessary that I exist in the form of being-there, still it is altogether contingent that I exist in the first place, for I am not the foundation of my being; on the other hand, while it is necessary that I be engaged in this or that point of view, it is contingent that it should be precisely in one to the exclusion of others. We have called this twofold contingency embracing a necessity the facticity of the for-itself.”⁽²⁵⁾

Let us here have a closer look to the Sadraean thesis of “existential or ontetic possibility”.

An essence, as opposed to an existence, can quite conceivably be said to be a possible being, because it is existentially neutral (*quidditas tantum*). That is, it can come into the light of existence by the illumination of Being, and it ceases to exist when Being withdraws itself from illuminating. To characterise an essence by

possibility is just another way of reflecting upon its state of neutrality between coming into the world of reality and ceasing to exist in this world. Thus, Sadra concludes, the very meaning of essence is existentially neutral.⁽²⁶⁾ But how can it be true of an emanation which is a form of existence to say that it is “existentially neutral”? Can a degree of existence in the form of emanation be existentially neutral? If the subject under consideration is emanation, which is taken to mean that a pure light of existence has issued forth from Being, then how is it understandable if one modify it by the predicative phrase “existentially neutral”?

There is one significant point in this ontology which might shed some light on the matter under discussion, and that is the distinction made by Sadra between what is existentially neutral and what is not: An essence can be subject to the disjunction “either it is or it is not,” therefore it is existentially neutral in terms of “liability” to this disjunction. But existence, on the other hand, is not liable to this disjunction, nor for that matter, to non-existence, i. e., “. . . it is not.” On this account, Sadra has characterised ‘essences’ by existential neutrality.

Assuming that the meaning of possibility is the state of equilibrium between existence and non-existence, which is the meaning of the above disjunction, and, furthermore, assuming that the meaning of emanation is substituted for “X” in the following argument, “X is a form of existence, but is X existentially neutral?” becomes a self-defeating question in Sadra’s eyes, in the same way as “X is a rectangle, but is X neutral in having four sides?” is a self-defeating question. Thus, although the modality of possibility is, according to Sadra, the only conceivable modality for emanative existence, the implication of its being existentially neutral is not meaningful as a characterisation of this sort of existence.

Here Sadra argues that the modality of possibility, in its primitive sense, is irreconcilable with the existential part of any form of possible being, whether it is an emanative or non-emanative being, that is, whether we do, or do not, have an emanation. If so, he tells us, we cannot rely on this modal argument in making our decision about the species of the modality of the existential component of any kind of being, or of the existence of the universe at large. The only benefit that we do derive from this argument is that we know that we cannot leave the existential feature of the universe undecided and indeterminate from the standpoint of its modal constitution. If we do so, that is, if we leave the existential state of the universe undecided, it will be an infringement of the law of “exclusive disjunction,” and in a way, ultimately an

infringement of the law of the “excluded middle.” The original question concerning the existential status of an emanation widens when asked of the existential structure of the universe in toto. That is, this question can no longer be regarded as a restricted issue concerning the emanative status of the self. Rather, it is a most fundamental point concerned with the major problem of the ontology of the world of reality as a whole.

It is under these circumstances that Sadra distinguishes between two species of possibility. One sense of possibility is that which characterises the essential feature of a being as distinct from its existence. This possibility, of course, belongs to the order of essence, and is taken to mean that an essence is existentially neutral. The other possibility is that which qualifies the very constitution of the existence of any form of being issued forth from another. This meaning of possibility is not existentially neutral, rather it stands for a positive relation between a higher rank of existence and a lower one. The first possibility is called “essential or eidetic,” and the second “existential or ontetic,” according to the subject under consideration.

As we have already hinted above, Sadra understands by “existential possibility,” as distinct from “essential possibility,” the sense of “dependence” of one existence “upon” another.⁽²⁷⁾ The meaning of “essential possibility,” on the other hand, is the state of “equilibrium” with respect to existence and non-existence. Thus the logical truth of a “possible being” is to be defined as that which may either be or not be. This is the meaning of the existential neutrality of a conceivable essence.⁽²⁸⁾ Existential possibility means, as we already saw, absolute hanging on and total dependence on the other. Sadra, the originator of the Illuminative “existential possibility”, finally clarifies the meaning of this possibility for us:

“On the matter of the possibility of a pure essence from the concept of which all the implication of existence is withdrawn, it consists of the negation of the necessity of being; together with the negation of the necessity of not being, with reference to the conceivability of the essence in itself. But, concerning the possibility of the very reality of existences, it is to be taken to mean that the reality of these existences is absolutely related to, and dependent upon, another reality, such that they are conceivable only in terms of pure relation to the substantive reality of the other. Thus, the reality of possible existences is merely propositional and is understandable only in the light of the radiation of another existence. They are, moreover, devoid of any sense of independence both in conception and in factual truth. That is not the case when a universal essence is taken into consideration. Although it is true that essences do not stand for anything before becoming

involved in some degree of existence, they are nevertheless entities conceivable in themselves in the sense that one can think of them independently insofar as one can present them in one's mind. . . . This means that, despite the reality of existences, the conceivability of essences is not to be dependent on another being as prepositional functions of that being. It is this conceptual sense of independence that enables us to direct our mind to essences and make our judgement about them as to how they are identical in themselves and how they are different from one another. ⁽²⁹⁾

By now enough has been said to show the general elements of the Sadraean theory of Being and his analysis of the connection of the emanative existents to Being. Now, among the most important consequences concluded by Sadra from the above analysis, an issue can be considered here as crucial for the presentation of his theory of self: The ontological relation of the self as an emanative being to Being through the existential modality of possibility; and realising how this meaning of possibility provides the self with a special presence to identify its reality through being absorbed in Being. These issues will be discussed in the next chapter which concerns with the ontetic structure of the self.

Chapter Four

The Ontetic Structure Of The Self

In the previous chapter the general elements of the Sadraean theory of being were presented so far as the issue in question is concerned here. In this chapter, we will proceed to see how the Sadraean Illuminative existentialism interprets the ontetic structure of the self on the basis of its theory of being. In this study we have three interrelated aims: (i) we will first see Sadraean approach to the reality of the self, that is, to its being ; (ii) we will also see the relation of the self with other beings in the existential context; (iii) we will see that there is no self in subjectivistic sense in the order of being; what is there is only a unitary consciousness. In the end of this chapter we will consider two old but disputable problems concerning the nature of the self (its simplicity and its substantiality) in the light of the Illuminative approach. Then this chapter studies the ontology of the self as one may call it in modern terminology. The epistemological implications of this theory will be discussed later.

4. 1. Primary Considerations:

Sadra discussed the elements of his theory of the self widely in four of the nine volumes (I, II, III, IIX) of his huge and hardly understandable book *Asfar* in a sophisticated complex of logical, ontological, epistemological and mystical idioms, metaphors and ideas. Also he has discussed the nature of the self in his later works like *Mafatyh* and *'Arshiyyah* plus several dissertations he has independently written. Then, as expressed by his commentators like Kompani,⁽¹⁾ it seems too difficult to catch the depth of his theory; perhaps because he sometimes goes beyond our conceptual, eidetic thought and requires us to sympathise with him in his apprehending the truth. In this chapter we are not concerned with all aspects of his theory of the self, nor to detect all the elements of the Sadraean perspective. All what we want to do here, is to depict his description of the reality of the self.

For Sadra, the reality of self is hidden in its special mode of being.⁽²⁾ As he says, and presupposes, man is the only full-handscript of God (*Al-Nuskhat al-Kamelat al-Ilahiyyah*) among beings, a microcosm in macrocosm, to this latter the former corresponding⁽³⁾ by way of wisdom -- that is, the performative self's mystical

experience of Being. In a Heideggerian manner, Sadra also maintains that it is only man that has this special being among the others, but unlike Heidegger who locates this speciality in the temporality of Dasein's nature, Sadra underlines God's devotion of man to Himself; this is, Sadra believes, what makes man's existence special.⁽⁴⁾ However in agreement with Heidegger, Sadra holds that the nature of the self can not be grasped by analytically eidetic reflection. The reason is clear from his perspective: the nature of the self is his special being, and being can not be caught by essential thought simply because being is not a category to be essentialised and conceptualised then understood by the eidetic reflection. To apprehend his nature, we need to leave the eidetic thought and to sympathetically come up in the light of Being; if so, we would then *experience* the being of the self. Otherwise, the nature of the self always remains mysterious and, as easily seen in Husserl's phenomenology, far beyond our reflective understanding. This is why Sadra in his description of the nature of being, starts from the structure of Being itself, not, as Heidegger does, from the analysis of the being of the self. Instead to see the being of man in the horizon of temporality, Sadra considers it in the context of Being itself. His theory, therefore, emerges in the general frame of his theory of being some relevant elements of which were considered in last chapter. As we have seen, he considered that Being manifests itself in the form of beings in such a hierarchic (*Tashkiki*) manner that they are continually everlastingly hanging on it so that if it deprives them of its light they will nihilate. Applying this theory to the nature of the self, this manifestation implies a double nature for it in particular: The self is hanging on (i.e., being emanated in the Illuminative terminology) and present to (i.e., being absorbed in) Being at the same time. It is this double nature of the self that makes him special and outstanding among beings; that is, while all beings are manifested and emanated entities from Being, it is only the self that is absorbed in Being at the same time. The reason is that the absorption is, according to him, an experientially and sympathetically conscious presence before Being. It is his factual practice in everydayness (in Heidegger's term), and, unbounded unreflective consciousness (in Sartrean terms). This kind of presence, that is, this kind of existential, non-reflective, unitary consciousness is what makes the self distinct from the other beings. It is this consciousness that is the basis of our actual life and the source of our concrete, social, moral aspects, as well as of our intentional, reflective thought. Such a consciousness is already approved by the Illuminative mystics when they spoke of their higher mystical experiences; however, it

has not been theorised in a philosophical manner; nor has it been justified for our ordinary life while we are not mystics. It is through this illuminative theory elaborated above that such a mystical idea comes in the form of a philosophical theory so that it is applicable to our experientially ordinary life. This formulation of the unitary consciousness covers all aspects of the self's life simply because this consciousness is its special mode of being. We will see this point later in this chapter. Here, instead, we would first explain the Sadraean thesis on the reality of the self.

4. 2. The Reality Of The Self:

The reality of the self is, according to Sadra, prepositional. In order to understand this thesis, we would first specially remind ourselves here of the above discussions on the prepositional nature of emanation (see above, 3. 2) and the existential possibility (see above, 3. 4). Keeping them in mind, we now try to explain our Sadraean approach to the being of the self.

Through the argument from “complete disjunction” Sadra reached the point where to say that the only modality applicable to the existential truth of an emanative reality, like the self, is “existential possibility.” Here Sadra comes to argue that the self, by the very nature of its existence, is a continually “absorbed” reality. For, as already seen, in the case of an emanative entity like the self, to exist means for Sadra to be manifested by/from Being, and the maintenance of a situation of hanging on and dependence on Being. That is to say, it can never be detached from Being and stand by itself as an independent entity in the world of reality.

In this Sadraean perspective, it is not, therefore, true to say that the self could have issued forth from Being and could continue to exist while no longer having existential dependence on it. This false interpretation of possibility, Sadra argues, would mean that a possible existence was possible when and only when it had not yet come into existence through Being. But as soon as that same possible existence was to come into the world of reality, it would change its basic status from that of essential and existential possibilities to that of essential and existential necessities. That is, it would no longer remain as a possible being, but would, in the continuation of its existence, become a necessary being.⁽⁵⁾ This idea of possibility, Sadra argues, is not valid, because if a being becomes, even for the briefest moment of the continuity of its existence, unneeded of, and independent from, its principle, it means that it is at

that very moment a self-sufficient being with, at that moment, no basis for being. Whatever a self-sufficient being might be, it ought by definition to mean a necessary self-grounded existence. This existence then, even though it is at that very moment continuing in existence, is no longer an emanation and has become a necessary being which does not rely for its existence upon Being. This is a transmodification from possibility to necessity.

Concerning this problem, Sadra turns to the above-discussed kind of the emanative being asking: Why is a certain being, say the self, possible and another being, say God, necessary? The answer, on the basis of his analysis, is that the very nature of the former is to be hanging, dependent on and held by Being, while that of the latter is to be absolutely groundless and independent.⁽⁶⁾ As we have already seen, when one is speaking of emanation he is not dealing with a being constituted by the essence-existence relationship, but rather with that very simple indivisible entity the whole nature of which is to be known as an issuance forth from Being. This is the meaning of the prepositional state of being which characterises the reality of the emanative being (see above, 3. 2). A simple thing which has no definable identity or reality except as a mere issuance from and a manifestation of Being is only possible in truth, and conceivable in the mind, if, Sadra says, it is preserved by the very Being.

The question as to how such an entity can, from another point of view, as it were, be spoken of as distinguished by essence and horizontally diversified is, in Sadra's eyes, analogous to the question as to how a prepositional entity can be spoken of, and defined, as distinguished by its noun, pronoun, verb, adjective, etc. Then, Sadra tries to supply an answer to the former question in comparison with the latter question. In this case, he says that when we speak of a preposition, say the word "from," describing it in terms of ' . . . used to introduce the place, point, person, etc., that is the starting point,' we are speaking of the preposition in a very important sense; but at this particular stage of language we are not using the expression "from" in its prepositional function. On the other hand, if we use it in its genuine prepositional sense in a sentence such as "the cat jumped down from the wall," it then quite definitely functions as a true working preposition. This time, although it is being implicitly used and meant as accurately and meaningfully as it can be, it is not laid out as the direct object of our concern. It is, instead, in this case, that which binds together the whole structure of our sentence, that without which the meaning of our language would break down, and its independent conceptualisation has not been

spoken of at all. In other words, Sadra supposes, a preposition has no independent sense (see above, 3. 2) while nouns and verbs have independent senses apart from their functions or even additional meanings or states they may undertake in a sentence. According to this account, while a preposition is used with its correct meaning in the sentence, it is far from being spoken of in that sentence. Once it has, by conceptualisation, been put in the form of an independent entity to be spoken of as the subject of discussion, it completely loses its initial meaning of preposition and finds a different meaning.

Speaking of a preposition however is a reflective language and is indicative enough, in Sadra's eyes, for the depiction and presentation of its definition and all the essentialities of its grammatical evaluation as far as its theoretical meaning is concerned. This analogy, though primarily linguistic, would seem logically profitable, for Sadra, as a pronouncement of the linguistic problem of the prepositional nature of emanation, its similarity to prepositional entities in language, and the difficulty and the solution that both have in common.⁽⁷⁾

On the basis of the above discussion, it can be easily seen why Sadra describes the reality of the self as prepositional: the self is an emanative being and the reality of every emanative being is prepositional in the sense that it is eternally dependent and hanging on Being, simply because the emanative being is by nature an existential possibility meaning for Sadra (like Sartre) 'absolute need'. Such does Sadra understand the reality of the self. With such a perspective of the reality of the self, Sadra turns to the second issue we mentioned above (see above, the latest paragraph of sec. 3. 3) to situate the self as a being-present-to-Being. Sadra speaks of this present-to-Being in terms of absorption and immersion. This will concern us in the following section.

4. 3. The Self As Presence In/To Being:

Sadra built up the reality of the self as a prepositional being that thanks to its emanative nature has an eternal dependency on Being. This, Sadra holds, allows us to consider the self as a factual presence immersed and absorbed into Being itself rather than to consider it as a merely transcendental subject who stands beyond of our consciousness -- as one may see in Husserlian theory. Rather, Sadra moves in a similar way in which Heidegger and the existential philosophers move later. Dasein is

introduced and defined by them as "*being-in-the-world*". Dasein cannot be distinguished from its existence in the world. Therefore, it makes no sense to suppose that we know ourselves better than we know the world (Being for Sadra), and it makes no sense to say that we know about ourselves in a different way than we know about the world. We know ourselves and the world identically, for ourselves (as Dasein) and the world constitutes a single phenomenon:

"The compound expression 'Being-in-the-world' indicates in the very way we have coined it, that it stands for a unitary phenomenon."⁽⁸⁾

Just as the existential philosophers consider the self as Dasein that is as a being-in-the-world who has an ontetic-ontological structure in the horizon of temporality, Sadra also considers the self as a being absorbed in-the-Being itself, that is as a being-presence-before-Being who has an ontetic structure; and this implies the self to be in the world as a factual, live, vital and performative reality rather than as an abstract, transcendental (in Kantian, Husserlian sense) or epistemological presupposition as we may see in the modern subjectivistic philosophy. For Sadra, as for the existential phenomenologists, the self is already a being whose 'facticity' is a pure need to supply his perfection; and this implies the self to be already involved in the order of being before falling in the order of concept. The self is absorbed and immersed in Being through which the self journeys to discover its mysterious land. To be so is, for Sadra as for Heidegger, to be present: present before Being (in-the-world for Heidegger) which implies its present for itself. To this implication Sadra applies a special name: the unitary consciousness which will concerns us from the next section onward. Instead we would now turn here to Sadraean notion of absorption, i. e., the presence before (or in) Being to depict its meaning a bit more in connection with the emanative aspect of the reality of the self.

Through his detailed discussions on existential possibility and the analogy between the prepositional sense and the reality of the emanative being, Sadra arrives at a position of understanding how to situate the self as present before Being. As already hinted, he uses the words "absorption" and "immersion" to indicate this peculiar situation of the self. When the whole reality of the self as an emanative being is nothing but an existential possibility in the sense of prepositional dependency, the state of "absorption" or "immersion" in Being does not seem odd, or, to use a stronger word, inconceivable for Sadra. The prepositional dependency which indicates

“hanging on,” and being “held by,” Being, according to Sadra, implies the self to be absorbed and immersed in Being. Such an absorption is, for Sadra, a fulfilment to be achieved by the self through its ontetic experiences. It is, Sadra holds, the whole existential feature of the self as a pure, emanative existence to be “immersed in” Being. It is its very existence, that is not even possible to think of except in the light of thinking of Being that is the substantive ground for the self’s being.

From a subjectivistic point of view we may of course always think of our selfhood independent of thinking of any principle; and it clearly denies the validity of such an Sadraean analysis of the selfhood as a pure, emanative existence absorbed in Being. This is so, a subjectivist may say, because if it were the case that the self, because of being totally dependent on another, could not even be independently understood and thought of, it would be impossible for us to ever have had the impression of our selfhood on its own. But the fact that we do have the idea of our selfhood on its own counts as sufficient reason for believing that the self is not totally dependent on another in this extreme sense of absorption.

Sadra answers such a point of view on the basis of his thesis of ontetic reduction: this so-called impression of the selfhood is the introspective self which comes into the mind through the conceptualisation and introspection of the factual performative truth of the self. The emanative reality of the self rather is the performative one which talks, feels, thinks, wishes, judges, decides, and has sensation, imagination, and intellection, and is acquainted with all these acts and powers of its apprehension. The performative self is that which always acts and perceives and is never acted upon, or perceived, by itself or by another, except through conceptualisation. Everyone can, by way of introspection, conceptualise the factual reality of his own selfhood as well as those of others. Despite this understanding, it should not be maintained that our impression of the self is the very reality of the self or even a real and truthful representation of it.

The analogy already drawn between the reality of the self as an emanative existence and the objective reference of prepositional phrases, may be helpful here and make this point somewhat clearer: If we make a pedagogical statement by saying, for example, “‘by another’ is a prepositional phrase,” the phrase “by another”, as the subject matter of this particular statement, is not really being used with its proper prepositional nature. This is not a substitution instance of a preposition at all; and, for that matter, it cannot be a true representation of the objective reality of “by another.”

Rather, it is a merely reflective conceptualisation of that reality which we speak of in the factual circumstances of our ordinary language. But if I say, in a normal instance, that "I am sitting by the window," or "the self is dependent on Being," I have truly used these prepositions with their own objective meanings. This is because their reality is illustrated by given examples instead of by generalisation and conceptualisation.

If an emanative being, such as the self, is expressible only in terms of a prepositional phrase, e. g., "by" or "on" and so on, its reality, too, like any other preposition, Sadra argues, it will not be understandable unless it is absorbed into the meaning of Being. As we have just seen, an introspection and representation of a prepositional phrase are a complete distortion and, in a way, a falsification of the objective truth of such a linguistic entity. Likewise, Sadra maintains, an introspection of the self is an illusory representation of its existential reality, and cannot be taken as its true representation. In Illuminative language, the word "illusory" is frequently used to signify this, that is, to conceptualise and interpret the unitary truth of a reality which can never truly and exactly be represented.

Though it will later be discussed in detail, it is however worth noting here that the Illuminative philosophy denies that the self can ever know itself, and still less be known by others, through representation. Thus the independent impression that we may have from the selfhood of ourselves can never characterise the truth value of the reality of the self as it exists in another. This reality, as we will see, can only be apprehended through the unitary consciousness (see next chapter).

Now we may draw Sadraean thesis on the second issue we mentioned above (see last parag. of sec. 3. 4) as to how the Sadraean interpretation of possibility provides the self with a special presence to identify its reality through being absorbed in Being. Since the reality of the self is nothing but a prepositional being, that is, an existential possibility which is a 'pure need', the self then is hanging on Being which is eternal necessity and absolute perfection. That is to say, the self, the reality of which is more or less analogous to the sense of a connective or preposition, cannot be thought of accurately as distinguished from Being which is the principle of its being. Such as it is, this existential reality of pure dependence upon Being gives rise to the notion of a kind of existential "absorption." This means that the reality of the self as an emanative entity is to be known as something "over-absorbed" in Being. As Sadra analysed, this Illuminative sense of absorption is, therefore, directly derived from the existential

meaning of the prepositional truth of emanation, namely, “dependence on”, “issuing from,” “held by,” and so on. However, Sadra maintains that the self stands out -- in a Heideggerian term -- among beings due to its presence before/in Being; that is, the self absorbed in Being can *experience* its emanative being so that through its everydayness it can catch its reality in an absolutely mystically ontetic apprehension called “the unitary consciousness”.⁽⁹⁾

Therefore, absorption in being, which is presence in/before Being, as ultimately understood by Sadra, is a living, performative, non-reflective and ontetic experience which in its high form shapes the mystical apprehensions and in its ordinary form shapes our commonsensical experiences and inspirations throughout our everydayness life. This current experience of Being, or as we called it ‘the unitary consciousness’, that the self possesses by its absorption in Being (or, to borrow Heidegger’s phrase, by its being-in-the-world), builds up the factual reality of the self as a being-toward-perfection (*al wujud al talib li al kamal*):

“Through going ahead toward perfection, the self become unitary, then this unitary is practical (factual) and is consciousness.”⁽¹⁰⁾

Sadraean ‘self’ then like Heideggerian ‘Dasein’ and Sartrean ‘for-itself’ is continually in the process of realising its existential potentialities. It is for Sadra the authentic root of all that we have, do and know,⁽¹¹⁾ and since Sadra maintains that absorption is experience of the very emanative being the self is, then it can easily be seen that this experience, i.e., the unitary consciousness is identified with the being of the self. Not only this, since the emanative reality of the self can only be grasped in this unitary consciousness, then the unitary consciousness, it can be concluded, is the being of the self. In this relation Sadra clearly writes that this consciousness:

“is neither a negation nor a relation; rather it is existence; however, not any sort of existence. It is an actual special being which is pure [i.e., non-oidetic].”⁽¹²⁾

He ultimately says that we can not logically define this consciousness, just as we can not define our special ‘being’. We only grasp it in our living experience of Being,⁽¹³⁾ because as we will see (Ch. 5), there is no representation of this consciousness.⁽¹⁴⁾ However, it does not deprive us to reflectively assign an essence to it and think of it. This reflective thinking of it, however, can not show its reality to us,

because, as we will see later (Ch.7), such a thinking itself is grounded by that existential consciousness.⁽¹⁵⁾

4. 4. *The Unitary Consciousness :*

In last paragraph of the previous section we referred to the unitary consciousness with which we would be concerned from now on speaking of the self as this existential consciousness. This is because, as we mentioned in that paragraph, any seeming separation of the unitary consciousness from the self is simply rejected: the Illuminative school does not believe that in the order of being there is an interruption between the self and the unitary consciousness.⁽¹⁶⁾ In this respect Sadra writes:

“Every body who is conscious of himself necessarily is that consciousness of himself and this consciousness is currently continually the self for ever.”⁽¹⁷⁾

And after trying to demonstrate this thesis, he concludes that the reality of the self is “its existence, and its consciousness of its individual (*Shakhsi*) existence is realised only by presence of this existence.”⁽¹⁸⁾

The self and the unitary consciousness are separating from each other only metaphorically, as when we introduce the notion of the self ‘behind’ such a consciousness.⁽¹⁹⁾ The unitary consciousness which is a factual experience of and an ontetic presence before Being constitutes the being of the self; in other words, it is the self simply because it is, indeed, the experience of no-self (self in its subjectivistic sense) or, to use a mystical term, of “emptiness” (*fana*).⁽²⁰⁾

In such a discussion Sadra may again be regarded as a forerunner of existential phenomenologists in rejection of the subjectivistic notion of consciousness and the transcendental self.⁽²¹⁾ Just as in Heidegger and Sartre,⁽²²⁾ we already found in Sadra that both notions of ‘consciousness’ and ‘self’ fell with the denial of the transcendental subject, or as we found in Kant, Hegel, and Husserl (all after Descartes), the affirmation of the *Cogito* was at the same time an affirmation of both the existence of consciousness and the self. A comparison between Sadra and Sartre here may make the case clearer.⁽²³⁾ Sartre, in particular, takes the existence of consciousness as his beginning. His denial of the transcendental self is not a denial of consciousness or existential self which as Sadra he seems to identify as ‘for-itself’.

This consciousness seems to be for Sartre as for Sadra existential and an openly performative practical experience. For both of them, the acts of consciousness provide us with a describable starting point; there are no acts of an 'underlying' or transcendental self. Consciousness is analysed not as a knowing consciousness or as a primarily reflecting consciousness, but rather as an active, 'living' consciousness. While Sadraean thesis rejects Descartes', Kant's, and Husserl's theory which takes thinking and knowing as the essential conscious acts, it somehow agrees with the Sartrean position that consciousness is first of all a perceiving, feeling, mobile consciousness. Consciousness is first of all a practical, a 'non-reflective' consciousness. As already indicated, the unitary consciousness is, according to Sadra 'ontetic', meaning that it is existentially primordially a factual lived experience. In a more or less same manner, we may see a similar tone in Heidegger and Sartre. For Heidegger and Sartre practical or 'ontic' acts are more 'primitive' or 'original' than acts of 'ontological' cognition. In Sadra, this insistence on precognitive intensional performative experience, i.e., the unitary consciousness is carried through consistently and persuasively; in his analysis, the traditional dualisms between mind and body, subject and object are discarded in favour of the notion of being-present-in/before-Being -- a notion which sounds like the Heideggerian conception of "being-in-the-world".

In the light of the above remark, it may easily be seen that the "intentionality" which is the crucially central keystone in Husserlian eidetic consciousness finds no room in Sadraean ontetic unitary consciousness simply because the latter belongs to the order of being in which the unitary consciousness, the experience of Being, genetically existentially acts, not intentionally that bears a subjectivistic tone. True, intentionality belongs to the eidetic field (with Husserl); it is the essence of reflection. In the ontetic field, 'intentionality', if has any meaning for Sadra at all, should be, in agreement with Sartre, stripped of its Husserlian heavily cognitive connotations and becomes equivalent to the concept of 'mobility'. The self, according to Sadra, is conscious, not of his being, but through his being. This is why he says that the unitary consciousness is an existential building up of the being of the self; a continually continual process of going ahead toward perfection (*sayrurat ila al kamal*). The paradigm of an intentional act, then, in agreement with Sartre, is not "I think" or "I know," but "I can."

However, like Sartre who believes that the existential consciousness is dependent by its nature,⁽²⁴⁾ Sadra also goes on, as already seen, to say that consciousness is absolutely nothing apart from its source, i. e., Being, and it always remains dependent, 'unfulfilled', and 'incomplete' (in Sartre's word: "decompression of Being"). This leads Sadra to maintain, with Heidegger and Sartre (and perhaps Post-Heideggerians like Rorty, Derrida and Foucault),⁽²⁵⁾ that the existential consciousness can have no 'contents'⁽²⁶⁾ and can have no independent existence, no existence apart from Being. It would further follow that there can be no intelligible thesis of idealism, which relies on its dependency. With this analysis, the traditional notion of subject (in Cartesian-Husserlian sense) is altered radically. There is no subject or self 'in' or 'behind' consciousness; the self, as already hinted, is simply the unitary consciousness itself. Self is not relative to experience as we may see in subjectivistic approaches; rather it is this experience. Consciousness, being an existential experience, is no longer the subject in Kant's meaning of the term, it is subjectivity itself or in Sartre's words, the immanence of self in self.

There is further room here to compare Sadra with Sartre. As often mentioned, the unitary consciousness should be regarded as an existential experience. We would underline the word 'experience' here. The word 'experience' here indicates, for Sadra, a creative relation to Being which puts the self in absorption. Therefore, it does not mean, in a superficial positivistic sense, the scientific experience. Rather, it is a purely existential experience for Sadra. Such an experience, according to Sadra, is the hermeneutic content of mysticism (*irfan*). However, since it is the being of the self, we, even being non-mystics, also live with a special degree of such an experience. It is root of all aspects of our acts. Now if we take the word 'perception' in its existential sense as seemingly used so by Sartre and the existential phenomenologists like Merleau-Ponty who maintain that phenomenology is initially an investigation of perception, we may, then, find more similarity here. In a similar manner, Sadraean 'experience' and Sartrian 'perception' need not be analysed as a primarily cognitive notion (as we find in Husserl). Such an existential experience and perception may be viewed more broadly as the general relations of consciousness and Being or as the original relation of consciousness to being. Accordingly both Sartre and Sadra take such an existential perception and experience as the nature of consciousness. For both Sadra and Sartre such an experience and perception are to be analysed as 'primitive'. In this case, both also begin with the doctrine that the existence of consciousness itself

is known simply by virtue of its existence. What Sartre and Sadra concur in on this latter doctrine is that self-knowledge (in its subjectivistic sense) is not the defining characteristic of the existential consciousness, for it ignores the 'non-reflective consciousness' or 'preconscious intentionality'. It may be said from this perspective that Cartesian *Cogito* is true and necessary only on a reflective, articulate 'level' of that existential experience or perception. The definition of "consciousness" thus focuses on this -- that is, its always being existentially an experience inside Being. According to these authors, consciousness, it seems, is this existentially factual experience; it is not an object itself or an object for itself. Sadra determined this by insisting that the truth of this experience can never be accessible for reflective thought; then it is, to use a mystical term, 'empty' for reflective thought. Sartre also points out that this consciousness is 'nothing'.

As we have already seen (above, 2. 5), the Sadraean thesis of ontetic reduction provides him with another idiom which we can call "ontetic touch", and by which he was able to say that the emanative self in his process of experiencing Being is at home with the reality of beings and can then catch their existential truths. One can say, on this perspective, that Sadra may have maintained that the existential experience of the unitary consciousness has a twofold task: to be the experience of its very being as well as of beings at the same time. Though the unitary consciousness is by its emanative nature as a self, in Sadra's term, being-for-the other (i.e., for Being which is in-itself), that is, it has no independent being apart from its prepositional, hangingful being, however, the unitary consciousness is "being-for-itself" (*wujud li nafseh*)⁽²⁷⁾ in the sense that it is presence-in/before-Being and experiences both its being and the other being with which it is in an ontetic touch. If so, we may see a similarity in Sartre: Though the twofold task of Sadraean unitary consciousness may seem different in nature from Sartrean task of consciousness, some similarities may, however, come in force here. Sartre arrives at a distinction between two very different kinds of Being: the being of objects for consciousness (beings-in-themselves) and the being of consciousness (being-for-itself). Consciousness is dependent, for Sartre, on its objects just as for Sadra on Being for its own existence. To avoid any postulation of consciousness as an object of some sort distinct from its objects, Sartre introduces a convention of parenthesising the (of) in the expression "consciousness (of)". "This locution is similar to Sadra's characterisation of "being present in/before Being" (or in Heideggerian term "being-in-the-world") In both cases, the point of the linguistic

innovation is to prevent us from separating different components of the expression, specifically, from attempting to logically distinguish consciousness (or the emanative self) from its objects (Being). "Consciousness (of) objects" is thus to be taken as a primitive for Sartre just as presence before Being, the unitary consciousness is a primitive for Sadra. Both expressions carry enormous philosophical thrust, for they are basic rejections of Husserl's basic distinctions between *Cogito* and cogitatio, noetic act and noema, subject and object. On the basis of this characterisation of consciousness as an existential experience or perception, in a more or less similar way, these authors recharacterise the sense in which this existential consciousness which is being-for-itself, is self-knowing (in Sadra's words *ma'refat al-nafs*). The existential consciousness is essentially aware of itself as well as the other beings with which it is, according to Sadra, in an ontetic touch.⁽²⁸⁾ According to both Sadra and Sartre, this is even a necessary 'ontological' (ontetic) feature of consciousness. It is not, then, to be confused with the reflectivity of the Cartesian *Cogito*. There is no self (in subjectivistic sense) in this existential consciousness, and all of this is still non-reflective. The *Cogito* is based on reflective thought-experiment (see Ch. 7). Consciousness can then be characterised as "being-for-itself" (in Sadra: *wujud li nafseh*) because its existence consists in its dependency on objects (Being for Sadra), its non-reflective knowledge of its own dependency on objects, and the possibility of explicit recognition of itself in the Cartesian *Cogito*.

Much of the characterisation of being-for-itself (*wujud li nafseh*), however, must be made in contrast to Being-in-itself (*wujud fi dhateh*). The key to the distinction between the two kinds of being is, says Sadra in a Sartrean tone, the centrally important recognition that Being-for-itself can never be dependent on any thing except itself; that is to say, its being comes from within itself not from without; in Heideggerian words it is groundless; rather it is the ground of beings (see above, sec. 3. 2, 3. 3). Whereas the being-for the other, the emanative self as the unitary consciousness, is absolutely dependent on Being (objects for Sartre).

Though the above comparison shows the similarities between Sartre and Sadra, it must not however be taken that the aim and nature of their discussion are simply one and the same. While Sadra intends to catch a theory to cover all implicit, tacit knowledge (*ma'refah*) from a commonsensical everydayness to the higher mystical apprehension, from the naive sensual intuition to a huge invisible kernel, Sartre avoids any involvement in invisible field and mystical apprehension. Moreover, while Sadra

following the Illuminative mystics in suggesting the unitary consciousness as an existentially current experience, he avoids any subjectivistic idiom in this particular case (when for example he speaks of the experience of non-self (*fana al-dhat*) considering it as "emptiness" (*'adam*), Sartre who strains to follow Husserl in his analysis of consciousness, constantly falls back into traditional subject-object language; this may easily be seen in his division of consciousness in two kinds one of which is the object for the other. Although he intends to support Heidegger in his rejection of Cartesianism, the dualism between consciousness and one's own body is never rejected, even though he insists that one's body is not simply "another object." In spite of his rejection of Husserl's transcendental ego and his *epoche*, Sartre seems not to succeed in getting rid himself of those Cartesian elements which he most needs to reject according to his own methodology.

In this context, it may be interesting to point out here that one can also find, with some reservations, a support relevant for the Sadraean notion of unitary consciousness in Wittgenstein's philosophy. Of course, Sadra and Wittgenstein belong to two different traditions of philosophy. Our aim is not here to deny this fact. However, despite of the differences in intention, method and philosophical attitude, there seems to be a similarity on the nature of human consciousness. This similarity is hidden in their approaches (though completely different in method and aims) to consciousness as a "particular current experience". As yet, to some extent, we have seen this ideal in Sadra. Let us find briefly its relevant in Wittgenstein.

Wittgenstein has referred to a double consciousness⁽²⁹⁾ that stands close to Sartrean theory of consciousness of which we have already spoken. The relevance that we would mention here between Sadra's and Wittgenstein's approaches to consciousness can be found (as in Sartre's) in the deeper level of this double consciousness which is fundamental. Early Wittgenstein seems to consider this deeper level of consciousness as identified with life and life with reality. In this stage, consciousness means for him "my current experience,"⁽³⁰⁾ while holding that "all that is real is the experience of the present moment."⁽³¹⁾ Although he criticised himself for his solipsistic approach⁽³²⁾ to this profound idea, Wittgenstein turns later to deeper understanding of this idea which is somehow close to Sadra's Illuminative position. Rejecting the dichotomy of subject-object (inner-outer) "which has dominated philosophy since Descartes"⁽³³⁾, he critically points out that

“the picture is something like this: Though the ether is filled with vibrations the world is dark. But one day man opens his seeing eye, and there is light”⁽³⁴⁾

Wittgenstein conceived ‘consciousness’ “as the ray of light which illuminates our private mental episodes.”⁽³⁵⁾ Then, it is misleading to look for the essence of consciousness “through turning one’s attention towards one’s own attention. What is needed is an investigation of how the word ‘consciousness’ and its changes are used. Such an investigation reveals that consciousness does not refer to a phenomenon occurring inside us. The alleged ontological split between the physical world and the world of consciousness is merely a categorical difference drawn in our language.”⁽³⁶⁾

Perhaps it is right to say that Wittgenstein, through his analysis of language and its relation to “thought” ends up in a practical interpretation of ‘consciousness’ which remains faithful to his early idea of “current experience”: I am not claiming to have knowledge (in its reflective sense) when I say “I am sitting in a chair,”⁽³⁷⁾ because I am actually aware of this, at the time that I am sitting. There is only a current experience in which “the ego is not an object”.⁽³⁸⁾ Wittgenstein clarified this position more in his analysis of, e.g., seeing and pain.⁽³⁹⁾

As we may see, the Wittgensteinian approach to “consciousness” sounds somehow in Sadraean tone: This can be found in the emphasis on consciousness as “current experience,” as “light,” as well as practical, living “activity.” Though it is the case, one point should, however, be noticed here. Wittgenstein achieved the above-mentioned idea of consciousness through his analysis of language which is the anchor of his philosophy; while Sadra, as we have seen, grasped that idea through the ontetic reduction in which the notion of Being is the anchor.

One interesting similarity between Sadra and Wittgenstein is the application of this notion of consciousness. As we know, one serious problem in philosophy is our relation with each other in the sense that if there is an “I”, how does he contribute to the other “I.” Phenomenology suggested here the well-known plan of “intersubjectivity;” which because of its Leibnizian sophisticated tone of harmony between monads, is given up in Heideggerian existentialism. We have seen above, instead, that Sadraean philosophy is able to suggest a practical justification here for the above problem by setting forth the idea of the ontetic touch through which every conscious being (*al-Manvjud al-'Aqel*) can grasp the reality of the others.⁽⁴⁰⁾ In this stage, as we already hinted, there is only an ontetic presence, a unitary consciousness

which experiences being of the others. Wittgenstein justified our connection with each other through our common using and employing the language which is a “form of life”. Both “forms of life” and “language” are embodied in acting, and since we are sharing with each other in these items we comprehend each other.

As we see, the similarity between these two answers is hidden in their emphases on practical and applied (rather than a subjectivistic and idealistic) aspect. However, it must be noted that Sadra had not laid upon language as much as Wittgenstein had. Sadra had not Wittgenstein’s narrow theory of language; On contrary, Wittgenstein seems not to have Sadra’s narrow notion of Being and the ontetic reduction. ⁽⁴¹⁾

For the time being, we would like not to go further here in comparing Sadra and Wittgenstein. All we wanted to mention was that there is a similarity (along with all other probable similarities and differences) between them in considering “consciousness” as a current experience, and even as light; and in their emphases on the practical, applied aspect of this consciousness. We will see later some more similarity between the Illuminative philosophy and Wittgenstein. (see Ch. 6)

4. 5. Final Considerations:

Having established that the being of the self is nothing but a prepositional existence with a pure possibility and that it is a reality presented to and absorbed in Being which enables him to say that the self is but a current and continuous existential experience, that is, a unitary consciousness, Sadra moves from this basic achievement towards the other fundamental theories which are of vital interest in Illuminative philosophy, and among which these two old problems concern us here: (a) That the self is a most simple reality. (b) That the question whether or not the self is a substance can be decided if by “substantiality” is meant the practical, but not the theoretical and categorical, negation of being in another. A thing can be a substance if its actual existence proves not to be in another, and if its act does not depend upon another being. ⁽⁴⁴⁾

4. 5. 1. Simplicity:

Dealing with the problem of the absolute simplicity of the self, Sadra relies upon the principle of the above-established identity between the unitary

consciousness and the “being” of the reality of the self. Since, in the domain of the unitary consciousness as thus described, there remains nothing to be pointed to which would be other than “I-ness” (that is my existential experience of the ‘being’ of my ‘self’) the pure reality and the absolute presence is governed by nothing apart from the ontological state of “I-ness.” Were there any element which could be understood as constitutive of genus or differentia other than “I”, and which could be referred to by “it”, Sadra argues, it would give way to the state of “it-ness” and, as a result, cause the entire authority of the performative “I-ness” to collapse. In this case the “I-ness” would become contradictory. Just as there is no possibility for a transition from the state of “I-ness” to that of “it-ness” in the unitary consciousness in the order of being, holds Sadra, so also there is hardly any possibility for suggesting any objective composition of “I-ness” and “it-ness” when the state of “I-ness” is in effect -- that is, when we remain with the unitary consciousness. Thus, to existentially experience the being of my ‘self’ by presence is to rule out any element of not-being myself, which would not be present in myself, and to concentrate instead on the absolute purity of “I-ness” which is wholly present to myself. Since this unitary consciousness remains, at this particular stage, in absolute simplicity, the self also, because of our equation, must remain in the ultimate degree of simplicity. ⁽⁴⁵⁾

As far as the equation of this sort of consciousness with the existential reality of the self is concerned, Sadra takes this position to say that we do constantly know ourselves insofar as we really are in ourselves; that is, insofar as we exist in the world of reality among external beings, not as we “appear,” in the Kantian terms, to ourselves is the form of phenomenal knowledge. The most outstanding feature of the unitary consciousness, according to Sadra, however, is that the immediate objective reality of the self, as it is, is its being known.

4. 5. 2. *Substantiality:*

With regard to the problem of the substantiality of the self, Sadra considers it with clarity and easily decides the issue on the grounds that he supposes that he has already established the proposition of the identity of the being of the self with the unitary consciousness. ⁽⁴⁶⁾

As we know, historically speaking, the problem as to whether the self is a substance or not has been one of the crucial and important issues in any discussion on

the self. Though suggested by Plato, it was however Aristotle who first time formulated the nature of the self as a substance. This word has two senses for Aristotle: In first sense, it means the objective reality of an individual, say, this John who stands here now; In second sense, it means what, when it exists, exists not in another being. Among only five substances in second sense, the self is one in particular. Such an idea which indicated that the self has an independent existence has had a troublesome history. We know how much this idea, enforced by Descartes, has played role in modern subjectivistic philosophy and how many philosophical and theological problems it has raised in modern thought (simply think of self-body relationships in this context and its implications!). Perhaps, it is one of reasons for which modern thinkers such as Foucault, Derrida and Rorty, as we may see, tend to ignore and to give up a term like the self in this sense.⁽⁷⁾

However, dealing with the question whether or not the self is a substance, the Illuminative position is different. It does not give up the notion of the self; meanwhile it forcefully rejects it to be a substance. In Suhrawardian sense, Sadra holds, the self is a light; it is pure being. Here, to rapidly come to his argument, it may be useful to refer again to a distinction Sadra makes between being and essence on which his method of ontetic reduction is applicable (see Ch. 2). Sadra distinguishes being from essence saying that essence is either substance or accident (Aristotle's ten categories). Moving from this distinction, he comes to say if the self is a substance, it must then be an essence. But, applying the ontetic reduction, we have seen that the nature of the self is an emanative being. Then the self can not be a substance. Secondly, substance is defined in terms of independence, meaning that a substance is what has independent existence and its being must not be dependent on the other. This criterion, obviously, does not hold good for Sadraean notion of the self the reality of which, as we have seen, is nothing but dependency and the being of which is merely prepositional. It follows that the self is not, for Sadra, a substance in its official sense. Of course, it is accepted, that in a non-official, then non-essential, sense we may say the self is a substance. This sense based on the existential experience of its being. To understand this Illuminative sense of substantiality of self let us quote Suhrawardi's saying in this respect:

“Substantiality, however, whether considered as a complete essence of the self or given as a negation of a [subsisting] subject or locus for its occurrence, is not something [objectively] independent such that your

reality itself consists of “that” object referred to as an “it”. Assuming “substantiality” to have an unknown meaning, while you constantly know your reality not by anything superadded to that reality known by yourself, this unknown substantiality which is absent from yourself will not count as the whole, nor even as part, of your reality at all. When you have made your careful inquiry into yourself you will find out that what you are made of as “yourself” is nothing but that which knows its own reality. This is your own [performative] “I-ness”. This is the manner in which everyone is to know himself, and which everyone’s [performative] “I-ness” has in common with you.”⁽⁴⁸⁾

In point of fact, this Illuminative sense of the substantiality of the self has been constructed from the two consecutive theorems. The first is the identity of “the unitary consciousness” and “being” of the self, and the other is the purity and absolute simplicity of the self and the unitary consciousness, which decisively and actively excludes any element of “otherness” from itself. That is to say, the self as unitary consciousness ever experiences itself as “I-ness” and never as “It-ness” in this stage. Once these two premises have been accepted, the conclusion obviously follows that the self has a form of reality which does not imply any sense of “otherness.” This is the meaning of the independent reality for which Suhrawardi’s Illuminative terminology of “substantiality” stands.

The remaining part of Suhrawardi’s text is intended to re-establish a warranted and straight-forward version of “substantiality,” and disentangle this notion from the classical approaches to the controversial distinction between the category of substance and that of accidents. In doing so, Suhrawardi offers his own definition of “substantiality,” a definition that he tries to articulate in the light of his inquiry into the factual circumstances of performative “I-ness” on the one hand, and the commonly understood meaning of the word “substance” on the other. Far from being a priori and dogmatic, his definition is characterised by the mere negative import of “substantiality,” namely, “not being in another,” and by being based only upon the information yielded by the performative unitary consciousness itself, regardless of all metaphysical discourse concerning the issue.

When he suggests that, supposing that the self has an unknown essence, be it substance or accident, such an essence can constitute neither the whole nor part of the reality of the self, he means that we should not concern ourselves with these controversial problems which are not warranted by the factual reality of “I-ness.” All we can do, Suhrawardi suggests, is to make a careful inquiry into our performative,

and not conceptual, “I-ness” to find out what their reality consists of. Of course, by “inquiry” he means an inquiry into the awareness of ourselves and into what we are aware of by the unitary consciousness. As soon as the result of this turns out to be nothing more nor less than the unadulterated reality of “I-ness,” there is no reason whatsoever why we should inflict the reality of this “I-ness” with an “it-ness,” even if such an irresponsible infliction were not to prove to be contradictory.

In conclusion, on the basis of this Illuminative theory that the performative unitary consciousness of “I-ness” is exactly what the reality of “I-ness” is in truth, together with the simplicity of the nature of this consciousness, a negative sense of “substantiality” can evidently be established. This negative sense alone is able to describe the reality of the self as a form of “being” which, while simply and performatively is, does not exist in another.⁽⁴⁹⁾ Now if the category of “substance” as such can undergo this reduction and simplification and be reinstated in this negative version without calling for a positive, unknown essence, Suhrawardi may arrive at the conclusion that the existence of the self proves to be a substance revealed to us in this illuminated and non-official sense.⁽⁵⁰⁾

By now, we discussed the ontetic structure of the self in Sadra’s Illuminative philosophy explaining that (i) the reality of the self is a special kind of being; and (ii) this kind of being is in a current process of existential experience of Being, a process which indicates in this regard that the being of the self is a unitary consciousness through which the self grasps the reality of beings by an ontetic touch. In the next chapter we will consider the most important characteristics of this unitary consciousness in more detail.

CHAPTER FIVE

Characteristics Of The Unitary Consciousness

In the preceding chapter we have seen the ontological aspect of the Illuminative doctrine expressing that the nature of self is but a unitary consciousness identified by its 'being'. Hereafter, through the following chapters, we would find out the basic epistemological implications of this doctrine. In this chapter, we would preferably consider some of the main epistemological characteristics of the unitary consciousness which would helpfully make clearer this Illuminative notion.

5. 1. *The unitary Consciousness Is Self-objective*

In the previous chapter when we have been discussing the Illuminative theory of the 'being' of the self we mentioned that from the Illuminative standpoint the self is ultimately but a unitary consciousness so far as it is an existential experience of the being of the self. This unitary consciousness is, therefore, marked by the intrinsic characteristic of "self objectivity". Self-objectivity is the chief characteristic of the unitary consciousness. Sadra says:

"It is concluded that in this kind of consciousness (*'ilm*) what . . . really exist in itself is one and the same. "(1)

This is because the essential nature of the unitary consciousness, as already discussed, is that the reality of this existential consciousness and that of the self are existentially one and the same. In other words, since the emanative (which grounds the 'being' of the self) and absorbed (which grounds the unitary consciousness) dimensions of the self are two expression of one and the same truth (that is, the self), then, from this Illuminative standpoint, there is no object (in the ordinary, subjectivistic sense) in experiencing the being of the self; that is because there is no duality in this stage at all, no room there for speaking of object or subject; there is only a unitary consciousness that is the being of the self. Then the unitary consciousness is self-objective in the sense that there is really no object, no subject. The term "objective" here should not be understood in its subjectivistic sense, rather,

for the Illuminative standpoint, it indicates that the self “realises” (somehow in a Hegelian sense) itself because it is actually pure existence.

Taking the hypothesis of self-awareness as an example, the Illuminative school posits that the self must be absolutely aware of itself without the interposition of a representation. Any representation of the self, empirical or transcendental, necessarily renders the hypothesis of self-awareness contradictory. It is rather by the very presence of the sheer reality of the self that the self is utterly aware of itself. This train of positing leads, in Illuminative eyes, to the very notion of the self-objectivity of the unitary consciousness. “Self-objectivity” then is the chief characteristic of the unitary consciousness through which it has to be distinguished from any other species of human knowledge. Self-objectivity means that the unitary consciousness has no object in its technical sense.

The unitary consciousness, according to this school, has all its relations within the framework of itself, so that the whole anatomy of the notion can hold true without any implication of supposing an objective reference (in the subjectivistic sense) calling for an exterior relation. That is, the relation of knowing is, in that form of the unitary consciousness, a self-object relation without the intrusion of a connection with an object. By this, to be sure, the illuminationists would not understand an abstract, idealistic or solipsistic sense of the unitary consciousness isolated from the world of reality; Rather, they maintain that this self-objectivity indicates an anti-idealistic and anti-solipsistic position. As we have seen, this consciousness is an existentially performatively current experience of Being. Occurred in a lived context of existence, this experience, they say, is far from being abstract or solipsistic. On contrary, it is a living experience of ‘my’ being as well as the other beings with which it is in an ontetic touch. Being self-objective means for the unitary consciousness a currently realising its existence in the line of going ahead toward its perfection. Thus understood, it seems, self-objectivity is the other version of identity of the unitary consciousness and the ‘being’ of the self.

5. 2. The Unitary Consciousness Cannot Be Erroneous

One of the main characteristics of the unitary consciousness is its freedom from the dualism of truth and falsehood. This characteristic must be understood on the basis of two principles in the Illuminative philosophy:

a) Principle of primordially and unity of Being as such: since Being as such, Sadra says in a Heideggerian tone, is existentially really unique truth; and that the unitary consciousness is a manifested mode of that Being, it is then concluded that the unitary consciousness is true. Its truth however is existential, not logical (in technical sense); ontological not epistemological. If so, it is not then subject to the logical dichotomy of truth-falsehood.

b) That this dichotomy can be supposed where there is an object. Now, as we are said, in the case of the unitary consciousness we have neither object, nor subject, then this dichotomy is not eligible to apply here. In other words, the unitary consciousness is not subject to this dichotomy because its nature is not concerned with the notions of "reflection" or "correspondence" and the like. When there is no object, correspondence between the subject and object, the internal and external states, and so also between "external fact" and "statement" makes no sense; simply because such dualisms belong to the order of concept and not that of being -- i. e., to the eidetic field not to the ontetic field. Thus, while in the order of concept and the eidetic field, it is the case that the principle of "correspondence" has been widely accepted as the criterion for truth or falsity in a statement about an external object, and while it is also the case that this principle has been set up as the standard for the examination of truth or error in, as Russell puts it, knowledge of truth,⁽²⁾ such a principle cannot, and is not required to be involved in the case of the unitary consciousness -- especially if we remind ourselves of its self-objectivity.

Since the dichotomy of truth and falsity, in Illuminative philosophy, supposed to depend upon the correspondence relation in the first instance between subject and object, between the mental object and the external object, and in the second instance between a statement and its external reference, there is no application for such a dualism in the unitary consciousness. If there is no correspondence (since no object in subjectivistic sense), then there is no meaning for reflective knowledge; no meaning for reflective knowledge, then no meaning for a statement about this knowledge; no meaning for a statement about an external physical object, then no meaning for the truth or falsity of such a statement. Consequently, the unitary consciousness is not prone to the logical dualism of truth and falsity. ⁽³⁾

5. 3. *The Unitary Consciousness Is Not The Phenomenal Act Of Mind:*

One of the characteristics of the unitary consciousness underlined by the Illuminative philosophy is that the unitary consciousness is not my phenomenal acts, whether sense-perceptions, or psychological states of mind. It is because the unitary consciousness, as we have already said, is 'my' existence so far as I existentially experience it; and it is the unique context for phenomenal acts, perception as well as psychological state of mind. In fact, Sadra says that it is the unitary consciousness that creates them; it is their upsurge.⁽⁴⁾ They are various aspects of the unitary consciousness but the unitary consciousness can not be identified by only one of them, just as it can not be identified by a collection of them. The unitary consciousness is them and more than them; simply because it is the 'being' of the self.⁽⁵⁾

Such understood, the above characteristic of the unitary consciousness seems to put it, if not opposite to, behind and in the ground of the Cartesian *Cogito*, Husserlian constituting (eidetic) consciousness as well as the Humean psychological 'I'.

After being troubled by his famous methodological skepticism, Descartes arrived at a point where he found himself no longer susceptible to doubt. Focusing on his indubitable principle, "*Cogito*," Descartes said: I am really doubting; whatever else may be doubtful, the fact that 'I doubt' is indubitable. The certainty of the existence of *my* doubt leads me up to the certainty of the existence of *myself*. Descartes, therefore, managed to establish the consciousness of his selfhood through his self certainty of the state of doubting. In other words, he brought one phenomenal act of his mind to account for the truth of the existence of his personal identity. Also Husserl who regards himself "as Cartesian Meditator,"⁽⁶⁾ applies *epoche* "in order to regain it by a [reflective] universal self-examination"⁽⁷⁾ in which the self "is accessible".⁽⁸⁾

Sadra appears to take issue with Descartes and Husserl on their reflective position. Starting with our particular sense-perceptions Sadra argues:

"No particular sense-perception or phenomenal state of mind, even though in the form 'I', can ever bear witness to the truth value of the existence of myself. This is because any phenomenal event which I attribute to myself, such as my feeling cold or warmth, or pain etc., must be, and is presupposed by an underlying awareness of myself. With this underlying awareness can I appropriate cold, warmth, pain, pleasure, etc., to myself. If I suffer from severe cold weather, or escape from the flame of a burning fire, it is only because I already am

aware of something which, in one way or another, belongs to myself. This is true in doubting, thinking, believing, etc. Thought, doubt, or belief, in general, can never be appropriated to myself, nor can they be a subsisting phenomena in myself. But as particularly applied to myself possessed by myself in terms of my own thought, doubt, or belief, it involves the underlying awareness of myself. This is the case no matter how the reality of the self is to be understood, and how the problem of identity is to be handled by philosophy. ⁽⁹⁾

The unitary consciousness, our awareness of ourselves, is not reflective at all. It is because, in Suhrawardi's words:

"Anyone who has a reality of which he is never oblivious is not obscure. This is so because of the clarity and apparentness of his reality to his reality to himself. He is not a mode of darkness inherent in another thing, for even a mode of light cannot be light in itself let alone that of darkness. Therefore, he is an immaculate purity of light that cannot be located by physical indication."⁽¹⁰⁾

This knowledge (*'ilm*), the unitary consciousness, is identical with the very reality of the self, and the reality of the self with pure light ; therefore the reality of the self is pure light and that than which nothing more apparent can be apprehended.

It is also refuted by Sadra that the unitary consciousness can be identified by my actions as suggested, we may see, by Hume and early Husserl.⁽¹¹⁾ In this respect Sadra writes:

"Were it the case that I, through my own action, whether it is intellectual or physical could become aware of myself, it be as if I should bring forth from myself evidence to bear witness to myself. It would obviously be a vicious circle in which the knowledge of my action functions as a cause of my knowledge of myself which is itself already implied in, and serves as the cause of the knowledge of my own action. ⁽¹²⁾

The reason that an illuminationist like Sadra keeps avoiding to take the unitary consciousness as a collection of my phenomenal acts, whether sensual, psychological or mental, or simply of my actions may be clear from their common position in this case: Our actions or phenomenal acts are 'intentional' or reflective; whereas the unitary consciousness basically covers the hidden existential ground of such actions; principally it is an existential experience of no-mind; it entails not only my eidetic consciousness (in the Husserlian sense) but also my non (un)-consciousness (in the Freudian sense). It is 'my' existence and can not be simply a collection of actions or be known somehow through its phenomenal acts.

5. 4. *The Unitary Consciousness Is Non-representative*

Another important characteristic is that the unitary consciousness is non-representative. The unitary consciousness neither achieves itself nor can be achieved by representation. We know how much Kant emphasises the representative consciousness of the self.⁽¹³⁾ In order to establish simultaneously the nature and function of the transcendental, Kant prefers a reflective analysis which makes the transcendental self appear. The reflective analysis basing itself on synthetic judgements, shows that ‘the highest principle of all synthetic judgements is therefore this: every object stands under the necessary conditions of the synthetic unity of the manifold intuition in a possible experience.’⁽¹⁴⁾ These conditions make the transcendental subjectivity appear. The *medium* of synthetic judgements is the whole in which all our representations contained -- i. e., inner sense, whose apriori form is time. And the unity required in judgement rests on the unity of apperception. This unity, which tends to emphasis the “I” of the “I think,” is, at least in the second edition of *Critique*, the keystone of the Kantian system. But we find even in the first edition that all empirical consciousness has a necessary relation to transcendental consciousness “namely, the consciousness of myself as original apperception.”⁽¹⁵⁾ For we are conscious

“of the complete identity of the self in respect of all representations which can ever belong to our knowledge.”⁽¹⁶⁾

It is therefore an absolutely primary principle, that the various empirical consciousness must be linked to one unique consciousness of self. This consciousness is the simple representation: I. Kant adds:

“Whether this representation is clear (empirical consciousness) or obscure, or even wether it ever actually occurs, does not here concern us. But the possibility of the logical form of all knowledge is necessarily conditioned by relation to this apperception as a faculty.”⁽¹⁷⁾

The self is only a “simple representation” concerning which “there is not even a question of reality”. In other words, the “I think” is the unity of consciousness and not the consciousness of a unity; its being is that of a logical, conceptual condition, not

that of *an existential reality*. It founds the reality of experience, but it is not founded upon the experience of a reality.

Considered from the Illuminative standpoint, the problematic of Kantian position lies in his conceptual, reflective analysis of our consciousness of 'self'; such a position, obviously, leads us to ignore the existential reality of the self as well as an experience of such a reality (as we underlined in last paragraph).

Relying on the existential reality of the self and the experience of its reality, on contrary, the Illuminative theory of the unitary consciousness tries to demonstrate that our consciousness of ourselves in its authentic and original state is not representative.

"The fact that our selves apprehend [= the unitary consciousness] the reality of themselves does not imply that that apprehension has come to them by a representation. This is because of the following:

First; the representation that is used which appears in the mind is not exactly the mind as it is in itself. But that which is aware of itself is supposedly aware of what its objective "I-ness" consists of, rather than that with which this objective "I-ness" is in conformity. Any representation taking place in the mind of the knower is in fact something added to his reality which, in comparison with that reality, serves as an "it" and never as an "I".

Secondly, suppose that self-apprehension is by representation. Now every representation existing in the self as an intellect is universal [in the sense that it is not impossible to predicate it of many]. Even if the complete sum of the universals referring altogether to one single individual among others have been gathered together in a unitary complex, it still can not make that representation cease to be universal. But the fact is that everyone's apprehension of his own reality is with such strict individuality that it can have nothing in common with another. Thus one's understanding of one's own individual reality can never be admitted as being by means of any representation at all." (18)

Since the contemporary discussion on the problem of self-consciousness is more or less inspired by Kantian spirit, and mostly often this discussion presupposes his doctrine on the representative 'I', it seems to be of chief importance in this respect to explain and interpret the Illuminative position in more detail here in the light of Suhrawardi's argumentations, followed by Sadra, to clarify more and more the Illuminative position concerning the unitary consciousness and self-awareness.

5. 4. 1. First Argument:

Let us follow Suhrawardi in his first argumentation:

"A thing that exists in itself and is conscious of itself does not know itself through a representation⁽¹⁹⁾ of itself appearing in itself. This is because, if, in knowing one's self, one were to make a representation of oneself, since this representation of his "I-ness" could never be the

reality of that "I-ness," it would be then such that that representation is "it" in relation to the "I-ness," and not "I". Therefore the thing apprehended is the representation. It thus follows that the apprehension of "I-ness" would be exactly what is the apprehension of "it-ness", and that the apprehension of the reality of "I-ness" would be therefore exactly the apprehension of what is not "I-ness." This is an absurdity. On the other hand, this absurdity does not follow in the case of apprehension of external objects, for the representation and that to which that representation belongs are both "it"s."⁽²⁰⁾

Before explaining this argument, three preliminary remarks to be helpfully reminded here.

(A). A first glance at the text informs us that there are at least two necessary conditions to be grasped for the correct understanding of the subject matter we are talking about. (i) That we are here dealing with a thing which is existent "in itself" (*fi nafseh*) though not necessarily "by itself" (*bi nafseh*). That is, the thing must not be a form of being that might, by its nature, be subsistent in something else. (ii) That we should concern ourselves with those things that are supposed to know themselves and can be in one way or another conscious of themselves. These things are not from inanimate beings; rather they are those beings who can take a position that gives a rational justification for their saying: "I do this and that."

(B) As already stated, according to the Illuminative theory, in the process of knowing, in general, there is an "agent" standing for the performative "I" which is established by its very nature of authority to act, not to be acted upon. This "standing for" is just for the subject "I", and nothing other than "I" can ever participate in this private incontrovertible rank of being. This state of authority is to be called "I-ness." "I-ness" therefore is the kingdom of the authority of the subject which perfectly satisfies the above two conditions. This is because, as it stands, the "I" is "in itself" in the sense that whenever it expresses itself in any form of statement such as "I . . .", it means neither more nor less than "I myself . . ." as an active subject. Contrary to Heidegger and Sartre who maintain the public source of the 'I', the Illuminative position does not imply that "I am in, or, with another". The 'I' is also conscious of itself, because as soon as "I" has been expressed by itself it is understood that the "I" knows itself, whether that expression is direct, "I know myself," or indirect, "I know something" or "I do something," etc., which presupposes that "I know myself." There is, on the other hand, another sense of "stand for" which is opposite to this "I-ness" and which is peculiar to what can be truly called "another." Whatever this "another"



may be, whether “he,” “she,” or simply “it,” it cannot participate in the authoritative kingdom of I-ness. This sort of “another” must then be fitted in its appropriate class, viz. “it-ness”. We might well call this Illuminative thesis the “I-it” relationship. This relationship (that is actually between the ‘I’ as my primordial state , and the representation of the same ‘I’) is considered in the Illuminative philosophy as a transferring from the order of being to the order of thought and , as we will see, the nature of this relationship is Illuminative, i. e., existential. (see, Ch. 6)

(C). With regard to all this, the Illuminative authors would say, if I know myself through a representation of myself and not by the very “presence” of the reality of myself, we come up against this question: Is this representation of myself identified with the reality of “I-ness” or does it remain in the state of “it-ness”? Being a representation distinct from the reality of myself, it can never be fitted into the realm of “I-ness,” but ought rather to be placed and kept within the boundaries of “it-ness.” It then follows that the “I-it” dictum can no longer hold true in the case of knowing myself, and this law of knowledge is violated. For in this case, the representational “I” falls into the category of “it-ness” and is no longer within the realm of “I-ness,” and therefore “I” by transforming into “it” becomes “not I” when it should be nothing but “I.”

These are remarked because they are implicitly presupposed in this Illuminative theory . Now let us revert to the Illuminative argument: It might be said that there are apparently two ways in which the fact that one is really conscious of oneself can be proved. One is by knowing something other than one’s self, such as is the case when one expresses one’s knowledge in a statement saying: “I know objects x, y and z.” This means that by attribution to myself I am already aware of myself. The other is by directly knowing one’s self, when one reflects upon one’s self and presents one’s self-knowledge in a statement by saying “I know myself.” In both cases the knowing subject is aware of itself.

Concentrating on this awareness, the Illuminative argument makes the claim that the knowing subject “I” in itself is a complete self-object consciousness, and then raises the question as to what the nature of that implied consciousness may be. In other words, from this standpoint, any “I” clause, whether it is in the form “I know myself” or “I know, or do, such and such,” is analysable into a complete self-object consciousness which can be stated: “I know myself.” Subsequently, the complete judgement, “I know myself,” can be reduced, without any loss of meaning, to the

self-expressing "I" as standing for its own ontetic existential reality of "I-ness." The question then is: what is this consciousness of 'self', or that greatly simplified "I"?

It is supposed by the Illuminative school that in the consciousness of any particular thing, thought, or feeling, there is always a performative agent which "brings about" that particular act of consciousness. The reality of this agent will be called "I", no matter what sort of nature it may be in truth. From a reflective point of view, in the same act of consciousness there is another thing involved which is not the agent, but related to it as that which has been "brought about" by that agent. Reflectively, we suppose a reality for this latter thing as the object that we are conscious of and will be referred to by "it". In the case of our consciousness of self, 'I', we move in this "I-it" relationship. In this manner, Suhrawardi sees that in the unity of consciousness there is always a predominant dialectical process of the nature of an "I and it" opposition which must be carefully observed and must not be violated. That is, in this regard neither is "I" reducible to "it", nor "it" to "I". In the anatomy of this position, "I" and "it" make up a unity of opposition.

On the basis of the "I-ness/it-ness" dictum, Suhrawardi tries to establish his point of argument in the following way. If it were the case that the knowing subject, in order to know itself, objectifies itself, it would set up a phenomenal representation distinct from itself which would be called "it" and not "I." In that case, while, as the law of "I-ness/it-ness" requires, the "I" must remain in its unchangeable subject authority of "I-ness", the "it," being the "self," also falls under this category and becomes united with "I." However, once again, as the law of "I-ness/it-ness" stands, the "it-ness" can never be converted into "I-ness" and becomes totally united with the active reality of "I". Nor can the factual reality of "I" be transubstantiated into the reality of "it." Consequently, Suhrawardi may argue, the "I-ness" and "it-ness" turn out to be both different and identical in the same respect. This is impossible. Let us see how, on the basis of Illuminative approach, they can be different by a sort of opposition, and yet at the same time united in a self-identity, both in the same respect.

They are different, because each of them, on the I-ness/it-ness relation, stands for a different function and a different component of the unity of consciousness. For, while it is true that the "I" never becomes "it" in the unity of consciousness, it is also logically and epistemologically true that the "it" never resigns its own totality to the subject authority of the "I". So it does not become altogether identical with the state of "I-ness" either. In other words, according to the Illuminative position, the relation

of “I-ness” to “it-ness” within the unity of consciousness is considered to be a kind of “correlativity”. The standard property of a relation of this kind is, the Illuminative authors see, that all the related members of the class must be mutually “simultaneous”, in act or in potency. That is to say, they are all supposed to be in the state of equilibrium with regard to act or potency in the sense that if one is in act the other or others must be in act as well, and if one is in potency the rest must be in the same condition too.

The relationship of fatherhood and childhood is of this kind of correlativity. If X is the father of Y at this present time, Y must simultaneously be a child of X at this present time, and vice versa. But if X is the father of Y in the past or future, Y must also simultaneously be a child of X in the past or future, but not in the present, and vice versa.

Putting the “I-ness/it-ness” dictum into this categorical relationship, the Illuminative philosophy argues that, concerning the case of self-consciousness, if we suppose that the “I” is really in act such that the “I” can truly say “I know myself,” its opposite, “it,” must also truly be in act simultaneously to the same degree of certainty. That is, “I know myself” is just another way of saying “I know ‘it’” and because the “I” in this case is in act, the “it” is also simultaneously in act. Conversely, if the “I” is not in act but rather in the state of potency, the “it” also must remain in the state of potency. The conclusion is that in the state of unity of consciousness the difference and opposition between “I-ness” and “it-ness” cannot be eliminated but rather become sharper. They must therefore, by necessity of inter-correlativity and simultaneity, be different, and never be identical.

At the same time, this conclusion does not lead these authors to ignore (as we may feel in the Sartrean position) the identity of “I-ness” and “It-ness”. These two are, in some respect, identical, because the “it” as substituted for “myself” in a self-consciousness statement means nothing but the knowing subject itself, the self for which the “I” has already been designated. By using an equation, we see that the expression “it” in a sentence like “I know it/myself” is equivalent to the object term “myself”, such that it can be substituted for “myself” as the object of my knowledge; and the expression “myself” is also, being a reflexive term of the subject, in a way equivalent to the term “I;” and that therefore the “it” is convertible to the “I” by this formulation: $A = B, B=C, A=C$. Furthermore, if I have the right, according to the Illuminative theory, to believe that “I know myself,” what has, then, been expressed

by "myself" in this statement is nothing other than what is meant by "I". Supposing that the expression "myself" somehow ceases to be identical with "I", the whole of the statement falls short of being in any way meaningful. It means that "I" and "it" are identical here. Thus understood, in a statement such as "I know myself," the "I" and the "it" must be both identical and different at the same time.

This is the absurdity that Suhrawardi is talking about and wishes to attribute to the phenomenalist⁽²¹⁾ theory of self-consciousness in which, it seems, he sees the dramatic setting down of the reality of 'I'. He tries to point out that if it were the case that our consciousness of the truth of our selves is by a phenomenal representation, we would be driven into this flat contradiction. For, the absurdity comes only where there are two opposite and inconvertible terms "I" and "it" involved. They face each other in a state of opposed interrelation, making up together a piece of phenomenal knowledge distinguished from other kinds of knowledge as self-knowledge.

It appears all but obvious that the whole force of the argument is based upon "invariability," or, if one wishes, "inconvertibility," of the state of "I-ness" into "it-ness" and vice versa. Were the "I" in one way or another convertible into "it," there would be two "it"s and a possibility for the two "it"s to be united with each other and judged by the uniting act of the self without contradiction. "I-ness" is therefore the court in which "judgement" is made on "other" things and can never become one of them; it must, at the same time, always remain distant from judgement as "other" things. One can, of course, objectify oneself when one reflects upon oneself by saying: "it" is "I" who know myself. But by objectification it seems to be meant that one can fictitiously treat oneself as an "it" and bring one's judgement of unification upon oneself. But this is an objectified fictitious "self" that has nothing to do with the real performative "self," the knowing subject which is the maker of the judgement, not the object of it. One should notice that by fictitious self the Illuminative school does not unwillingly commit itself to a mystical monistic theory which proclaims that all the plurality of this world is illusory and fictitious. It rather seems to specify that no reflective knowledge of the self can be accounted for by anything but a transformation from the invariable "I", the existential self, to the variable nature of "it." If it were not so, the "I" could no longer be represented at all. Thus, any conception pretending to be a representation of the "I" is fictitious and contradictory. This will then be an "introspective" piece of knowledge which should not be, strictly speaking, called self-consciousness; but grammatically, it is a sort of

judgement about a fictitious self similar to those about others. There is no difference whatsoever between saying "S knows P" and "It is I who know P" or "I am the one who knows P" provided that the "I" in the second, and the "I" in last statement, are convertible into "it." The only difference between the first, on the one hand, and the second and third, on the other, is that the judging subject has not occurred in the first statement but is understood by the act of judgement from the outside, while it has fictitiously occurred in the second and third ones. Since the "I" in such a place as this is necessarily converted into "it", the occurrence of the "I" signifies nothing but "it."

One can however put the absurdity demonstrated by this argument in various ways. These ways may really have been intended by the author himself, but they need to be explicated in order to be completely understood. They are the followings:

(a) If my acquaintance with myself were by a representation instead of the presence of my reality to myself, then my acquaintance with myself would be exactly my acquaintance with what is not myself, viz. with a representation, even though it be a representation of myself. This absurdity proceeds from the "epistemic" feature of the problem which can be clearly understood from his words "the apprehension of the reality of "I-ness" would be, therefore, exactly the apprehension of what is not "I-ness," namely "it-ness.""

(b) Should "I-ness" and "it-ness" ever be identical in the case of self-consciousness, while, as the subject-object relation stood, they functioned distinctly, they would be then both identical and different in one and the same respect. This is, of course, a logical form of absurdity that arises from the violation of the law of the subject-object relation in a proposition.

(c) If the expression "myself" in a statement like "I know myself" means "it" as referring to the representation of myself which is obviously on a par with only 'not myself', then "I know myself" must have the meaning that "I know only not-myself." Now, "I know only not-myself" is just another way of saying "I do not know myself." This would be destructing human communication, should a statement like "I know myself" ever mean that 'I do not know myself.' This absurdity belongs to the linguistic features of the issue.

At the end of this explanation of Suhrawardi's argument, we must remind ourselves of three important points concerning the objective of this argument and its consequences which the illuminative theory suggests us.

(A) For everyone who is, in the manner of his nature, to be acquainted with "himself" in such a way that in the scope of his own acquaintance there remains no logical possibility for anything other than himself, his consciousness of himself is nothing other than the very reality of his self. Anything besides the bare reality of selfness counts as "another" which lies beyond, and is foreign to, the true unitary consciousness of oneself. Thus, there is, so to speak, a typical equivalence and interchangeability between this kind of "consciousness" of the self and the bare reality of the "selfhood" it. In other words, as already discussed, the meaning of the unitary consciousness becomes absolutely equivalent with the meaning of the very "being" of the self. This is the meaning of the self-objectivity of the unitary consciousness. ⁽²²⁾

In these terms, 'my' most private reality is nothing but the individual fact of my existence, for which the word "I" has been designated as a direct reference, not to be used in the manner that an ordinary word is used in its meaning. This sort of "I" can never be converted under any circumstances into "it" or the like. The language game of "I" therefore is radically different from that of anything else expressed by "it." If we call the former "subject language" and the latter "object language," the subject language is that which can never be used and spoken in the object language, because as soon as the subject "I" becomes objectified and has been spoken of in the object language, it has already been converted into "it" and is no longer the "I."

However, one may ask, how we can manipulate such a radical difference between the two languages? One answer to this question may be, if I am not mistaken, the difference between the theory of "meaning" and the theory of "reference." When "I" as a subject term is expressed in a sentence, it is not used to mean the concept of the reality of "I-ness," rather it has been designated to directly refer to the reality of the subject. The subject language is therefore referential to the performative "I", which, by showing itself, makes itself known as a living subject in a self-judgement. The word "I" accordingly functions as an "arrow" pointing to the kingdom of the performative "I" in any self-statement, not as a word used for the meaning and conceptualisation of the self, though it can do so in an introspective self-proposition.

(B) The most significant point that one can conclude from Suhrawardi's argument, as well as from other arguments which the author presents later, is that there is at least one thing such that it is "being-in-itself" in the sense that so far as it is a unitary consciousness, its being does not subsist in another, and such that it is

known to us by virtue of this unitary consciousness. This consciousness, as we have seen, is the existentially current experience of the reality of my "I-ness" which has been proved to be in itself, though not necessarily by itself, and present to itself, in the sense that it cannot possibly be more apparent to itself than simply being in itself.

(C) As we have seen, there is no mention in the above text of much interest in those basic metaphysical and transcendental concepts which generally appear in all the classical kinds of philosophical studies, such as "existence" and "essence", or "substance" and "accident" and so on. Instead, the great emphasis has been laid on the empirical, active "reality" of "I-ness," which, as we have already observed, does not have any connotation connecting it with the controversial problem of the essence-existence distinction. It seems that the main objective of this approach is to consider the truth of the actual reality of the subject which is characterised by the two conditions mentioned above. It does not matter if the kind of subject here under consideration has to be called, in the transcendental language, substance, accident, noumenon, or phenomenon. Nor does it matter if this sense of "reality" later falls under the heading of "existence" or of "essence" when the problem of the essence-existence relation is considered, although, in the end, as we have seen, Suhrawardi, then the Illuminative philosophy, does reach the position that such a projected reality of the self is nothing but a pure existence. This is because, according to his Illuminative principle that the reality of the self sufficiently satisfies all the empirical essentialities of light, and because light also perfectly applies to pure existence in terms of the greatest "apparency," the self can be defined in terms of a pure existence.

None of these three important points is really what draws Suhrawardi's attention at this stage of his investigation. As we have seen (see, above, 3.9.2) the notion of substance in its conventional positive sense does not belong to the absolute simplicity of the reality of "I-ness", neither does it belong to its negative implication which is not to exist in another being. Perhaps substance, as well as other metaphysical concepts, are all, in his opinion, to be understood and considered only after a certain intellectual analysis made by the philosophical mind of the simple reality of the performative, factual "I-ness." Thus in the territorial simplicity of "I-ness" there is no possibility for these manipulated questions such as substance and accident. Indeed it should be admitted that one of the greatest merits of this type of argument is

their careful avoidance of emphasis on any of these delicate metaphysical problems, but instead their examination of the very performative reality of "I-ness."

5.4.2. Second Argument:

Now, let us pass on to the presentation of the next argument:

"Again, assuming that it [i.e., consciousness of 'self'] is by representation, then if one does not know that that representation is one's own, one thus never knows that one has ever known oneself. But if one supposedly knows that the representation belongs to one's self, one must then already have known oneself with no representation. However, it is inconceivable that one apprehends oneself by means of something superadded to one's self, since this superaddition would serve as an attribute to oneself. If this is so, then, one decides that every attribute associated with one's reality, no matter whether it is knowledge or another attribute, belongs to one's own reality, and it then implies that one has known oneself before these attributes and even without them. The conclusion is that one does not know oneself through one's superadded attributes among which is one's representation of oneself."⁽²³⁾

Whereas the first argument was concerned with the logical, epistemic, and semantic function of the state of "I-ness" as opposed to that of "it-ness", this argument seems to deal with the metaphysical distinction between "attributes" and what these attributes we ascribed to, which is prospectively supposed to be the reality of self-ness. Still, there has been no interest shown in what manner this reality should be interpreted, as belonging to the category of substance or accident or some other category.

Although this consideration quite clearly calls for a distinction between attributes and the self to which these attributes are referred, it has been set forth in such a way that even this distinction is to be made by the performative self itself, and not by an outside agent. This is because a judgement from the outside that makes a distinction between attributes and the thing to which these attributes belong treats the self as an object which, being converted into an "it," can easily be analysed into qualities and the thing qualified. This obviously brings us back to the vulnerable classical argument for the subsistence of material substances, an argument with which Suhrawardi does not wish to get involved.⁽²⁴⁾

In other words, this argument must be brought into line with the first so that it may satisfy the two above-mentioned conditions, i.e., that the self under consideration should be something existing in itself, not in another, and that it must have the power to be existentially conscious itself. Given these two conditions, it becomes clear

enough that this argument is concerned only with a self that is speaking, doing or making a judgement of which he or she is conscious. That is because anything other than this performative self could be changed from a unitary conscious 'I' into an inanimate one, which could be referred to by "it." Having made this qualification, there is therefore no possibility of considering this argument among those traditional ones which deal with the distinction between substance and accident on the one hand, and attributes and that which the attributes are predicated of on the other. All these classical arguments spring from the consideration that there is a material substance which acts as a continual, never-changing "it" that holds and unites the variety of accidents in the succession of events.

In the case of a self-knowledge given by representation, the knowing subject ought, beforehand, to have "appropriated" the representation of himself to himself so as to achieve the act of knowing himself by the act of specification. Otherwise, if such an "appropriation" did not take place properly, he would for ever fail to know himself. For a representation which is neither appropriated to himself nor to any other particular person is characterised as universal. A non-appropriate representation is to be held universal because it can legitimately be applied to anyone who may be represented by such a non-appropriated representation. Now, if this were the case, Suhrawardi asks, how could one appropriate the representation of oneself to oneself in all certainty, and be sure that it is one's own representation while one supposedly does not already know oneself without representation? The representation thus helps one to know one's own 'self' if and only if one can specify it and appropriate it to one's 'self' so that one can know one's true self through that appropriated representation. On the other hand, if one cannot properly make this appropriation, one can never succeed in knowing oneself with any degree of certainty, since a non-appropriate representation remains universally open and applicable to a multitude of individuals as its possible objective references. Such an appropriation implies the awareness of the self-knowing subject, not by representation, but rather by presence.⁽²⁵⁾

A counter-example for this argument could be a question like this: In the case of knowing an external object, which undoubtedly exemplifies knowledge by representation, how can one "appropriate" the representation of the object to the object itself, in order to know that specified object, while one does not already know the object without representation? Whatever the solution for knowledge of an external

object by representation turns out to be, it will also be the solution which is proper to knowledge of the self by representation. The Illuminative philosophy's answer to this counter-example is that in the course of knowing an external object, say a table, insofar as we are not able to know that object by presence, we cannot with certainty appropriate its representation to it, at least not exactly as we do in the knowledge of ourselves. This is the reason why our knowledge of the external world must remain in the mode of "probability," or in Sadra's terminology, in the state of "accidentality," and can never be raised to the logical state of necessity or self-certainty. For that matter, our scientific "truth" is always characterised by degrees of probability and verification. But, it is obvious that a necessity and self-certainty is characteristic of our private knowledge of ourselves.

One can put this argument in other way: Assuming, for the sake of argument, that our consciousness of ourselves is, like our reflective knowledge of external objects, by a representation of the reality of ourselves and not by the existential presence of that reality itself, it then follows that this representation must be appropriated and referred to ourselves as its "objective reference." This appropriation cannot be done except by knowing ourselves through another representation appropriated to ourselves as its objective reference. The other representation also requires another appropriate representation, and so on. This will then go on *ad infinitum*. Thus, in knowing myself, either I should not know myself at all, or I should know a range of infinite antecedent representations of myself along with the consequent knowledge of myself at the end. The first alternative is contradictory, while the second is an absurdity of an infinite number of items of knowledge within the limited scope of a single case of self-knowledge in a limited span of time. This is again another form of contradiction, because it requires an infinity in a finite case of knowing. Notice that in both alternatives it is assumed that, by virtue of self-certainty, we do know ourselves in one way or another. That is, in this interpretation an unspecified sense of knowledge is understood through the assumption of the fact that we do know ourselves with all certainty. Taken thus, I cannot know myself by representation at all. However, since I do, with all certainty, know myself, my consciousness of my 'self' must be by presence and not by representation.

"Since you are not absent from your own reality and from your awareness of that reality, and it is not possible that this awareness be by a representation or any superaddition, it thus follows that in this awareness of your reality you need not have anything besides the very

reality of yourself, which is apparent to yourself or, if you wish, not absent from yourself. Consequently, it is necessary that the apprehension of the reality of the self itself is only by itself according to what that self "is" in its being, just as it is necessary that you are never absent from your reality and from whatever your reality may consist of. On the other hand, whatever your reality is absent from, like those organs, viz. , heart, lungs, brain and all intermediate forms and modes, no matter whether they are modes of darkness or of light, is not implied in that constant awareness of your reality. Your constant conscious reality is therefore not a material organ, neither is it an intermediary one. Had your reality consisted of any of these things, you, as the constant and unfading consciousness of yourself, would never become absent from it. ⁽²⁶⁾

Finally, we would remind ourselves here of a point. The preceding arguments proved at least the negative side of the Illuminative thesis; that is, the self cannot be absolutely known through anything accessory to the pure reality of itself, no matter whether this accessory thing is a representation made by itself or any other thing that can be referred to as "it." From this already proved theorem, together with the earlier presupposition that we are in principle concerned and in touch with those beings that are not absent from themselves, two most important conclusions may be derived here, one following upon the other. (i) That the unitary consciousness, the existential experience of the self must necessarily be through the sheer presence of the reality of the self; this is the positive dimension of the thesis discussed in detail in previous chapter. (ii) That whatever is not known through the presence of the pure reality of the self has neither a basic, nor even a partial, part to play in making up the existential constitution of that reality, and lies, therefore, beyond the kingdom of "I-ness."

As for the first hypothesis, we can easily see that Suhrawardi's argumentation here is supportive of Sadraean analysis of the unitary consciousness we saw in last chapter. Suhrawardi has pointed out here that although we are, in actual circumstances, aware of ourselves, we have clearly understood that it is absolutely impossible to attain this awareness through a representation, which would obviously count as something other than the bare reality of ourselves. It must thus be concluded that our awareness of ourselves is necessarily through the sheer "presence" of the reality of ourselves. The awareness of ourselves means neither more nor less than the very existential reality of ourselves. This is the material equivalence between "knowing" ourselves by presence and "being" in ourselves as the existential reality of

ourselves, and this is the meaning of the self-objectivity of the unitary consciousness, which in fact constitutes the positive aspect of Illuminative theory.

5. 5. *The Unitary Consciousness is non-temporal:*

As we have seen, the Illuminative theory of the unitary consciousness signifies that something exists in us before our personal history; to say that one bears the unitary consciousness in himself is to affirm that he depends neither on his personal history nor on the world (of objects); he would be dependent only if he had to acquire what he already possesses. Therefore, so far as he possesses this unitary consciousness, he is unengenderable, because it is an existential current experience -- as we have already hinted; therefore, he is always already there. Of course, he is born, but the upsurge of the for-itself (*li nafseh*) a being capable of revealing Being to itself is not merely a historical event. The unitary consciousness is, according to the illuminationists, non-temporal. Considered from their standpoint, history then arises from a non-historical ground, from a beginning which inaugurates time.

In one form or another, this idea has some relatives in modern philosophy. Even in Kant we might find a certain support for it. It seems to be the *apriori* which for him is non-temporal, since it represents a system of logical conditions. But in addition to the transcendental subject Kant maintains the idea of the thing-in-itself, not only in order to combat the temptation of idealism, but also to designate the moral subject who acts according to an intelligible causality. For the Kantian subject is also a moral agent, and reason is also practical reason. This moral subject is no longer purely logical as free actions insert themselves into the temporal web, and the kingdom of ends to which he belongs must be attained within history. Now this subject is not wholly temporal because his free actions are absolute beginnings.

We can also find a relationship to Sartre whose existentialism is both a genetic theory of personality and a search for a fundament for the personality. He sees the finally irreducible element in man to be an "original project" in which the for-self determines its being and by which it unifies itself freely. Having all the unpredictability of a free act and being, both completely contingent and irreducible, this "original choice of our being" is really pre-temporal or non-temporal. Sartre attributes this choice to freedom and attempts to guarantee its non-substantiality by saying that "the

structure [constituted by this choice] can be called the truth of freedom."⁽²⁸⁾ He introduces the notion of person here:

"[freedom] is not to be distinguished from the choice of freedom; that is, from the person himself."⁽²⁹⁾

True, if we present Sartre's position to the illuminationists like Sadra, they see instead that the person (or man: *insan*), considered as subject, is given to himself during his existential presence; and they would not designate a specific given in this action. This is because the subject has a primordial existence: he is affected by a contingency (see Ch. 3) which, one may say, is not necessarily the mark of freedom. Nevertheless, whether the subject is responsible (in Sartrean sense) or not, what we would see is that, according to the Illuminative philosophy, the subject is rooted in the non-temporal -- even though he manifests and realises himself only in time.

The non-temporal is the unitary consciousness which is the ground of the subject. It can, however, be the principle of an individual history to the extent that it actualises itself or merely tends to actualise itself. All genesis or authentic development which is not simple repetition is, according to Sadra,⁽³⁰⁾ an actualisation of the unitary consciousness, as we have already seen. Though a condition of history, the unitary consciousness in itself is nevertheless not historical for the illuminationists simply because it is being and being is not temporal for them (contrary to Heidegger and his followers; See Ch. 2); only the circumstances of its actualisation are -- so far as the unitary consciousness is born in and with the individual (*fard*). This has the paradoxical implication that the unitary consciousness has no birth date, since birth, in any case, has a date only so far as events are dated in relation to it or so far as it too is considered as an event in the world. The unitary consciousness is the principle of genesis, not its effect. And, as imbued with and grounded by it, the subject is unengenderable.

To the extent that it concerns what is foreign or prior to facts, the unitary consciousness does not have to be submitted to a factual test, simply because every test will be supplied by it through its living and current experience. Yet it calls for facts in two ways. First, it does not discredit a genetic theory; the priority of the unitary consciousness, as we have already seen, is not only logical, but also real and existential. This is why the unitary consciousness retains its autonomy by appearing as an origin, as a beginning which has no beginning: the existential and thus non-

temporal priority of the unitary consciousness expressed in the temporal order as a radical priority.

However, from a subjective standpoint, one may say that the unitary consciousness also has a logical priority. The benefit of this priority seems to express its absolute character and to translate it into the language of temporality by such an expression as "always already there." It is this "always already there" that a genetic theory may bring to light: by showing how the unitary consciousness is actualised, such a theory manifests the primordial character of the unitary consciousness. As we have seen, by his method of ontetic reduction, Sadra detected the unitary consciousness (the self) as being always already known.

More generally speaking, a genetic theory of the self (Sadra uses: *takwin* and *Sayrurah* of *nafs*)⁽³¹⁾ on the basis of the unitary consciousness can show how an individual (*fard*) has been open to certain meaning or values, and closed to others: It is dependent on being in ontetic touch with them in the order of being. Since his childhood, one may be defined by a certain character of the unitary consciousness which it conceals and which, taken as a whole, form what we may call, to borrow a phrase from existentialists, his existential *apriori*. This means that the unitary consciousness is actualised only if it belongs to a performative self who currently experiences. A performative self is that who is born and possesses an existential nature. This nature is constituted through that process of current experience, through the accomplishment of the unitary consciousness.

The unitary consciousness in fact signifies what is not known at first, what I know only afterwards when I say: I already knew it or I have always known it. In fact, the unitary consciousness, as we have seen, is the presence of the self to self: in Bergsonian terms, the immanence of the past in the present. The unitary consciousness is what I am because I am essentially my current experience of my being in present of Being; this determines the meaning of my being in the present. Thus, from the Illuminative point of view, the unitary consciousness must be understood in reference to being rather than in relation to knowing. Knowledge may also be referred to, if it is defined not as a process of aiming at, but as one of coinciding with: if, says Sadra, it is a manner of being and not a manner of acting or of preparing for action by elaborating of concepts. In this sense, knowledge is nothing other than presence to self.

Moreover, the Illuminative theory of the unitary consciousness implies that our existential current experience of Being always has a partly actualised aspect and a partly non-actualised aspect (because it is a being-toward-its perfection [*al-Mawjud al-Talib li al-Kamal*]). To actualise the latter is to realise, in another perspective, what Kant took to be impossible: a non-objectifying knowledge of the self. And it seems to combine two very different senses of self-relation; the relation to oneself as negation of the self, thus as the emptiness (*fana*) which defines the unitary consciousness for Sadra, and the relation to oneself as presence to self, hence as the plenitude which defines self-knowledge for him.

By now we have encountered the most important characteristics of the unitary consciousness. As we saw, all these characteristics indicate that the unitary consciousness is factual, existential and not accessible for our reflective thought. It is beyond the time but grounds it; then it is beyond memory and imagination, rather, it is their root. It is the evidence of ungenderability of the self, simply because it is the being of the self. In following chapters, we will see two applications of the theory of unitary consciousness in particular: (i) to our private states (ii) to our reflective knowledge.

CHAPTER SIX

The Unitary Consciousness And Our Private States

So far the meanings of the Illuminative theory of the self and the unitary consciousness have been described. In order to establish that this unitary consciousness is primordial and has the sole principal role to play in the basic formation of the human intellect, the Illuminative philosophy proceeds to an empirical illustration which shows some applications of this theory. The point of this study in this chapter is to present such an application of the theory of the unitary consciousness when dealing with our private states. We will start with the Illuminative theory as to how we are aware of our private states in general; then we will consider the application of the Illuminative theory of the unitary consciousness to the body and sensations in particular.

6. 1. Our Awareness of the Internal States

Concerning the problem of our awareness of private states as such, the Illuminative philosophy offers us an ontetic interpretation by applying the Illuminative theory of the unitary consciousness. Dealing with this problem, Suhrawardi says:

“The self does in fact apprehend [through the unitary consciousness] its body as well as its imagination and its phantasm. The supposition that these things are apprehended through a representation inherent in the reality of the self, while the representation as such is universal, would imply that the self is the mover of a universal body using universal mental powers, and has no apprehension of its particular body nor acquaintance with the powers which belong to itself. This [consideration] is obviously not right, because the imagination is ignorant and it cannot apprehend itself, just as it is ignorant of all the mental powers, so it cannot challenge these powers in actual operation. Now if the imagination is not competent to realise these mental powers, no material power can ever understand the truth of itself; and if the self as an intellect were also not supposed to know anything other than universals, then it would necessarily follow that a man would never know his own particular body, his own particular imagination, and his own particular phantasm, all of which pertain to himself. But this is not actually the case, because in the world of reality there are no human beings who do not know in their own presence their own particular bodies and their own particular mentalities, using their own particular powers. The conclusion is that

man knows all his mental powers with no mediation of any mental image, and knows the entirety of his body in the same manner." (1)

In this passage, Suhrawardi has taken a step toward an empirical account: Like self-apprehension, the apprehension of one's own body and all its mental powers and activities must be characterised as a form of the unitary consciousness.

This point is to be explained. Setting aside for the moment the question of the self-knowledge given in this philosophy as the principal step towards the solution of the problem of human knowledge in general, the Illuminative philosophy tries to answer the question of how and in what reasonable manner we can be, or are, acquainted with our bodies, our mental powers of imagination and phantasm, and our sense perceptions in general. By asking this question and dealing with the metaphysical and epistemological aspects of this problem, it does not necessarily mean that we become unwillingly involved in the psychological evaluation of human mentalities and the ways in which the mind functions. On the contrary, as Sadra tries to clarify, it seems that the question of how I am aware of my mental powers of understanding is far from being a psychological question such as one of knowing, according to "scientific procedure", my mental powers as designed to act or as being acted upon. However there are two points to be noted.

(a) The whole point behind this philosophical issue is that whereas we are undoubtedly aware of our powers of imagination and phantasm as well as our bodies, we need further to understand how we can characterise this awareness. Is it that, in order to know our own particular power of imagination, we must in one way or another grasp a representation of that particular power? And also, are we supposed, in order to know our phantasm, to have a mental image as the representation of that phantasm, and likewise for our body and all the powers operating in our own particular body? If this is the case, then the question will be: How and where does such a representation take place? Does the representation of the imagination come into the imagination itself, and that of our sense experience in our senses themselves, and of our body in the body itself, etc. ?

As the classical epistemic law stands, the representation of these things never occurs in these things themselves, but rather in the higher stage of the self which is called the "intellect," or the power of transcendental understanding. This is because, just as sense-perceptions can never perceive themselves, nor a body ever apprehend itself, so also imagination and phantasm cannot imagine and fancy themselves. On this

hypothesis we must come to the conclusion that the representation of these things can only appear within the intellectual power of the self and never in any lower mental power of apprehension. Thus, all the representations and mental appearances taken from our bodies and mentalities must accordingly be regarded as intellectual, and, for that matter, universal, and no apprehended motions in our body regarded as particular.

(b) Given that all these representations situated in the intellectual self are abstract, and in that sense, universal, the self as performative can never act upon, or be informed by, the particular reality of the things represented. This is simply because it can have no communication in the level of concept whatsoever with these particular things if the link between the intellectual universal representations and the particular reality of these things is missing. In these circumstances all the "I", as a performative self, can do is "intellectually" move the universal body which is the representation of my particular body instead of moving my actual body itself, and operate the universal imagination and phantasm, which are representations, instead of operating the real particular ones. This is what Suhrawardi points out in his empirical theory by saying it "would imply that the self is the 'mover' of a universal body using universal powers. . . ."(2) This is, of course, the denial of the most evident, actual motion of our particular bodies that we empirically perform in every intentional act, the absurdity of which denial must be called a pragmatic contradiction, if not a logical contradiction. For the way of operation, and the functioning, of our intentional movements contradicts the claim of such a denial that there are no particular motions at all in our bodies, and that all our bodily movements are universal.⁽³⁾

By now, we have described the general position of the Illuminative philosophy concerning our consciousness of our internal states in Suhrawardi's language. In that discussion, I tried to show that this consciousness is not reflective, representative and conceptual. We saw how our consciousness of these states is in Suhrawardi's language by presence. In the following sections we would focus on two issues in particular: the first is the relation of the unitary consciousness and the body; and the second is the relation of the unitary consciousness and our sensation/feelings.

6. 2. *The Unitary Consciousness and The Body*

In the previous section, we saw that our consciousness of our body, according to the Illuminative philosophy is not conceptual and representative. Nor is that all however: In the light of his detailed discussion on the body-mind relationship, Sadra goes far beyond Suhrawardian general position. In fact, the Illuminative philosophy in its Sadraean version presents us a theory to remove, in the ontetic field, the dualism of body-mind (or mind, etc.) in the light of his theory of Being⁽⁴⁾ to accord with our everyday experience and to remove the ancient platonic explanation of the relation between the mind and the body which is embodied as a relation between a driver and the chariot he steers. Plato thought that the mind is a substance free from matter and exists in a supernatural world. Later, it descends to the body in order to steer it and manage it. It is clear that Plato's explanation of this pure dualism that separates the mind and the body cannot explain the close relation between them that makes every human being feel that he is one, and not two things that come from two different worlds and then met. The platonic explanation remains incapable of solving the problem, in spite of the revision made in it by Aristotle who introduced the idea of 'form' and 'matter' -- a revision that influenced philosophical minds after him during the medieval period.

In post-medieval philosophical discussion of the mind-body problem, the central figure is Descartes whose well-known dualism of *res cogitans-res extensa* (Cartesian dualism) (positively and negatively) formed the major attitudes in modern philosophy. For a cartesian dualist the mind and body are both substances, but while the body is an extended, and so a material, substance, the mind is an unextended, or spiritual, substance, subject to completely different principles of operation from the body. It was this doctrine that Gilbert Ryle caricatured as the myth of the ghost in the machine.

Dualist theories are also to be found in a more sceptical form, which may be called "bundle dualism". The word "bundle" springs from Hume's insistence that when he turned his mental gaze upon his own mind, he could discern no unitary substance but simply a bundle of perceptions. (see Ch.1) Hume thought of such a bundle as non-physical. A bundle dualist is one who dissolves the mind in this general way, while leaving the body and other material things intact.

Besides dividing dualism into Cartesian and bundle theories, one may also divide it according to a different principle. “Interactionist” theories hold what common sense asserts, that the body can act upon the mind and mind can act upon the body. For “parallelist” theories, however, mind and body are incapable of acting upon each other. Every event occurring in one of them is accompanied by a parallel event in the other (like two synchronised clocks). This necessary accompaniment between mental events and bodily events does not mean that either of them is a cause of the other. The mutual influence between a material being and an immaterial being, according to parallelism, makes no sense. Rather, this necessary accompaniment between these two kinds of event is due to the divine providence that has willed the sensation of, for example, hunger always to be accompanied by the movement of the hand for reaching the food, without this sensation being a cause of this movement. It is clear that this theory is a new explanation of plato’s dualism that separates the mind and the body. There is also an intermediate view, especially when combined with with a bundle theory of mind, that is called the doctrine of “epiphenomenalism”. This view tries to cognise the independent reality of the mental with approving the controlling role of the brain in the mental life.

Mentalist theories arise naturally out of dualistic theories, particularly where the dualistic position is combined with Descartes own view that the mind is more immediately and certainly known than anything material. If this view is taken, it is natural to begin by becoming sceptical of the existence of the material things. (Remember Berkeley).

Though it is usually accepted that Cartesian dualism (*res cogitans-res extensa*) logically ends up in the deadlock of mentalism, Descartes’ own particular form of the theory, however, seems to have still a bit room to avoid such a radical subsequence. Through his *Meditations*, he tries to attest a “substantial union” between body and mind through nature:

“Nature teaches me nothing more expressly or clearly than the fact that I have a body, that this body feels out of sorts when I am in a bad mood, and that it needs food or drink when I feel hungry or thirsty. . . .
“(5)

This voice of nature is feeling, the experience of obscure and confused qualities; it has to be guaranteed by divine truth and appear as being itself the voice of God. Yet what Descartes discovers in the *Cogito* is a reason for the union, not, as we see in

Sadra, its being. The union needs a justifying reason because, even if it is directly experienced, it is not immediately clear to reflection: for the reflective knowledge, the mind is really distinct from the body, since it is an autonomous substance. This precludes interpreting the union as a unity (as Aristotle thought) or as an identity (as Spinoza maintained); it can only be a conjunction. Descartes does, however, make as much progress toward unification of the two substances as is possible. He recognises that the mind is compromised by the body; feelings are not the thoughts of a mind distinct from the body, and the body in its turn is structured by the mind: its functional indivisibility results from its union with the mind. Apart from this union the body exists as a mere collection of mechanical parts without a nature of its own; such a machine gains purposiveness only when the mind bestow finality upon it, and

“turns a purely mechanical assemblage into a whole, teleologically related to all of the body.”⁽⁶⁾

As a result, the body is both divisible and indivisible; if on the one hand it participates in the indivisibility of the mind, on the other hand the indivisible mind participates in extension without being itself an extended substance. In sum, Descartes accurately describes the effects of the union of body and mind, but he admits that this union is unintelligible in itself -- an unintelligibility that provides a reason to celebrate God for having created this union, and to exonerate Him for having made man fallible.

Instead, Sadra conceives the idea of a real unity on the basis of the self's being, lived in diverse experiences, though without these experiences being able to introduce a principle of dissociation into this unity. When the vicissitudes of this union -- e.g., the mind acting on the body and vice versa, or the mind trying to cut itself loose from the body -- are invoked to illustrate fully lived experiences, they are usually of the order of the “as if” because they presuppose dualism. Of course, Sadra speaks of the mind: certain moral, theological and mystical codes push him to; however in using a term such this, he seems to abstract from his theory only to describe his conclusions and to make his theory understandable in his contemporary official philosophical language and terminology.

Taking the human reality in an existential kinetic movement (*al-Harakat al-Juhariyyah*) on the basis of his theory of Being, Sadra sees that the body in its existential movement pursues the completion of its existence and continues its completion (*kamal*), until it is free from its materiality under specific conditions and

becomes an immaterial being- that, in the case of human being, leads to what is called 'human soul' or 'mind'.⁽⁷⁾ In spite of the fact that the mind is not material, it has material source in body. For Sadra, the mind not only is not separated from the body, but rather it itself is nothing but a material being made superior by the existential movement. This does not, however, mean for him that the mind is a product of the body and one of its effects; never. It is a product of the existential movement which does not proceed from matter itself. By this meaning he considers that the body is the 'near side' of the unique reality appearing to us in our everyday experience. The 'other side', traditionally called mind or mind, generated by the ontetic purification of the body's being, is the depth of that reality.

On the basis of Sadraean theory of body whenever I say "my body," I prevent myself from considering it as any body whatsoever, as a Cartesian machine. And I should not think, either, of a body linked with a mind, but of an animated body; nor of a mind linked with a body, but of a corporeal mind -- as we find in Merleau-Ponty's theory. According to Sadra this is because the body is the genetic origin of the mind. At the beginning, there is only the body, such holds Sadra.⁽⁸⁾ Then, getting deepened through its existential kinetic movement, the body, like a flower, opens and its depth comes out and embraces its existentially genetic origin, i.e., the body, as a foam. The mind is depth of the body. In other words, according to Sadra,⁽⁹⁾ the body and the mind are two terms to describe two aspects of one and the same existentially unique reality at which we look from two different standpoints.

Sadra has, indeed, discussed his sophisticated theory of body in detail and written pages upon pages to demonstrate it. However, since we have confined ourselves in present research to the Illuminative theory of the unitary consciousness to see its contribution, to some limited extent, to the basic problem of modern philosophy, we are not to engage ourselves in the details of his theory of body. Instead, as depicting the scope of the unitary consciousness, which equals the 'being' of the self in the Sadraean perspective, we see the relation of this unitary consciousness with the body. In this latter case, he seems to detect the body in the unitary consciousness, and not simply to join one to the other in Cartesian fashion.

To do this task, Sadra detects body-consciousness as an existential mode of the unitary consciousness.⁽¹⁰⁾ It appears from what Sadra tells us that I do not know my body, in its existential state, as an object; rather, I am aware of it as my 'self'; I discover it in my unitary consciousness as my experience of my presence -- my being.

Sadra does not plan to find the body as if it were already there, existing independently of the mind, and ready for a kind of pact with it. Then he does not deduce the body: either in the Cartesian sense of the word, according to which it is subordinated to consciousness both in the order of being and in the order of knowing (for if the body has a meaning it is to be always already there, thanks to causes, not our understandings), or in the Kantian sense of deduction, since the body is unjustifiable; it is neither a right nor a possession. According to Sadra, I do not possess a body, in the way that I own a cloth; instead, my unitary consciousness, my existential experience of my being teaches me that I am my body. I do say that I have bad eyes as I say that I have a stomach-ache; but in holding my body at a distance in this manner, I affirm that I am more than a body, not that I am not a body. We must, then, find the body in the unitary consciousness, and conceive of the unitary consciousness as a body.

Sadra starts from this fact that the unitary consciousness bears witness to the body by the very fact that the body is present to it. At first, the unitary consciousness is existentially conscious of body. In this level, for Sadra there is not a question of the body-as-subject: we are on the plane of the unitary consciousness, not of reflective knowledge. As Sadra teaches that corporeality (rather than the multiple and divisible body) is immediately my first living experience in the plane of the unitary consciousness. A child, for example, is conscious of all his body, of his body as whole, before exploring and recognising the diversity of its parts: consciousness of the body is prior to the reflective distinction between external and internal perception, and does not result from a co-ordination or interpretation of sensation. The body is given as a primary unity which is the expression of a corporeal being, not as the result of a synthesis or as the conclusion of a judgement of finality. ⁽¹¹⁾

In elaborating this identity, Sadra begins with the unitary consciousness, and first of all discovers the self in it.⁽¹²⁾ We have already seen this when we discussed his doctrine that the unitary consciousness implies the 'being' of the self (Ch. 4), and that only the self absorbed in and presented before Being can become a unitary consciousness. Now so far as he wants to take body-consciousness as the unitary consciousness, it seems, Sadra tries to verify it in another way. In the following discussion we try to bring out his hidden and sophisticated argument in comparison with modern trends when applicable to make clear what he may want to say.

We can put this 'another' way as a trying to answer this modern question: Why is the *Cogito* in the first person? It is evident that when I say "I think," I am abstracting, in Sadraean manner, from my unitary consciousness. It transfers us from the order of being to the order of concept, from the ontetic field to the eidetic field. What then the 'I' signifies is that this 'I think' implies a unitary consciousness which is self-consciousness: when I say 'I think', I think that I think. This consciousness exists for the self as a presence to self. However, the self may not be interpreted here as a verbal or logical condition for the unitary consciousness, and then, on this basis as the condition, for the objectivity of my representations. Rather, we have seen that the Illuminative theories of Sadra avoid thus interpreting the self. The self, as Sadra said to us, has another kind of being: a non-formal and non-logical being which is also non-substantial. This being, Sadra already said, is like that belonging to a pure relation or preposition (Ch. 3). Never being reflective, this being is an existential experience of no-mind: "the pure nihilating movement of reflection" as says Sartre along with whom Sadra maintains that the unitary consciousness makes itself realised through this movement.

For Sadra self-consciousness implies a relation, that is a presence, to the self, a unitary consciousness. The unitary consciousness manifests its interiority in this relation, for it turns back onto itself only insofar as it is turned toward Being in the process of its existential experience; It is self-consciousness as the unitary consciousness. It is also a consciousness of self as self, so that the self, the unitary consciousness, performs a double function here: as the pronoun of consciousness and as a pronominal absolute. Actually, from Sadraean perspective, at the level of the unitary consciousness, the pre-reflective *Cogito*, there is no self-knowledge transforming the self into a known object, only an allusion to the self that can later be made explicit by underlining pronoun "I". Hence the self is no longer consciousness of itself or its movement in this reflective sense, but the unitary consciousness effecting this movement. It is in this sense "empty" (*fani*). In such a process there is no symmetrical intentionality, as we see in reflective knowledge, belonging to that which intends the object, for the unitary consciousness does not intend or posit the subject; it experiences and lives it. The unitary consciousness is not so present to Being that it is not at the same time conscious that this presence is its own presence. The "I" is thus immanent in the unitary consciousness. For Sadra, the self in its non-subjectivistic sense cannot be an illusion, since it is immediately present to itself. Nor is it -- like the

Kantian "I think" -- a simple character of successive psychological or logical consciousness, since it is given as a self which is the unitary consciousness, and as an active principle that makes the experience of Being possible (see: Ch. 4). The self is the unitary consciousness as that which experiences Being. According to Sadra, to be conscious does not signify to have consciousness like a possession. To be conscious is not to possess a quality but to perform an act. The unitary consciousness is the act and performance rather than the possession of the subject -- an act and performance determining his being.

This unitary consciousness is active, and therefore ascertained and realised. When Sadra asserts that 'I' can exist only in an individual self and that the experiencing individual is given in all existential experience, he pursues his analysis of the unitary consciousness yet further. In fact, the self that is the unitary consciousness which achieves its fundamental selfhood (as with some reservations, Sartre would also say), is a singular self. In every experience, the unitary consciousness is unique and irreplaceable. If the Cartesian *sum*, one may then say, accompanies even the pre-reflective *Cogito*, this is because the self posits itself as an absolute by force of its unitary consciousness.

Taken thus, the self in the sense of the unitary consciousness is not the object of observations and inductions which belong to the eidetic field. In other words, to the extent that it does not give rise to a reflection -- which always risks impurity -- conferring properties and prerogatives on it, this self can claim neither the being of an object nor that of a subject which would somehow remain motionless in its being as the unitary consciousness. It has only the precarious and absolute being of the unitary consciousness. This being, however, seems from a reflective point of view, as non-being or empty simply because it is not accessible for the reflective knowledge. The unitary consciousness denies itself as an in-itself precisely because it is in-itself in spite of itself, or at least because it is always menaced by the in-itself as if by its own shadow. In fact, Sadra specifies that if the unitary consciousness is negation, it is not only the indeterminate negation of the self in general, but the determinate negation of a determinate in-itself, i.e., of a particular (*joz'i*) self. In refusing its particularity (*joz'iyyat*), the unitary consciousness admits that it is particular; it has to have a certain perspective, a certain mode of being and a certain portion of existential experience of Being. This particularity is not at present made explicit by means of empirical, objective determinations; but it is expressed by a sort of the experience of a

living relation with a being that proposes or conceals itself, in the feeling of effort or relaxation and the like. When I say "I" before any reflection on this 'I', Sadra believes, I experience myself as someone, not as just anyone or as an abstract universal. My presence to Being or to beings with which I am in an ontetic touch is a singular presence, not an anonymous and neutral one, although it may imply different degrees of plenitude or depth -- for example, according to whether I think conceptually or feel affectively. Now, the body, Sadra argues, constitutes this singularity (*tashakhhos*) and provides this plenitude. We should not say that the body continually reminds me of its presence, or that it supports or betrays me, embarrasses or stimulates me; for then I objectify it (though its very nature invites such objectification), and I substitute an artificial relation with my body for my spontaneous relation with Being. The body is not present to me as Being is, since it is my presence to Being; I am not conscious of my body as I am conscious of a being with which I am in ontetic touch because I am my body. This is why Sadra speaks of the consciousness of the body as the 'continuous' beginning stage of the unitary consciousness. Body-consciousness (or in Sartrean special phrase: 'consciousness (of) body') expresses the fact that the body is not an object for the unitary consciousness, but it is the unitary consciousness itself. By this manner as we see Sadra has found the body in the unitary consciousness, though not as object; rather, as the unitary consciousness itself so far as it is singular (*motashakhhes*).⁽¹³⁾

We can easily see similarities between the path followed by Sadra and that followed by Sartre:⁽¹⁴⁾ In a similar (but not necessarily the same) manner, Sartre also tries to take away any distinction between non-reflective consciousness and body. In this relation he says:

"being for itself must be wholly body or wholly consciousness; it cannot united with the body."⁽¹⁵⁾

Sartre also points out the singularity of the for-itself when he recalls the Platonic doctrine according to which the body individualises the mind and represents "the individualisation of my engagement in the world."⁽¹⁶⁾ But in coming into the world and becoming engaged in it, we are captured and compromised by it. The body is in fact, writes Sartre:

"the in-itself which is surpassed by nihilating for-itself and which reapprehends the for-itself in the very surpassing."⁽¹⁷⁾

However, taking Sartrean language, reapprehending the for-itself means from Sadraean standpoint that the for-itself is also an in-itself; although not in the sense that man would be the God that is a being wholly and simultaneously for-itself and in-itself. Instead, the alliance between for-itself and in-itself is established on the plane of finitude and as if it were an imperfection. Sartre, however, insists on another aspect of the for-itself: its double contingency:

“on the one hand, while it is necessary that I exist in the form of being-there, still it is altogether contingent that I exist in the first place, for I am not the foundation of my being; on the other hand, while it is necessary that I be engaged in this or that point of view, it is contingent that it should be precisely in one to the exclusion of others. We have called this twofold contingency embracing the necessity the facticity of the for-itself.”⁽¹⁸⁾

Therefore the body is the facticity of the for-itself, and this is of crucial importance.

Nevertheless, in spite of this, and without deducing it, Sartre arrives at the body in two ways, in both of them he is expressly opposed to Descartes. The first consists in investigating the basic relation between the for-itself and the in-itself. The in-itself here is the world, not what I am myself; consequently, the body, even though not exterior to the subject, remains idealised to a certain extent; it ‘designates’ my situation, it ‘is defined’ as my contingency, it ‘represents’ my individualisation. All of these verbs express the ontological function of the body, not its being; Sartre says: “the body manifests my contingency . . . it is only this contingency.”⁽¹⁹⁾

Then he defines being in terms of function. Secondly, the study of the body is part of the study of the for-others. The for-itself is here opposed to the for-others, rather than to the in-itself and the for-others determines what is or is not in-itself. The body then is in-itself only for others, while by itself, for the consciousness that experiences it or rather is it, it is for-itself. The body ceases to appear as the object it is for others when I experience it, instead of thinking about it and assuming the perspective of others.

In spite the similarities one may feel between Sartre and Sadra in this case, however, there remains one important distinction in particular: Sartre does not tell us about the being of body; on contrary, Sadra has fully discussed the being of the body. Though we would not fall in such a detailed discussion which is beyond our present research, we may however consider his discussion on the being of the body insofar as

it is identical with the unitary consciousness: as we have seen (Ch.4), the self of self-consciousness designates, for Sadra, both the movement of the unitary consciousness and its nature; movement denying its nature as being accessible for reflective knowledge and yet affirming it in the very denial as the primordial and existential current experience of Being: displaying the non-being of a being. The body is, according to Sadra, both surpassed and posited in this process. But we must not think that it undergoes this treatment passively, as if the unitary consciousness is exterior to it. The body is surpassed and posited because it is identified with the unitary consciousness; this is the very nature. It is not surpassed by the unitary consciousness as if by its other simply because, Sadra affirms, the body-consciousness is the continuous beginning of the unitary consciousness. To put this in a comparative way, it surpasses itself by effecting the nihilating movement that Sartre attributes to the for-itself.

Sadra brings forth here a clarification of the seeming opposition of the unitary consciousness and body: he notices that we would ever remember the two orders or fields already mentioned one of which is of concept and the other is of being. When we are talking of the identity of the unitary consciousness and body-consciousness we are in the second order not in the first one. In the first order, because we reflectively distinguish between the body and the mind we remain with the illusion of a dualism; but, in fact, it is not the case if we look from the second order on which the body is not only on trial with itself, but also with Being. Surpassing itself toward Being, Sadra holds, it exists only in acting, in a living existential experience -- that is, in the unitary consciousness -- and it becomes identified with, and as, the latter. The body, from this Sadraean standpoint, is here no longer an object, but an acting self, a performative 'I'. On this, in all activity, the body is not experienced as a body, but as the unitary consciousness. This means for him that the body does not possess conceptual existence; it has the existence of the in-itself. The body is both for-itself and in-itself. This is why is Sadra led to say that I am body as the unitary consciousness, or as Suhrawardi said, my consciousness of my body is by presence. The fact that this body is part of my existential presence means for Suhrawardi that it exists for the unitary consciousness; However, Sadra seems to hold that this does not prevent the body from being the unitary consciousness. For Sadra, the unitary consciousness and body are two perspectives on or two languages about one and the same really.

The unitary consciousness, as we have seen, is, according to Sadra, that of a process; It is a living and current experience through which, and because I am a being-toward-perfection (*al talib li al kamal*), I am always the negation of what I am; this negation is entirely spontaneous, and is made explicit only when I reflect; I am my body on the condition of not being it, since I say 'I'. Yet it occurs all the time, and , is my very existence.

By this line of reasoning, Sadra comes to an interesting conclusion: the for-itself (*li nafseh*) and the in-itself (*fi nafseh*) are not two modalities of being brought together and reconciled in me: I am a for-itself -- i.e., both presence and opposition to myself -- but not only in and through my relation with the in-itself, which is what I deny in myself and which yet is myself. It is this unity of the for-itself and in-itself in me that constitutes my being.

6. 3. *Our Awareness of Sensations and Feelings:*

Following the above line of reasoning, the Illuminative philosophy presents an existential interpretation of the sensations and feelings by considering them as the examples of the unitary consciousness. In this respect Suhrawardi writes:

“One of the things that supports our opinion that we do have some kind of apprehensions (*idrakat*) which need not take a form of representation (*surah*) other than the presence of the reality (*dhat*) of the thing apprehended (*mudrak*), is when a man is in pain from a cut or from damage to one of his organs. He than has a feeling of this damage. But this feeling or apprehension is never in such a way that that damage leaves in the same organ of the body or in another a form of representation of itself besides the reality of itself. Rather, the thing apprehended is but that damage itself. This is what is truly sensible and it counts in itself for pain, not a representation of it, caused by itself. This proves that there are among things apprehended by us, some things such that in being apprehended it is sufficient that their reality be received in the mind or in any agent which is present in the mind.”⁽²⁰⁾

In this passage we can find two straightforward points dealing with the matter at issue, namely, the empirical exemplification of the unitary consciousness. The first is what Suhrawardi has indicated by his words “*that we do have some kinds of apprehensions which need not take any form of representation.*” Mediation and intervention by a representation for the attainment of knowledge is needed and carried out by the intentional act of mind if, and only if, the reality of the object is initially

“absent” from the mind of the subject. This is exactly the case when an external object is apprehended. But as regards those objects that are already “present” for an ‘I’, and that with which this ‘I’ is in an ontetic touch, it seems absurd to “represent” what is in itself “present”; it is more or less like knowing something that has already been known.

The second point constitutes his main argument, which is an empirical analysis of the experience of pain. The experience of pain is one of several examples that Illuminative philosophy offers us for the explanation of its theory. One’s empirical awareness of his sensations and feelings, such as pain, emerges through the unitary consciousness and not by reflective knowledge. The Illuminative philosophy holds that this sort of awareness is privileged with the highest degree of sense certainty in that when I am aware that I am in pain it makes no sense to say at the same time that I doubt whether I am in pain. But this certainty nevertheless does not account for the property of the truth or falsehood of my awareness of pain. This is so, it is argued, because the logical theory of truth must be given in such a way that the judgement or expression, while making sense, can alternatively admit of the opposite qualities, truth or falsity.

This condition is perfectly satisfied primarily by reflective knowledge, and derivatively by descriptive statements and expressions that are designed to express this kind of knowledge. Why this logical alternation, truth or falsity, does not apply to the unitary consciousness, but does apply to reflective knowledge is a question of which the Illuminative philosophy is fully aware. We have already mentioned this point among the characteristics of the unitary consciousness (see Ch. 5). However, as it is said, an empirical illustration for the unitary consciousness is given by the example of our pain experience. This means that the bare presence of the existential status of pain in our mind is a sufficient and complete condition for being acquainted with pain without the mediation of a formal “representation” of the pain experience in the mind.

Here this question seems to be raised: From what thing are we really suffering in a case of pain experience - from a cut in our finger, a fracture in our leg, etc., or from, in Suhrawardi’s own language, a representation or in Russell’s words, a sense-datum of that cut or fracture? Suhrawardi believes it would be absurd to put the blame upon the sense-data or the representation and appearance of the pain experience, while the reality of the pain is absolutely present in us or in some of the powers of the suffering

subject, which are all present in and for us. This is simply a physiological fact that one's feeling of a cut in one's finger, for example, is undoubtedly one's acquaintance with the cut in the finger itself, not with the representation or the sense-data of the cut. A cut in my finger is hardly like my table that I am seeing and touching, etc. In that experience it is quite understandable to say that in front of my table I am acquainted with the sense-data that make up the appearance of my table its colour, shape, etc. But in the "presence" of the reality of a fracture in my leg, how can it make sense to say that I am acquainted with the sense-data that make up the appearance of my broken leg; its colour, shape, hardness, smoothness, etc.? Does this really account for my pain? No, it certainly does not; the Illuminative philosophy answers. Of course, I can see and touch my deformed broken leg from the outside and get acquainted with the sense-data that make up the appearance of my leg, as my doctor does, but this sort of acquaintance is no longer the same as I have already had with my pain itself. It is therefore another kind of acquaintance, with which the Illuminative philosophy is not concerned while speaking of the reality of sensations and feelings. It talks about the acquaintance with our feeling and our pain, not with the sense-data, or representation of the deformation of our leg which serves as an external physical object, and goes with the reflective knowledge.

Therefore, having established this empirical example, the Illuminative philosophy maintains, that our apprehension or knowledge of sensations and feelings is not attained by any representation or sense-data. It is only through an existential unification called, in the system of the aforementioned philosophers, "presence", existential experience or as we called it the unitary consciousness, that this category of awareness comes into being in which the *reality* of a thing known is existentially present *before* the self -- who is in an *ontetic touch* with the reality of that thing -- without any representation or sense-data of that thing -- as indicated by the characteristic of self-objectivity; that is, the unitary consciousness concerns, begets and catches the reality of beings without having or using their representation. This means that our consciousness of sensations and feelings expresses only another aspect of our being.

The Illuminative analysis does not posit any relation or association of our unitary consciousness with a thing or bring out any sense of "representation" for our real instantiation of feelings and sensations. While we are experiencing pain or pleasure, our actual object of acquaintance and awareness, with which we are truly

acquainted, belongs to the order of *being*. It has nothing to do, of course at the moment of experience, with the order of “conception” and representational “apprehension.”

Representations, on the other hand, are designed to preserve these two fundamental aspects of reflection which are incompatible with the unitary consciousness. They function (a) to maintain the reflection or kind of association they have with their external objective references, and (b) as belonging to the order of conception not to the order of being and instantiation. By their nature they cannot associate themselves with the order of *being* because they are representations of objects. These are sufficient reasons for Illuminative philosopher not to be satisfied with the representative theory of sensation and feeling, and part company with its consequences.

Here it is necessary to remind ourselves of the fact that the Illuminative description of empirical cases of the unitary consciousness is always qualified by the phrase “at the time of immediately experiencing our sensation and feeling.” This is essential for indicating that we are dealing with a case of the unitary consciousness if we are *in* the act of experiencing our sensation not in the act of “reflecting” *upon* our experience. Therefore it is concluded in the Illuminative philosophy that our consciousness of sensations and feelings is not by reflection, because it is a case of the unitary consciousness and then bears the very meaning of “presence” the nature of which pertains to the order of *being* as distinct from the order of conception and perception. If we reflect upon our sensation, say by relating our episode of pain or pleasure last night, or even at the very present moment of experience, to a friend or a doctor, we try to conceptualise our feeling and bring it from its order of being into a sort of representation which is of the order of conception. By doing this we move from the existential realm of the unitary consciousness to the conceptual state of reflective knowledge. This is, according to Illuminative philosophy, what reflection is like, because whenever there is room for representation there is possibility for reflection, and what this reflection necessitates is nothing other than a knowledge which may, in turn, be either true or false.

It may be added here that despite the fact that reflective knowledge provides us with a representation and conception of its external object and serves as an intentional act of knowing, initiating in us the whole range of intentionality, the mode of the unitary consciousness operates in a completely different way. It brings about, and

gives rise to, the *real instantiation of the object, which is the actual reality of the object*. Instead of objectifying its intentional form of object by virtue of conceptualisation, it rather brings to the light of our acquaintance the reality [i.e., being] of the object itself. In this manner, it makes us identify, under certain conditions, with the ontological reality of the object. They are bound together in an existential unification, in an ontetic touch. If I say, for instance, "I know I am in pain," it means nothing but "I am in pain." The word "to know" therefore plays nothing more than an emphatical role for a certain state of *being*. This is, however, what is meant by "non-representational consciousness."

In this context, it may be interesting to refer here to Wittgenstein whose position on the same issue seems close to the Illuminative position:

"In what sense are my sensations private? Well, only I can know whether I am really in pain; another person can only surmise it. In one way this is wrong, in another nonsense. If we are using the word "to know" as it is normally used (and how else are we to use it?), then other people very often know when I am in pain. - Yes all the same not with the certainty with which know it myself. It cannot be said of me at all (except perhaps as a joke) that I know I am in pain. What is it supposed to mean - except perhaps that I am in pain?"⁽²¹⁾

Arriving at the point of saying, even though with a sense of uncertainty, "that I *know* I am in pain...is...to mean that I *am* in pain," Wittgenstein seems to realise, in agreement with the Illuminative theory, that our acquaintance with our sensations need not be achieved by an intentional form of knowledge and not by the ordinary (subjectivistic) sense of knowledge.⁽²²⁾ It is thus really the case that for any sensation and feeling such as pain or pleasure to be known by the agent, the being of that sensation and feeling must be present in the presence of that agent in such a way that the ontological and epistemological differences between them become absolutely non-existent. This is because the ontological and epistemological status of a present object and that of the agent in which the object is presented are in fact one and the same. When ontological and epistemological aspects are united, it is not surprising (and for Wittgenstein as well, it seems, there should be no room for doubt or hesitation) that "to know" I am in pain must definitely mean that "I am" in pain.⁽²³⁾

Wittgenstein accurately reached the conclusion that "I know I am in pain" is, in his words, "to mean perhaps that, 'I am in pain'." On the face of it, this statement amounts, linguistically speaking, to saying that "knowing" in this context is either redundant or synonymous with the word "being" which is understood by the next

phrase "I am in...." Thus interpreted, the sentence: "I know I am in pain, can really mean only: "I am in pain" scoring out the phrase "I know."

If this is truly the case, the sentence will no longer stand for the "reflection" or "introspection" of my feeling pain, but rather is, as it were, a typical expression of the empirical instantiation of the unitary consciousness insofar as it means that I really am in pain. In that case, my pain, as the object of my acquaintance, is "instantiated," and not represented, in my mind in a form of "existential unification."

Wittgenstein also seems to agree with the illuminationists that the matter would be quite different in essence if this statement were given as the formal expression of my "reflection" upon my pain experience. In a case of introspection like this, I reflect upon what I have been already acquainted with. And through this reflection I conceptualise my pain in such a way that, by being objectified in mind, the concept of pain-experience functions as the representation of the objective reference, which is, in this case, the reality of my pain experience.

It may, then, be said that Wittgenstein has approached the issue with an upshot close to the Illuminative theory. As we have already seen, according to the Illuminative theory, as soon as we get into the intentional act of conceptualisation and representation the problem of reflective knowledge comes into view. We have been driven from the order of being to the order of thought.

It is customary in matters concerned with description that I conceptualise further knowledge about my pain in order to assure both myself and my doctor that I am in such and such a state of pain, especially when two states of pain have some similarities. By introspection of, and reflection on, my experience, I place it into its determinate species of pain experience in general for the sake of clarity and unambiguous explanation. As soon as this reflection is made my knowledge of pain falls into the category of reflective knowledge. That is, when we are in the experience of pain we are already acquainted with pain in terms of the unitary consciousness; but when we are furthermore testing our experience by reflecting on it, we then have a corresponding acquaintance with the original instantiation, which forms our typical reflective knowledge.

By now it may be clear that every sort of our consciousness and knowledge, according to the Illuminative theory, is merely a mode of the unitary consciousness -- whether to be body-consciousness or sensation or feeling. In the next chapter we will continue to see how this theory applies to our reflective, representational knowledge.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Unitary Consciousness And The Reflective Knowledge

As yet we have presented in some detail the specific application of the Illuminative theory of the unitary consciousness, so as to illustrate this Illuminative theory in the different stages of our private states. Now in this chapter we would continue to see how it is applied to the reflective (eidetic) field of knowledge. We will start with the old but seriously unsolved problem of subject-object relationship. We do so, because this dichotomy has been for centuries, perhaps, the most important characteristic of the reflective knowledge. After primary considerations we will proceed to the Illuminative attitude toward a theory of object to see the Illuminative suggestion for the subject-object relationship; then we will consider the relation of the unitary consciousness with reflective knowledge by which our knowledge, according to the Illuminative theory, is already rooted in existence.

7. 1. *primary considerations:*

Turning to the analysis of reflective knowledge itself, among various distinctions which have so far been made regarding the notion of human knowledge, the distinction between 'subject' and 'object' is a widely accepted one. The question of the subject-object relationship has, nevertheless, been one of the serious problems in philosophical thought. This problem has found its most dangerous form in modern western subjectivism.

Descartes' methodological doubt ends up in an underlying subject, a wordless self who is a separate substance as *res cogitans* distinguished from the world as *res extensa*. As asked even by his contemporary critics,⁽¹⁾ a simple question raises here: How does the subject, *res cogitans*, correctly know the object, the *res extensa*? This question is roughly applied to the subjectivistic epistemology and there is no way to escape from its maze if we remain in the subjectivistic standpoint. Kant, for example, begins his philosophy with a sharp subject-object dichotomy, resulting in the problematic distinction between phenomena (objects as they appear to the subject) and noumena (objects as they exist in themselves); He finally maintained that the latter can not be grasped by our mind; what the mind knows is only the former. Kant's

drawing of the question perhaps is its best logical formulation in language of the subjectivism. This, however, leads us, as Hegel reminds us, to an ultimate skepticism, never knowing whether one really knows the things as they are or not. Hegel himself tries to interpret the Kantian “transcendental” to dissolve the problem of subject-object relationship to the benefit of a monism. He introduces the notion of “spirit” which is neither subject nor object. This avoidance of the subject-object relationship allows Hegel to claim access to the absolute knowledge.

In the phenomenological tradition we can also see a similar confrontation between Husserl and Heidegger. Inspired by Cartesian method, Husserl starts from Kantian position claiming that, contrary to Kant, we can know objects-in-themselves. His theory of cognition, however, is not a theory of object. By this theory of cognition, he claims that we know objects as they are in-themselves; we know them as they are in themselves because they are constituted in our consciousness. Objects *are* only for our consciousness in so far as we constitute them, then the object we know are the object-in-themselves.⁽²⁾ To justify this thesis, he uses the notion of “reason”,⁽³⁾ partly in the Hegelian sense, to indicate that we know objects-in-themselves. Reason is characterised as “source of necessity” (Spinoza and Hegel) and it is apriori condition of possible experience. Obviously, the Kantian notion of understanding is here replaced by reason (again Hegel). Identified with Eidetic intuition, reason contrasts with the individual intuition. Reason carries with it the demand for necessity by which Husserl intends that the constitution of objects for consciousness proceeds in such a manner that any alternative constitution is impossible. Thus taken, reason implies that consciousness of objects is both intuition of the things-in-themselves and the constitution of objects by reason. Then, we know objects-in-themselves. Husserl, also, appeals to “intersubjectivity” to assure us that we know things-in-themselves in the same manner as the others do. In other words, by this thesis, he wants to prove that the world and its objects exist not only for me but also for any possible knower. Saying so, Husserl presupposes two points: first, constitution is one and the same for human beings; and second, what constitution produces is necessarily objects-in-themselves.

It is considered by the phenomenologists like Heidegger that this line of reasoning leads us nowhere; and perhaps this is why Husserl accepts the label of idealism and solipsism. How can we be sure whether the object constituted in

consciousness are objects-in-themselves, especially if we ignore, to borrow Fink's phrase, the "ontological problem"?

Like Hegel who protests against Kant but rebuilds anew his transcendentalism at the same time, Heidegger also protests against Husserl while redirecting his phenomenology. In so doing, he tries to detect the being of the subject and then to put the subjectivistic standpoint aside, ignoring the subject-object relationship. He maintains that this relation is only ontic, and then should be dismissed by philosophy whose discussion is ontology. In this respect, Heidegger's criticism against Husserl in particular is based on his evaluation of the Husserlian bracketing of world and existence. This bracketing leads, according to Heidegger, to commit oneself to skepticism from the outset. World or Being, Heidegger holds, can not be doubted; rather, the ego or consciousness, the Archimedian point of subjectivism is merely illusion. There is no subject distinguished from his world; there is no meaning for the subject without his being.

As we have already hinted (Ch. 2), Heidegger tries to redefine the task of phenomenological method to rescue it from the trap of subjectivism. Husserl suggests that the true of the phenomenological method lies in the distinction of subject-object. Heidegger, on contrary, maintains that the truth of this method is in the absence of this distinction the rejection of which can be defended by phenomenological inquiry (see above, Ch. 2). This inquiry will show, according to Heidegger, the fundamental mistake in traditional philosophy and in Husserl's philosophy in particular: The imaginary supposition of a 'worldless' transcendental self. As we have already seen (Ch. 4), Heidegger does not hesitate to reject such a notion of the self. Husserl had told us to go "back to the things themselves," and then begins himself by talking about a transcendental self which, by its very nature, cannot be defended by phenomenology. Since the transcendental self can not be subject to the phenomenological description, according to Heidegger, there is no experience which can justify talk about such a self or an ego or consciousness, and, because of the rigorous restrictions on phenomenological research, such talk cannot be initiated apart from its foundation in phenomenology. There is, therefore, no subject, no ego; and an accurate, 'primitive' view of our experience of the world cannot describe this experience as an experience of a transcendental self or ego. It cannot even say with Hume that there are experiences (or "thoughts" after Descartes), for this description leads us back to the notion of a "subject" that 'has' experiences. There is simply,

according to Heidegger's analysis, a "being-in-the-world". The *Cogito* of Descartes, the 'I Think' of Kant, and the 'pure ego' of Husserl, these are only exaggerated recognitions of a grammar which forces us to use the expression 'I'. This is *only* a grammatical necessity, it does not refer us to any special substance or even to a unifying principle of consciousness. It has no ontological significance whatsoever.

"The word 'I' is to be understood only in the sense of a non-committal formal indicator." (4)

There is, therefore, no 'I' which can be substantially distinguished from the world in general, and there can be no bracketing or doubting of things 'outside of' consciousness. Once we have given up the notion of the transcendental self or ego and its implications ("contents of consciousness," the "external world"), traditional epistemological problems can not be raised. Heidegger argues that the transcendental self or ego 'discovered' in the Cartesian *Cogito* and affirmed in Husserlian *epoche* is not a substantial self, but only a 'formal indicator' that does not commit to postulating any entity called the self. The self is rather a conception imposed on us by the other (Das man). What is there is only a fallen being -- a Dasein.

Heidegger seems quite right in reconsidering the root of subject or, correctly speaking, in devaluating the subject to the profit of Being. It is also appreciated that the skepticism arising from subject-object dichotomy has been a constant source of philosophical perplexity in 'modern' western philosophy. However, it would not be understood from all these that we should dismiss the problem which is at the basis of our language and structurelises our reflective knowledge. Reflection can be justified only by rediscovering this relationship in order to ground it in a fair manner. In following section we will try to see how the illuminative philosophy approaches this problem.

7. 2. The Illuminative Approach To The Problem:

To give a solution, the Illuminative philosophy tells us that the subject-object relationship belongs to the field of reflection, that of eidetic consciousness (in Husserlian sense). It is because in the ontetic field, as already suggested, there is no room for this dichotomy; because of the unitary consciousness, there is no object there, then no subject; no mind, no self (in the subjectivistic sense); there is only a

unitary consciousness identified with the being of the self as an emanative entity who absorbed in Being. No object, no subject; there is only a unified existent as consciousness. We *are* this consciousness in the horizon of Being. We ordinarily have a continuous experience of this unitary consciousness. This state is not accessible for our reflective thought whose texture, according to the Illuminative philosophy, is eidetic (remember Sartre's non-reflective consciousness). This is because reflective thought is risen from this unitary consciousness or, correctly speaking, the unitary consciousness creates reflective thought. Then the subject-object relationship, according to the Illuminative philosophy, is above all an ontetic relation. By this way the Illuminative philosophy does not dismiss the subject-object relationship; rather it sees the problematic of this relationship, as Heidegger also hinted, in neglecting the notion of Being. However, the Illuminative philosophy does not dismiss the problem for this reason (as Heidegger did). On contrary, it encounters this relationship aiming to solve it by finding an ontetic ground for it. In other words, the Illuminative philosophy accepts such a relationship by assigning it to reflective thought. The problem is not then hidden in this relationship itself, but in dismissing its foundation. Therefore, if one can justify the generation of reflective thought from an ontetic point of view, the relationship of subject-object remained subsequently confirmed without involving in subjectivism. We would recall this point while speaking of the Illuminative solution. In the following discussion we first explain this in more detail by formulating Sadra's theory of object, then we depict the relation of reflective thought with the unitary consciousness.

7. 3. *The Illuminative Theory Of Object*

In the analysis of the theory of reflective knowledge the term "subject," Sadra says,⁽⁵⁾ signifies the mind that performs the act of reflective knowledge by knowing something, just as the term "object" means the thing or the proposition known by that subject. But, since in a proposition known there is always something involved, particular or universal, it is true then to say that the object of reflective knowledge is always what we call the thing known. It is also observed that the relation called "knowing" is constituted by the mind (as the subject) associated with the thing (as the object); the subject and the object, then, can be called the constituents of the unity of reflective knowledge. Thus, in the unity of reflective knowledge the terms "subject"

and “object” are two essentialities of this unity. The relation of subject-object is explained here in the language of Aristotelian causality.⁽⁶⁾ Here we briefly present this explanation:

Being in its essence intentional, the act of reflective knowing is always motivated, determined, and constituted by its object. The object therefore has a share together with the subject in the organisation and determination of the act of reflective knowing, but differs from the subject by having the unique role in motivating the act of reflective knowing. Thus, whereas the main characteristic of the object is to motivate the action of the subject, the subject on the other hand, can not take part in the procedure of motivating its own intentional act, for the simple reason that one is ever present to himself and cannot be the object of himself. In other words, the mind is designed to serve as the efficient cause for the intentional act of reflectively knowing something and the object serves as the final cause for the actuation of such an action. The efficient cause is not supposed to be absolutely identified with the final cause in the Aristotelian system of causation. Thus, a subject cannot be identical with object. Putting the subject-object relationship in this Aristotelian system of causation, one can further infer another characteristic distinction between the knowing subject as an efficient cause and the thing known as a final cause for the act of reflective knowledge. While the efficient cause is defined as the acting agent, bringing about the act of reflective knowing, the final cause functions in two different ways depending on its external and internal existence. The external existence of the object being independent and absent from the mind can only motivate the intellectual activity of the subject from outside and not be identified with it. But the mental existence of the same object being present in the mind is the cause of the subject’s causality. That is to say, the knowing subject as the efficient cause is in its turn caused and actuated by the mental image of the object in the operation of the act of reflective knowledge. For it is the idea of the object that first effects the potential causation of the subject by bringing it from the state of potentiality to the state of being an actual agent. Had there not been the idea of the object present in the mind of the knowing subject, the potential subject would never come to the act of reflective knowing at all. Thus, in this sequence of causation the idea of the object comes first and is regarded as the prime cause or the cause of causation in the system of causality. And the objective reality of the same thing constitutes the last and final cause of the immanent act of reflective knowledge. In this sense, one thing can stand at the same time for the first

and the final cause when viewed from different perspectives. While its mental representation is the first and the prime cause of knowing, its objective reality is the last and the final one.

7. 3. 1. The meaning of Objectivity:

In accordance with the above analysis, it is suggested by the Illuminative philosophy a twofold meaning of “objectivity” which characterises a single entity as both immanent and transitive objects. For these two fundamentally different senses of ‘object’, Sadra, uses the terms “essential,” “actual intelligibles,” and “accidental intelligibles,” in the case of discursive knowledge, as well as the words “essential,” “actual sensibles”, and “accidental sensibles” in the case of empirical knowledge. He says:

“The forms of things are of two kinds, one is the material form the existence of which is associated with matter and position and is spatio-temporal. With respect to its material condition placed beyond our mental power, this kind of form cannot possibly be “actually [and immanently] intelligible,” nor for that matter “actually [and immanently] sensible” except by “accident”. And the other is a form which is free and separated from matter, from position, and from space and location. The separation is by a complete abstraction, like an “actual intelligible,” or by incomplete abstraction such as “actual imaginables” and “actual sensible objects.”⁽⁷⁾

In this passage there are apparently two fundamentally important dichotomies involved. The one is the “actual” or “essential” intelligible object versus the “accidental” or “material” object. The next is the actual “imaginable” or “sensible” object distinguished from the “accidental” or “material” one. In both dichotomies, the first range of object is characterised by “actuality” and “essentiality,” and the second by “materiality” and “accidentality.” An object is truly said to be “essentially and actually intelligible” only if it is existentially identified with, and present in, the mind as being a constituent of the mental phenomenon of the act of knowing. It is truly said to be “actually sensible” or “actually imaginable” when it becomes part of our sensation or imagination in act. But when the object lies existentially beyond our intellect or beyond sense-perception and imagination, then it has an exterior relation of “correspondence” with its representation in our mind. It will be very much an aspect of chance and accidentality that characterises the appearance of the material object represented in our mind at the time we imagine it or sense it in a sense-perception. This means there is no logical certainty that the correspondence relation must hold.

That is because there is always room for the logical possibility that S's knowledge of P does not turn out to be true. Since the correspondence of the mental object to the material object is accidental and probable, the Illuminative theory explains, the material object should be called the "accidental object." Perhaps accidentality here may mean the "probability" that scientific truth always involves. ⁽⁸⁾

We have, accordingly, "essential intelligible" as well as "essential sensible" both of which are to be called "immanent" and "present" object." Likewise, we have "accidental intelligible object" as well as "accidental sensible object," both of which are called "transitive" and "absent" object.

Perhaps it might be interesting to see that the Sadraean distinction has a similar (not necessarily complete) relative in Husserl's phenomenology. Husserl distinguishes between 'immanent' and 'transcendent' objects.⁽⁹⁾ The 'immanent' is

"What forms an intrinsic component of an act, as opposed to what is intended as lying beyond the act (transcendent or intentional object)."⁽¹⁰⁾

These two objects belong to the flux of consciousness:

"In every consciousness we find an 'immanent content', with the content we call 'appearance'; this is either appearance of the individual (of an external temporal being), or appearance of the non-temporal."⁽¹¹⁾

Like Husserl who assigns these objects to the reflective consciousness,⁽¹²⁾ Sadra also allows this double objectivity in the field of the reflective knowledge. However this does not mean that these two authors are on the same line. Unlike Husserl whose phenomenology implies that "all objects are mine" (see, above, 1. 3. b), Sadra does not maintain that the 'transitive' object can be constituted by reflective consciousness.

Sadra sets out⁽¹³⁾ that of these two major kinds of objects, the immanent object alone is constituted through the reflective knowledge. The similarity between these authors is only here; the immanent object, according to both of them, constituted by our eidetic, reflective consciousness on which the knower, known and the knowing are united. Just as in Husserl's theory, the immanent object, for Sadra, comes first and counts for a mental representation of the thing known. This is the mere idea of the object manifested by the subject in the subject itself. This mental representation stimulates the intellectual power of the subject by driving it into the act of knowing. From this stand-point the idea of the object has priority over all the other causes in

question, because it takes effect before the other causes can do so. The transitive object on the other hand, comes last because it is the prospective reality of that ideal object. Since the transitive object is not present in the mind of the agent, it naturally lies beyond the frame of the mind, as well as beyond the intellectual existence of the immanent object.

All this is the case if one interprets the intentional epistemic act of reflective knowing as a mental sequence of natural events analogous to a set of external events dominated by the law of causation. When, however, an act of reflective knowing occurs, there is a complex unity in which "knowing" is the uniting relation and the subject and object are arranged in a certain order such that the "sense" of the act of reflective knowing governs over the whole in a kind of unification. In this structure both of the two terms, i.e., the subject and the object, function as bricks not as cement. The cement is the uniting relation itself, i.e., knowing.

This three-fold theory of reflective knowledge, namely, the "subject" as the knower and the "object" as the thing known, and the relation as "knowing" accounts for the whole constitution of the intentional act of reflective knowledge.⁽¹⁴⁾ Just as the complex whole of the relation is characterised by being immanent and intentional, so also each and every part of it has the character of immanence and intentionality. Thus, from this Illuminative point of view it follows that, like Husserlian phenomenology, there must be an immanent object essential to the very structure of our reflective knowledge, though, contrary to Husserl, apart from this there is also an object that lies supposedly independently outside of our mind and has no identical relationship with our reflective knowledge; rather, we are in an ontetic touch with it through the unitary consciousness. The immanent object and the mind are bound together and are never separate in their phenomenological status. Reflective knowledge, then, is primarily a relation between mind and objects, and exists only when that relation exists. No object, then no judgement; no judgement, then no reflective knowledge.

The distinction between "immanative object" and "transitive object" does not merely serve to show how these two kinds of objects are bound together, providing a communion between the external and internal worlds. In addition, the distinction enables us to understand that in our reflecting knowledge of the external world there is always an "essentiality" combined with a sense of "probability" in the relation between these two kinds of objects. The "essentiality" is that of the immanative objects, and is understood by the very definition of the notion of reflective knowledge.

The “probability” is that of the transitive object. They both have to join together in order to make up our reflective knowledge of external objects. Probability here means that those transitive objects may or may not truly correspond to the immanent objects. Probability however characterises our phenomenal, reflective knowledge.

7. 3. 2. *A Characteristic of Reflective Knowledge:*

The double sense of objectivity, however, is the essential feature of our phenomenal, reflective knowledge, or in Kantian terminology, “discursive knowledge,” whether it is perceptual or conceptual, empirical or transcendental. That which the mind immanently possesses, i.e., representation, is the necessary immanent object, such as our conception of Julius Caesar, etc., but not necessarily an external object such as Julius Caesar himself, etc. In the case of sense perception, for example, if I perceive a physical object, say my television set, there are two objective entities to be distinguished from each other. There is on the one hand an external object existing independently outside of my mind, the reality of which belongs to the reality of the external world, and has nothing to do with the constitution of this episode of my perceiving. This is the transitive object which is the physical reality my television set itself regardless of my perception of it. Corresponding to this, there is also an object which is present in, and identical with, the existence, of my perceiving power. This is the immanent object that constitutes the essence of my immanent act of perceiving, the reality of which belongs to the reality of my perception.

The relation of knowing or perceiving, it is said in the Illuminative philosophy, with regard to the external object is “accidental” and with regard to the internal object “essential.” The former relation is accidental because, Sadra says,⁽¹⁵⁾ the external object as an independent existence lies outside of my mental power and exterior to it. It is only matter of the co-accidentality of the existence of our mind along with its knowledge and the existence of external object that brings them together in the unity of the act of reflective knowing. But in the very definition of reflective knowledge as such, the internal object is necessary and essential, because insofar as the relation of knowing concerned it is impossible to have an act of this without having, or even with a doubt of having, an internal object. But there is no absurdity in having an act of this kind, while having no external object in the external world. It is concluded by Sadra that the internal object is constitutively given in essence of the notion of reflective knowledge as such, but the external object is accidental lying outside of the

conception of reflective knowledge in the extramental world and serving as the final cause in the factual case of our reflective knowledge of an external object.

A serious consideration is introduced by Sadra here concerning the conformity of subject-object. The interpreted Aristotelian conception of "causation" does not necessarily establish a theory of "conformity" as opposed to the theory of "correspondence," a conformity in the sense of identity of the thing as an external object with the thing as a mental entity appearing to us. Taking an external object as the independent reality of the final cause, and its mental image as the internal one, there is no possibility of any kind of identity of one of these two entirely different types of existence with the other. Thus no matter how strongly this Aristotelian notion of causality has to be interpreted, it can never bring us a sense of conformity which ends in some kind of identity between things in themselves and things as known to us. The meaning of "correspondence" therefore is inevitably taken as a negation of the idea of identity, and thus the notion of "conformity," no matter to what it may be attributed, can only be construed as something closer to correspondence than to identity.

By this, one should notice, Sadra is not challenging the focal point of the renowned Aristotelian thesis of "identity" of the understanding and the thing understood: the intellect and what is understood are identical. On the contrary, we see him trying to interpret it as if he equips it so that it can stand up to Kant's criticism of the idea of "conformity" in the sense of the identity. In this regard Kant says:

"If, then, on the supposition that our empirical knowledge "conforms" to objects as things in themselves we find that the unconditioned cannot be thought without contradiction, and that when, on the other hand, we suppose that our representation of things, as they are given to us, does not conform to these things as they are in themselves, but that these objects, as appearances, conform to our mode of representation, the contradiction vanishes."⁽¹⁶⁾

It seems obvious that the whole weight of this Kantian argument hinges upon the point that, should things in themselves ever be conformed to, i.e., identified with, things as they are given to us, it would be a flat contradiction. Putting this into our terminology, it can be rephrased in this way: If the transitive independent external object becomes, in the case of knowledge, existentially identical with the immanent object totally dependent on our mind, it is a precise contradiction. One answer to this contradiction would be: firstly, the conformity between external and internal objects

should not be understood as any form of existential identity, rather as a correspondence relation of the immanent object to the transitive object; secondly, the Aristotelian thesis of identity possibly, calls for a strong sense of the existential identity of the act of understanding with the immanent object essentially understood, and not with the transitive object understood only accidentally.

Looking at the matter as a whole, the Illuminative theory reached the conclusion that even in our ordinary knowledge, which we call phenomenal, reflective knowledge, there are two senses of objectivity, one is the immanent object, and the other the transitive object. On the other hand, we will see that in our knowledge by presence there is only one sense of objectivity which is but the immanent object.

7. 3. 3. *The Absent And The Present:*

We must now discuss why in the Illuminative theory all physical objects which are existentially independent from our mind are treated in that system as "absent objects" as opposed to "present objects."⁽⁷⁾ Considering the existence of physical objects as entirely independent from and unaffected by our mental act of knowing, the point becomes clear that the nature of such an existence always lies beyond the radiance of our existential mentality and is never identical with it. This state of "independence", "unaffectedness" and "beyondness" is expressed by Illuminative philosophy as the state of "absence," and objects belonging to this state as "absent objects." This deals with the word "absence." As for the word "presence," Illuminative philosophy has, on the same basis, taken it to mean the condition of identification of the existence of the mind with the existence of its mental acts and mental entities. Those entities presented under the condition of identity in the mind of the knowing subject are marked as "present objects." "Presence" therefore positively means something very close to the meaning of "identity" in existence with the mind, just as the word "absence" signifies the sense of difference in existence from the existence of the mind. Negatively, "present objects" are those objects which are not absent from the existential radiance of the mind.

From all this we are now able to understand how these circumstances justify Illuminative philosophers, such as Sadra, in supposing that things belonging to the order of the external world are to be held as "absent" objects as opposed to "present" objects. These external objects are not, in a true sense, present to, and identified with, us in the order of thought, but their conceptions and representations are. He says:

“A treatise on the theory that the knowledge of these objects whose existences are absent from us is possible only through the intermediary of the representations of these objects in us.”⁽¹⁸⁾

In his opinion, however, it would be absurd if the objective reality of these objects were ever present to our mind so that an external object became totally internal, and an independent existence fell from its order of being to the order of conception subsisting in the state of our mentality. But we can, nevertheless, says this philosopher, achieve communication with these absent objects only by virtue of having perceptual or conceptual representations of them in our mind, the representations that belong originally to us and have been raised and set up by our intellectual power.⁽¹⁹⁾

Let us sum up discussion of the Illuminative distinction between immanent and transitive objects. Objects of our knowledge are to be understood as of two kinds: a) immanent and essential objects, constituent of the act of the knowing subject, b) transitive, and accidental objects absent from the mind and extraneous to the act of knowledge. The relation of these two distinct objects is that of “correspondence” not of identity.

The immanent object being free from association with matter can be exemplified as sensible, imaginable and intelligible, depending on the degree of the abstract knowledge and our mental power of apprehension. In this project even an immanent sensible object in our empirical knowledge enjoys a primitive degree of abstraction and because it is free from matter. That is, it subsists not in matter but in mind.

The transitive object, on the other hand, is an external, material or immaterial form of object, which is existentially independent of, and separate from, the state of our mentality and has no susceptibility to any degree of abstraction. In the case of a material object, it is associated with matter, space, and time. And in the instance of a non-material object, if any, it stands by itself with no passive relation to matter, space, or time. These transitive objects can be communicated with only by initiating representations of them in our mind. These representations, therefore, being in the order of conception, are to be regarded as immanent objects proper, and those which have been represented by them, the existence of which has remained in the order of being, are to be held as transitive and accidental objects.

Finally, one should notice that on the matter of immanent, essential objects, just characterised as being free from matter, the question as to whether they are free,

hence, “abstract”, or essentially free, hence, “innate,” can easily be decided. Although it does not principally concern us, we have already indicated that “abstraction” is not to be taken to mean another intentional act added to the act of knowing, perceiving or conceiving. Rather, it is nothing other than the act of knowing itself that, even in its primitive form, represents the pure form of the material object through sense-experience. Abstraction⁽²⁰⁾ therefore is not to be construed as the sum of perceiving the whole material object, then separating its form from the matter, and keeping the form in the mind and leaving the matter in the external world. The subjective power of knowing does not, and can not, import anything from the outside of itself. It is rather the innate power of representation of the pure forms of things that makes the simple essence of our knowledge possible. On this Illuminative basis all kinds of our knowledge enjoy a proportionate degree of transcendental. An empirical sense-perception, for instance, because of being a sense-representation of the pure forms of a physical object, counts as an imperfect primitive form of transcendental object. The existential status of a sense perception can never be classified as a material object. It is rather an immaterial entity that represents the pure form of the material object. It stands for the form of that material object without having its external matter.

7. 4. Reflective Knowledge:

As yet, we have described the Illuminative theory of object which is essential to characterise the reflective knowledge. Now, in the rest of this chapter, we would have a closer look at the Illuminative approach to reflective knowledge and its relationship with the unitary consciousness to detect the existential nature of reflective knowledge as well.

The term ‘reflective knowledge’ is often used in philosophy to distinguish the subjective condition of experience. Locke, for example, defines reflective knowledge as the knowledge which the mind has of its own activity whereby these activities arise in the understanding. For Kant, reflective knowledge is concerned with the determination of the subjective conditions under which we are able to attain concepts. In phenomenology it is “the act by which consciousness turns inward, reversing its usual forward orientation”.⁽²¹⁾ In the Illuminative philosophy, reflective knowledge is, by definition, that class of knowledge which enjoys both an internal object and a

separate external object, and which includes a correspondence relationship between one of these objects and the other. As a matter of fact, a combination of the internal and external objects along with the maximum degree of correspondence between them makes up the essentiality of this species of knowledge. Since "correspondence" is indeed a dyadic relation by nature, it follows that whenever this relation holds there must be a conjunction between one object A and the other B. The relation cannot hold true if either conjunct is false. If there were no external object, there could be no representation of it. Then, there could be no possibility of correspondence relation between them. Therefore, there could be no possibility of that kind of knowledge at all.

The correspondence, therefore, is the criterion of reflective knowledge in the Illuminative language. If there are two independent existences such that the existential circumstances of the one do not bear upon, or derive from the other, and consequently there is no causal connection and no constant conjunction between them, then it seems true to say that the one is "absolutely neutral" with respect to the other. Another way to put it is, each of these two given different beings is existentially distant from the other. Thus interpreted, they are existentially "absent" from, and not present to, or united with, each other.

Here, as already indicated, the word "absence", quite often used in the Illuminative philosophy, means that there is no logical, ontological, or even epistemological connection between the two existences which are supposed to be in two completely different circumstances of being. The expression "absolutely neutral" is therefore a legitimate one for designating such a particular sense of "absence".

A mental entity (representation) in contrast with an external object would appear, at first sight, to be two existences which are absolutely neutral to and absent from each other. This should mean that they are not bound together, either logically, or ontologically, or epistemologically. It appears all but certain that such a neutrality can never be removed altogether and changed to an absolute unity so that the two existences become at the same time in all respects one and the same.

One possibility is suggested by the Illuminative philosophy for these two different things to reflectively come together and be bound to each other through a kind of epistemic unification. This is phenomenal unification which is epistemic, not logical, nor ontological. An external object may have, besides its factual reality which belongs to the order of being, a phenomenal representation⁽²²⁾ in our mind that pertains to the

order of conception. This does not mean for the Illuminative philosophy that an order of the external being comes and resides in our mind in such a way that it becomes considered as existentially united with our mind and listed as belonging to the order of conception. It can also be said that one of the main characteristics of the order of conception is that by being mental it subsists "in" us and is "produced" by our mind "within" the domain of our phenomenal act, whereas the order of being is characterised by existence, not "in" us but "in itself," and lying outside of us in the external world which is independent of the radiance of our mentality.

We have just said that the only possible way supposed by the Illuminative philosophy towards the unification of the two initially neutral existences is an epistemic unification. But what is this unification like, and how does it take place? The answer to these questions the Illuminative philosophy offers lies in the notion of "correspondence." The meaning of "correspondence" used here in this theory of reflective knowledge is, briefly considered, "resemblance" in content and "identity" in form.⁽²³⁾ That is, the internal form is united with the external material form, but the mental existence is never identical with the external one. The two different modes of existence therefore resemble each other by virtue of a formal unification. If this formal identity did not exist, there would be no possibility of any communication between the human mind and the world of reality.⁽²⁴⁾

When here speaking of the notion of "correspondence" it should, of course, be noted that the Illuminative philosophy is not concerned with the question of the criteriology of logical statements that must be either true or false. In the Illuminative philosophy this question is regarded as a derivative of the primordial question: How can our reflective knowledge correspond to the world of reality? Or, in other words, how can we understand our external world before we are able to speak and make sentences about it? This is the point that concerns us here the problem of "correspondence" is under consideration. But the question about the circumstances under which a given statement is true or false is another question, which should be treated in its proper place.

It has already been pointed out that in the Illuminative theory, reflective knowledge is marked by being involved in a two-fold sense of objectivity. It has an internal object, as the essence of reflective knowledge as such requires, and it also has an external object which lies outside the order of conception and counts as the objective "reference" of that reflective knowledge. The former has been called by

Illuminative philosophy the present object, and the latter the absent object the reality of which exists in separation from the reality of the mind of knowing subjects.

In this knowledge the internal object plays an intermediary representation-role in the achievement of the act of reflective knowing. That is to say, the internal object represents by means of conceptualisation of the reality of the external object before the mind of the knowing subject. To achieve this act of representation there must be a conformity in the sense of correspondence between the two kinds of objects. As representation, the internal object, and consequently the whole unity of the reflective knowledge, makes sense only if it has conformity and correspondence with the external object. Reflective knowledge therefore is that in which:

a) There are two kinds of objects: one is internal and the other is external. That is, both internal object and external object must already be in the order of the act.

b) There is a correspondence relation between these two objects. As we have seen before, since the correspondence relation is accidental, that is, our reflective knowledge may or may not correspond with the external reality, the logical dualism of truth and falsity, or error, comes under consideration. If our internal object really does correspond to the external object, our knowledge of the external world holds true and is valid, but if the condition of correspondency has not been obtained, the truth of our knowledge never comes about. This is because the opposition of truth and falsity is of a peculiar kind. It calls for a kind of relation, the applicability of which is symmetric, though the relation itself is not. This means that to whatever proposition or sentence the quality of "truth" is applicable, the quality of falsehood is by the same reason potentially applicable, and to whatever proposition or sentence the quality of falsehood is applicable, the quality of truth is on the same basis potentially applicable.

In Illuminative philosophy, according to the appropriate principles, certain oppositions have been developed that one can not find in the traditional square of opposition. Among these, the opposition of what has been called "aptitude and privation" should be specified in connection with truth and falsity. The nature of this opposition, as it is elaborated, is that in that category of opposition there must be something in which there is "eligibility" for qualification by one or other of the opposite qualities. An example of this, mentioned by these philosophers, is an animate object that has "eligibility" for sight or blindness, susceptibility to which is lacking in the nature of inanimate objects. We can say that a certain individual or species of animal is blind, because the generic nature of animality has aptitude for the quality of

sight. But we can never say that a certain instance or species of inanimate things, say a rock, is blind, because the generic term of these things does not suppose sight.⁽²⁵⁾ Thus, whatever object has by its nature "aptitude" for qualification by one of these opposite qualities has "aptitude" and susceptibility for being qualified by the other as well and vice versa. The opposition of truth and falsity is supposed to be of this kind. It applies only to those judgements and statements that are, through a correspondence relation, eligible for truth or falsity. But where the application of falsity does not make sense, neither does the application of truth.

By virtue of the correspondence it contains through its objective reference, reflective knowledge possesses the "aptitude" for being true, therefore it may conceivably fail to meet this condition and as a result become false. But this aptitude does not hold in the unitary consciousness, for in this, since it has nothing to do with correspondence, there is no possibility of its being false; thus it is not eligible for falsity (see, above, Ch. 5). As the nature of this opposition stands, if there is no susceptibility to falsity, there is no meaning for truth either. Thus, the dualism of truth and falsehood only holds in an appropriate opposition in which the possibility of one opposite is the logical standard for the possibility of the other. The impossibility of one also counts as the criterion of the modal impossibility of the other.

7.5. The Relation Between The Unitary Consciousness And Reflective thought:

Such is depicted reflective knowledge in the Illuminative theory considering it as separated from its source -- that is, from the unitary consciousness.

Not that is all however. Reflective knowledge is existentially interpreted on the basis of the unitary consciousness as well. There is, as we have just seen, in the very analysis of the relation of "knowing" a complex unity which constitutes the entirety of the nature of this relation. Although in its mental existence this unity is originally simple, nevertheless, its simplicity is broken down into a triple multiplicity so that it can be analysed by reflection into the relation as "knowing," the subject as "knower," and the object as "known." This conceptual triplicity is derivable from reflection on the primordial simplicity of the constructive existence of the act of reflective knowing itself, the kind of act which is absolutely identical with the existence of the human mind itself.⁽²⁶⁾

Moreover, one of the most famous theses of Sadra is the advocacy of an existential unity between the knower, the known and the act of knowing.⁽²⁷⁾ There is no reason whatever why we should not be able in our reflection upon a simple and absolute unity to analyse this unity into different conceptual parts without this conceptual complexity damaging the original simplicity of the unity.

Take the mathematical central point in a circle as an example. It is mathematically assumed that the point is simple and therefore indivisible in the sense that it cannot be divided into various points at the centre. Yet we are taught that it is possible to divide it up into various "sides" and "directions" once we have conceptually reflected upon it and defined it as "a point equally distant from all points on the circumference of the circle." Obviously, it is the same indivisible point that has been now divided into different "sides" in accordance with the different points which are assigned to it on the circumference of the circle. But we know that this kind of reflected multiplicity in the definition of the centre does not violate the simplicity of its mathematical status.

The point of this analogy is that while the original structure of reflective knowledge is simple and indivisible, the conceptual analysis breaks it down into three interrelated components which are all characterised by being essential, present, and mental.

Let us now consider the relation between reflective knowledge and the unitary consciousness to depict the existential nature of the former more clearly. In the Illuminative philosophy there is an immense drive to provide an appropriate technique which can help satisfy the need for an adequate language of those complexities peculiar to this system of thinking. One of those all-important technical words is "Illuminative relation" (*al-neshat al-idafah al-ishraqyyah*)⁽²⁸⁾ which can be regarded as the basic term for the Illuminative approaches to the problems of ontology, cosmology, and human knowledge.

Unlike the Aristotelian category of relation, this Illuminative relation is not of a kind designed to run between one side of the relation and the other, binding separate entities in a complex unity. It is also not like the other categories of Aristotle, which all have this in common that they belong to the order of conceptions and essentialities of beings. Neither is it meant to account for a copulative between one thing and another as the normal sense of relation requires. It is rather designed to be of the order of existence and reflects the very reality of the light overflowing from the

Supreme principle of lights. This relation specifically stands for the grades of the act of being rather than the capacities of potency. In other words, this sort of relation designates the existential status of Illuminative being proceeding from the first cause of beings. Like the reality of existence itself the Illuminative relation varies in degrees of intensity without separation and detachment from the source of illumination.

On the hypothesis that in the absolute vacuum eternity there was nothing, including time and space, which exists except Being as such, this question arises: How and in what manner did Being did bring things into being, while there was nothing of any element of being to start with? How can its relation with things be expressed? The answer suggested by the Illuminative philosophy is 'the Illuminative relation'.

Obviously in the context of this hypothesis there is no alternative to the phraseology of the Illuminative relation which clearly describes the sort of causation by illumination and emanation as distinct from causation by generation and corruption. Once we have succeeded in the conceptualisation of this form of causation, the relation between any cause and its immanent effect is subject to the overriding question of whether or not an immanent action itself is a mere Illuminative relation instead of being something in itself related to something else as its cause. This means that the Illuminative relation would be an existential relation by nature in which the relation itself and that which is related are one and the same.

It is in the light of this 'Illuminative relation' that the main question as to whether the relation between our unitary consciousness and our reflective knowledge is considered in the Illuminative philosophy. To be more specific, the question is whether the human mind, regarded as the first cause, antecedent to its own phenomenal consequents, illuminates from the depth of its own presence knowledge the rays of its immanent act of reflective knowledge? Does the process of this phenomenal causation take place in the same manner in which the first cause of the universe sheds the light of existence on the world of reality?

In answer to this question consider the following dialogue:⁽²⁹⁾

Q. : How can we ever have knowledge at all?

A. : Think of yourself. If you do so, you will certainly find out what truly answers your question.

Q. : But how?

A. : If I consider myself, I will find in all certainty that I am truly aware of myself in such a way that I can never miss myself. This state of self-certainty

convinces me that my awareness of myself does not mean anything but the awareness of "myself", "by" myself, not by anyone or anything else. If I were aware of myself "by" anyone or anything else, it would obviously mean that the awareness of myself belonged to another active power which is not myself. In this case there would be a knowing subject operating in myself in knowing myself. Thus it would not be myself that knows myself. But it has been assumed that it is the very performative "I" as the subject reality of myself who knows myself. (30)

From this point onward the argument proceeds in two different directions. One of these two ends up with the conclusion that in the case of self-knowledge the self as the performative subject and the same self which is the object of which it is aware are absolutely identical. This is the very concept of self-objectivity which, as we saw, characterises the initial theory of the unitary consciousness which can here account for the self-subjectivity of performative "I". The other line of argument leads to the ultimate point that in the event of any *reflective* knowledge in which the knowing subject is an "invariable I," a "performative I", and the object known is an external object, the "I" already knows itself by presence and knows its object by correspondence. Only the latter extension of the argument is relevant to our present investigation. Since the argument is extremely involved, we feel called upon to develop it so as to reach a satisfactory conclusion concerning the problem under consideration, i.e., the relation of the unitary consciousness and the reflective knowledge.

In the case that "I know P" a question arises: "I know an external object P, but do I, at the same time, know myself?" If, I do, then form of knowledge unintrospectively is knowledge of P. On this supposition it is imperative to ask this question: What is the nature and character of this underlying knowledge myself implied in the very case of my knowledge of an external object P.

Both of these questions follow from the supposition that the "I" as the knowing subject does indeed know itself at the very moment that it experiences knowledge of an external object P. Taking the alternative that the "I" does not really know itself while knowing an external object P, there result some paradoxical questions from various perspectives.

From a logical standpoint, when I say, for instance, "I know P" the word "I" in this statement represents, or refers to the knowing subject of the proposition. The knowing subject is that subject which has made up and held within itself this relation

to the object P. Just as the word "I" is a constituent term in the form of the sentence "I know P", so the mind of the agent as the knowing subject counts for an integral part of the knowledge on which the whole conception of the knowing relation is based. Thus a constitutive part of knowledge, the "I", is subsistently implied in the whole. Given as it is, it cannot be unknown to itself. Ruling out the knowing subject from the complex whole of the relation of knowledge would completely break down the meaning of that relation, and as a result human knowledge could no longer remain meaningful. Thus, that which is an integral part of knowledge cannot remain unknown.

Besides, the act of knowing is designated , intentional and immanent in contrast with the physical and transitive acts of human beings. Being an intentional act, the whole complex unity of the act of the knowing relationship is placed within the scope of the "intentionality" which implies that each and every element of such a relationship is known by the knowing subject. As thus posited, the "I" as the knowing subject of such a form of knowledge must be known in its context. Subsequently, on this hypothesis, the subject term is known, just as the predicate is in all certainty known. A knowing "I" is known to itself by presence and acts like an active intellect to provide in itself the form of its object so that it can know it by correspondence.

Thus we can understand from all this that the unitary consciousness has creative priority over reflective knowledge. This is what Sadra underlines.⁽³¹⁾ He says that the self "has the power to create the forms of the mental objects."⁽³²⁾ In point of fact reflective knowledge always emerges from its rich and ever present source which is the unitary consciousness, and which is absolutely nothing other than the very "being" of the active and performative "I". For if the active "I" were not present in all of its intentional reflective knowledge, all human intentionality, such as believing, thinking, wanting and so on and so forth, would become meaningless. That is, there would be no sense in saying "I believe so and so," "I want so and so," etc..

On this account, the relationship of the unitary consciousness to reflective knowledge is taken by the Illuminative philosophy in terms of illumination and emanation. This kind of relation is nothing other than a typically existential relationship of which the Illuminative philosophy speaks in its terminology as an Illuminative relation.

This also implies that reflective knowledge is existential and in final analysis this kind of knowledge is a mode of being⁽³³⁾. This is because reflective knowledge is

grounded by and generated from the unitary consciousness; that is to say, it is a determination (*ta'ayyon*) of the unitary consciousness through which the former is constituted by the Illuminative relation. In this respect, the upshot of this discussion follows: "... [the reflective] knowledge... is being."⁽³⁴⁾

By such a thesis on the nature of the reflective knowledge, the Illuminative philosophy approves, with some reservations, its relevant efforts in the existential phenomenology to bestow an existential nature to the reflective knowledge. Heidegger whose aim is an 'ontological reflection', writes in the same case: "The whole correlation necessarily gets thought as 'somehow' being."⁽³⁵⁾ He also reminds us of others like Scheler and Hartmann on this subject:

"Following Scheler's procedure, N. Hartmann has recently based his ontologically oriented epistemology upon the thesis that [reflective] knowing is 'relationship of being'."⁽³⁶⁾

Nevertheless, these authors do not found the relation between ontology and reflective knowledge as an Illuminative relation. Heidegger, for example, tries to found this relation in temporality of Dasein that, in his eyes, discloses the reflection as a grounded mode of Dasein's existence. Moreover, he does not engage himself to see how ontological thought furnishes us with objects which unavoidably concern us in our reflection.

On contrary, Sadra has tried not only to discover in the unitary consciousness, so to speak, the mechanism of grounding reflective thought, but also to see how the former supplies objects for the latter. Concerning the second point, we may summarise his doctrine as follows: The unitary consciousness existentially discovers the reality of beings with which it is in ontetic touch -- that is, in its living experience of Being; then the creative imagination (which is called by contemporary Sadraean philosopher Tabataba'ii, the Converter (*mobaddel*) of the unitary consciousness),⁽³⁷⁾ translates those realities as objects of our subject.

7.6. Final Considerations:

This illustration may seem to oversimplify Sadra's position in this respect. In fact, he has discussed this issue in detail through demonstrating mental existence in first instance⁽³⁸⁾, but he crucially reconsiders this issue when he tries to show how the unitary consciousness dominates all aspect of our episteme in its broad sense: It

grounds our episteme, because the efficiency of all epistemic faculties including the subjectivity of the subject, depends on it⁽³⁹⁾.

Not only this; the unitary consciousness, according to Sadra, guarantees the objectivity of objects as well; that is to say, since the reality of beings with which a unitary consciousness is in ontetic touch are existentially present before it, it then already is sure of , so to speak, the external reality of objects which concern the subject -- specially if we remember the non-erroneous character of the unitary consciousness (Ch, 4). Therefore, we can conclude that apart from its other activity, the unitary consciousness grounds two things in respect to reflective thought: The subjectivity of the subject and the objectivity of the object. This may need a bit more description.

As it appears from the previous discussions, the unitary consciousness is an existentially current experience of beings with which it is in ontetic touch. Through this, the unitary consciousness discovers the reality of beings. In so doing, the unitary consciousness pushes us to be not merely receptive in relation with the world; rather, we are creative and go out to meet it, and always anticipate it. It is why there are things we do not learn; why we know them from the beginning, as if we had always been familiar with them. That is, as we have seen, the unitary consciousness implies coexistentiality. As we saw in this chapter, the unitary consciousness creates the object independently of the subject, even though the object is always an object for a subject. What the subject does possess is the aptitude for comprehending objects supplied for him by it and, once given, recognised by the subject. ⁽⁴¹⁾

Once again we see as before that such a process of elaborating objects requires the pre-existence of the unitary consciousness. From the reflective standpoint, the unitary consciousness is what I already know, just as the slave boy in Plato's Meno already "knew" geometry -- though the slave boy does not know that he knows geometry. His knowledge is an existential experience in his everydayness that could remain veiled, concealed and latent. This implicit awareness appears as present in him without needing to be formulated and as a primordial certitude which is always present in him.

This means for Sadra, at least, that reflective knowledge is not, as subjectivism implies, groundless. Our reflection is always springs from, proceeds and acts in the context of our 'being' as the unitary consciousness that puts us in an ontetic touch with the reality of beings that are present for us by their actual beings. Then, on this,

we are not indeed deprived of the real world.⁽⁴²⁾ Nor are we misled in grasping beings in the world, the things in themselves even in the plane of reflective thought simply because reflective thought is currently supported by the unitary consciousness which picks up the real and inserts it into the reflective language (of course, this language, has its own nature one characteristic of which is that it is subject to error dependent on the weakness or strength of our epistemic faculties). This is, according to Sadraean theory, what prove with our non-reflectively commonsensially everydayness experience.

In this chapter, we have tried to show, to some extent, the application of the theory of unitary consciousness to reflective knowledge and its 'subject-object'-ive structure. In the following final chapter, we will try to summarise some other applications of this theory.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Conclusions

Such was the Illuminative theory. In this chapter we will first briefly summarise the illuminative theory; and then set forth some immediate conclusions including (i) a refutation of a triple implication concerning the relation of the self and reality which follows from the subjectivistic gap;(ii) the agreement of the Illuminative theory with common sense; and (iii) a suggestion as to how one could read the authors of modern theory of the self such as Descartes in the illuminative context. Let us start with the summary.

I. Based on the special method introduced above (Ch.2), an ontetic field was discovered. Through this field the ability of the illuminative philosophy to contribute to resolving the ontological crisis in modern theories of the self was examined. This was the overall objective of this research. In trying to detect the origin of the epistemology of the self in the ontetic field, we saw how the ontological gap in modern theories could be filled by application of the illuminative ontetic principles (Ch.3) thereby reconstructing the dismissed “being” of the self. The self is then considered as an emanative being who is absorbed and situated in Being. At this stage, as we saw, there is no subject, no mind (in Cartesian-Husserlian sense); the subject is only a self as unitary consciousness. (Ch.4-5) On this basis the Illuminative philosophy was also directed to answering some major problems which arise from modern subjectivism, including our consciousness of private states and reflective (Subject-Objective) knowledge.⁽¹⁾ To be sure, commonsense suggests that the self is somehow a source of awareness of the body, feelings, thought and intentions which, by its nature, defines and embodies important values and goals. By identifying the self with the unitary consciousness, this Illuminative theory tries to show how the self, could be related to our awareness of private states (Ch.6), and also to reflective knowledge.(Ch.7)

II. We saw how the illuminative theory could also justify our grasping of the reality of objects through appealing to their being in the ontetic field. Understood as unitary consciousness, the self acts in a twofold way: On one hand, thanks to being an

emanative entity situated in the context of Being, it has *ontetic touch* with beings (objects-in-themselves for reflective thought) so that these beings are immediately present to the self. The self then has access to the reality of beings through ontetic touch.⁽²⁾ On the other hand, the self creates and grounds reflective thought by an *Illuminative relation*. It means that the self as unitary consciousness ascertains the correspondence between concepts or representations and their external objects.

Thus understood, the theory eliminates the triple consequence of modern subjectivism as well: skepticism, solipsism and idealism. All these arise from presupposing a gap between a mental concept or representation and its external object, to which supposedly the subject has no access. If the subject has no access to external objects, then the subject is concerned with nothing but concepts and representations: an external world is presupposed only as a reference point for our concepts and representations. The fatal step in the triple consequence is losing the external world: how can we be sure of our knowledge of the external world (skepticism) while we have nothing but representations and concepts (idealism), then, the world as a whole depends on us -- everybody is ultimately a monad (solipsism).⁽³⁾

The Illuminative theory avoids this triple trap simply because it maintains that the self does apprehend the external world, the reality of beings-in-themselves, through the ontetic touch: the object-in-itself while absent in our reflective thought (in the eidetic field) nevertheless is present for the self by its being (in the ontetic field): I am already ontetically in touch with the pen with which I am writing, but not in an intentionally conscious manner of representative, reflective knowledge. Rather, I grasp its reality as it is in itself through hybridisation of my being and the being of pen; in the sense that its being is present for my unitary consciousness, (i.e., for my being). There is no room for the triple trap. The reality of pen is not totally absent for me, it is present by its being (be)for(e) my being. This idea is supported by another Illuminative thesis explaining that the unitary consciousness is free from being mistaken; there is no error in the unitary consciousness because it is pure being. (see Ch. 5) Then, when the unitary consciousness picks up the reality of a being (pen in our example), it does not make error. However, error may take place at the level of reflection while conceptualising that reality: in fact, what comes first is 'Being' and the self is a fellow of it. We, selves, share a common site in reaching reality.⁽⁴⁾ What makes us different in our reflective interpretation of reality is our differences in the degrees of strength or weakness of faculties with which we translate that reality into

the language of reflective thought. Thus the unitary consciousness sets us free from the triple trap of subjectivism. I am not living only with my representations, but, already with their actual facts.

III. The Illuminative theory of the unitary consciousness may also contribute to justify why some of modern philosophers like Descartes and Kant presupposed the prior ideas/principles beyond our reflective faculties. Though there is a basic difference between the Illuminative notion of “the unitary consciousness” and the theory of Cartesian “Innate ideas” or Kantian “A priori” (just because the unitary consciousness is a living existential experience), it can show that such theories are right so far as they approve the necessity of being an other domain (which we called the ontetic field) beyond our reflective thought. To the extent that such theories could be deformed and existentially, the Illuminative theory accompanies and appreciates Cartesian or Kantian theories.

IV. The Illuminative theory of unitary consciousness also uniquely allows us to give experiential significance to the characterisation of the self as something which can neither be characterised nor defined in terms of empirical qualities and their collections and relationships. Without engaging in mysticism or in justification of the practical, mystical aspect of the Illuminative theory,⁽⁵⁾ we mention here that this point is supported by a profound experience of unitary consciousness widely reported by Illuminative mystics who claimed to taste the high experience of ‘no-mind’, of identification of the self and unitary consciousness, by abandoning reflective thought and picking up the ‘presence’ through meditative techniques, and whose mystical meditations claimed to cover all aspects of our experiences, including our external and internal perceptions.⁽⁶⁾ Illuminationists rely on an empirical element as well as our ordinary commonsensical experiences (including our experiences of thinking).

Furthermore, on the assumption that experience of the self is necessarily present in every experience, one can again show that experience of unitary consciousness is not only an excellent candidate for experience of the self but the only possible one. Only an experience without any qualities can accompany every other possible experience and the experience of unitary consciousness meets this requirement uniquely. This argument is conclusive, but another argument is worth noting. Unitary consciousness is experienced in a performative state; this experience has no parts or

components (indeed, even the manifolds of space and time, the very contexts in which parts can be distinguished, are not present in the experience). Therefore given our assumption that experience of one's self is present in this experience of unitary consciousness,(Ch.6) it must actually *be* this experience, as a whole, for the experience of this unitary consciousness has no part which can be assigned to or be specified as being the experience of the self. Thus we see not only that experience of unitary consciousness is the only possible candidate for fulfilling the criteria for experience of the self, as derived from Descartes and the above philosophers (see Ch. 1) but also it is the only possible candidate for fulfilling the commonsense intuition that the self is somehow experienced as present in every experience.

This last conclusion appears to raise a problem, however. For if the self is somehow experienced as present in every experience, as common sense insists, and if the experience of the unitary consciousness is identified as the relevant experience of the self, then the experience of the unitary consciousness must somehow be a component or aspect of every other experience. But this raises the question of why the unitary consciousness usually goes unnoticed, even when specifically sought. The answer immediately suggests itself that it goes unnoticed precisely because it is constant and present in all our experiences. Our attention tends to go to what is changing; what remains constant gradually recedes into the background. This in turn suggests that the Illuminative notion of self as constant and unchanging (see Ch. 5), present somehow in all of our experiences, is a reflection of a vague yet widespread subliminal awareness of the unitary consciousness as pervading all our experiences. If this analysis is correct, the fact that the unitary consciousness usually comes to be noticed only when all the other contents of awareness cease to occupy our attention ceases to be puzzling and becomes what we expect. Finally, if this analysis is correct we would expect that the Illuminative experience of the unitary consciousness renders it more noticeable and raises it from the existential level.

The identification of the unitary consciousness with the self thus offers a simple explanation for the otherwise very problematic fact that common sense continues to insist that the self is somehow present in all experience, even when it is unable to isolate it, and even when intellectual analysis convinces us that it cannot be given in experience by any empirical quality, or even abstractly accounted for by any relationship or collection of such qualities. For the self is present in all experience, there to be noticed, as qualityless unitary consciousness.

V. It also seems that the Illuminative theory of the self can helpfully supply a means to unify apparently conflicting modern theories of self, and allow development of a theory of self capable of giving experiential realisation of the otherwise unfulfilable criteria derived from Descartes, Hume, Kant and Husserl (see, Ch1). In the rest of this chapter, we will see this point in more detail.

Descartes claimed that he was able to locate the self, simple and abiding throughout our changing experiences. Philosophers such as Hume and Kant, however, insisted that they could not find any such self. Husserl remained in tension between Descartes on one hand and Hume and Kant on the other, and tried to reconcile them by suggesting the eidetic constitution. Nevertheless, Descartes' analysis seems to be faithful to common sense. The analysis of the unitary consciousness makes this commonsense claim (and the appeal of Descartes' analysis) intelligible, and in a way that suggests that common sense is in fact correct. In the absence of this Illuminative consciousness, however, common sense and reflective analysis have often been in sharp conflict. Such a conflict can be found, for example, in Bertrand Russell's views on the self.

The early Russell argued that "dualism of subject and object" is "a fundamental fact concerning cognition" and that "I am acquainted with myself."⁽⁷⁾ Indeed, he seems to argue that there are precisely two things that we are aware of namely, the self and its present.⁽⁸⁾ So far Russell, like Descartes, clearly conforms to common sense. Later, however, Russell changed his mind saying that

"Hume's inability to perceive himself was not peculiar, and I think most unprejudiced observers would agree with him. Even if by great exertion some rare person could catch a glimpse of himself, this would not suffice, for 'I' is a term which we all know how to use."⁽⁹⁾

Russell finally concluded that the concept of the self has to be a mere "logical fiction," "schematically convenient, but not empirically discoverable."⁽¹⁰⁾

Russell's rejection of his earlier commonsensical view was based on his inability to discover in experience anything that could either correspond to or clarify our ordinary notion of the self as simple and abiding. We have already seen how the Illuminative theory of the unitary consciousness is a good candidate for this experience of the self that Russell, like Hume before him, could not find.

VI. The Illuminative mystical experience of the self, as claimed by the Illuminative mystics, seems also capable of removing the force of difficulties arise from some linguistic approach to the self. In history of Western philosophy, especially since Hobbes (Descartes' contemporary), we see some philosophers who comes to reject the notion of 'I' simply through a grammatical analysis. The general point of such analyses is that verbs such as "think" require a grammatical subject naturally suggests that there is some "I" (in the first person case) who does the thinking. However, this "I" is merely a schematic convenience, required by ordinary grammar but not representing any real thing. For example, when we say "It is raining," we neither need nor want to postulate any separate "It" that does the raining. The same case holds good for the "I" (in "I think," etc.). Thus, if we cannot find anything that could properly correspond to the term "I," we should recognise that this "I" is nothing but a mere schematic convenience.

Such an approach to 'I' also conflicts commonsense. Common sense rejects this approach, insisting that we (or at least most of us) are in fact somehow aware of our selves throughout our experience, and that the "I" in "I think" is, unlike the "It" in "It is raining," definitely not at all superfluous. The analysis of the unitary consciousness seems capable of giving an experiential support to this claim of common sense, and removes such a grammatical approach.

It is interesting in this context to note also Descartes' own response to such approach. Hobbes objected to Descartes that since we have no inner perception corresponding to the idea of self or soul this idea could only be a mere product of inference. Descartes agreed that "there is no image of the soul fixed in the phantasy." But he insisted nevertheless that "there is what I call an idea," something that he was "directly aware of" and which was not "inferred by reason." (12)

"For when we observe that we are conscious beings (*res cogitantes*), this is a sort of primary notion, which is not the conclusion of any syllogism; and, moreover, when somebody says: I experience (*Cogito*), therefore I am or exist, he is not syllogistically deducing his existence from an experience (*cogitatione*), but recognising it as something self-evident, in a simple mental intuition." (13)

"I experience (*Cogito*) therefore I am. . . this knowledge is no product of your reasoning, no lesson that your masters have taught you; it is something that your mind sees, feels, handles." (14)

Descartes' experiential language and explicit denial of reliance on reasoning here are thus both unmistakable -- even though, as he insists, the experience has

nothing of the imagination in it, for any such content would only “reduce the clearness of this knowledge.”⁽¹⁵⁾

VII. It is easy to see why Descartes’ experiential claims here have not generally had much effect. For in the absence of knowledge of the relevant experiences these claims appear problematic if not simply unintelligible. The Illuminative unitary consciousness, however, allows us to see how the experiential aspects of Descartes’ *Meditations* can be read literally and intelligibly. We can also note numerous close parallels between Descartes’ explicit narrative experience and the Illuminative texts, parallels which indicate clearly that Descartes might helpfully be read here in this Illuminative fashion. Consider, for example, the following passages from Descartes’ first three “Meditations”.⁽¹⁵⁺¹⁾

“[Meditation 1] I will suppose that sky, air, earth colours, shapes, sounds and all external objects are mere delusive dreams. . . I will consider myself as having no hands, no eyes, no flesh, no blood, no senses.”⁽¹⁶⁾

“[Meditation 2] Yesterday’s meditation plunged me into doubts of such gravity that I cannot forget them, and yet do not see how to resolve them. I am bewildered, as though I had suddenly fallen into a deep sea, and could neither plant my foot on the bottom nor swim up to the top. But I will make an effort, and try once more the same path as I entered upon yesterday.”⁽¹⁷⁾

The result of being lost in this unbounded sea of doubt was, as Descartes describes in the next two paragraphs of his text, his “discovery” of self, already analysed by us at some length. Descartes then begins his next “Meditation” with a further description of his method:

“[Meditation 3] I will now shut my eyes, stop my ears, withdraw all my senses; I will even blot out the images of corporeal objects from my consciousness; or at least (since this is barely possible) I will ignore them as vain illusions. I will discourse with myself alone and look more deeply into myself. I am a conscious being.”⁽¹⁸⁾

Descartes then came to recognise that he had an idea of unbounded, “infinite” consciousness,⁽¹⁹⁾ that this idea is “supremely clear and distinct and representationally more real than any other”⁽²⁰⁾ and is “innate in me, just as the idea of myself is.”⁽²¹⁾ Descartes, calling this “infinite” consciousness “God,” then concludes his third meditation with the following observations:

“[Meditation 3] I wish [now] to stay a little in the contemplation of God; to meditate within myself on his attributes; to behold, wonder at, adore the beauty of this immeasurable Light, so far as the eye of my darkened understanding can bear it. . . . [T]his contemplation of the Divine Majesty. . . makes us aware that we can get from it the greatest joy of which we are capable in this life.”⁽²²⁾

Thus in his first three “Meditations” Descartes describes (a) generating a pervasive attitude of doubt, (b) withdrawing his attention from external objects, sensations, and sensory-oriented thought, (c) finding himself lost in a “sea” of doubt, (d) discovering his self as consciousness, independent of all imaginable content, (e) locating a completely unbounded level of such consciousness (“God”) as the context and foundation of his own (finite) consciousness, and (f) finding that contemplation of this unbounded level produces incomparable joy.

All six of these points correspond closely with the Illuminative literature. they are standard in the practice and performing of the Illuminative unitary consciousness which determines the self as pure presence to being, including even the description of what this school calls “the stage of raising doubt” (*maqam al hayrat*) from which all meditations start.⁽²³⁾ And, more generally, the main features described in Descartes’ account, namely, (i) reversing the direction of attention (away from the senses and sense-oriented thought), (ii) coming to inner experiences of unboundedness (a deep sea, non-picturable consciousness, and infinite non-picturable consciousness), and (iii) gaining an experience of exquisite joy and light in the latter unboundedness, are all standard components of the literature of transcendental experience, in the Illuminative school.

The autobiographical nature of these passages is, however, explicit. This interpretation provides the basis for an explanation of how Descartes might properly claim to have a “clear and distinct” intuition of self as unpicturable consciousness independent of all sense-oriented content and thought,⁽²⁴⁾ even though other investigators such as Hume and Kant could not.⁽²⁵⁾ For as we have seen, the Illuminative unitary consciousness, which uniquely can give clear significance to Descartes’ concept of self, remains unnoticed unless one methodically and radically reorients the direction of one’s attention.

Descartes is usually read by most of western philosophers in an intellectual context.(Put aside exceptions like Husserl) They do not even suggest that they have attempted to do what Descartes described, namely “withdraw” their senses from

physical objects and “even blot out the images of corporeal objects” from their consciousness. They have, however, often taken the idea seriously enough to propose what may be called “thought-experiments” in which they attempt to imagine what it would be like to perform the process Descartes described, and then draw conclusions from the imagined result. While thought-experiments can be useful, their results are often far from unambiguous. Two thought-experiments articulated by noted philosophers on the topic in question will illustrate this difficulty. The first was articulated by Avicenna (Ibn Sina, 980-1037 A. D.), often regarded as the most influential of the Medieval Islamic/Persian philosophers. In his thought-experiment Avicenna asked us to imagine a man created suddenly, floating in empty space, with his various senses either inherently non-functional or having no objects on which to operate. Such a person, according to Avicenna, would nevertheless still be conscious of his own existence.⁽²⁶⁾ This line of reasoning, however, would not be at all acceptable to Hume. For in thought-experiments of his own Hume argued repeatedly that if all his perceptions were removed he would be “insensible of” himself, and would “truly be said not to exist.” Without any perceptions or impressions, according to Hume, “I should be entirely annihilated, nor do I conceive what is farther requisite to make me a perfect nonentity.”⁽²⁷⁾

The fact that Hume and Avicenna come to such different conclusions from what for our purposes are comparable thought-experiments indicates of course that they had very different intuitions about the nature of the self and the relation of self-knowledge to the contents of ordinary experience. Various responses to their different intuitions and conclusions are possible. Depending on one’s own intuitions about the topic, for example, one might attempt to account for the difference between the positions of Hume and Avicenna (and correlatively defend one’s own position) by postulating that one or the other thinker was influenced by hidden verbal and/or commonsensical assumptions. Alternatively, one might postulate that the two thinkers had different degrees of clarity of the experience of “the unitary consciousness” -- just as the theory of a ‘transcendental self’, in Cartesian, Kantian or Husserlian senses, is so as well.

If we suppose here that it is possible to perform in reality (the phenomenologically relevant aspect of) the imagined thought-experiments, a less hypothetical analysis of this case is possible. For in Illuminative practices all the objective contents of experience can frequently fade out and disappear, entirely,

leaving the experience of the unitary consciousness (or in the Illuminative school mystical terminology, a pure presence to being which is the absolute openness of an absorbed self) by itself, devoid of all sensations and thought, and identifiable as the self.

This experience, as already hinted, has allowed us to corroborate and/or falsify various aspects of modern theories of self. It is worth noting here that while the experience falsifies some of Hume's (and other later empiricists') major conclusions about the self, it does so by remaining faithful to Hume's basic empiricist methodology. Hume emphasised throughout his *Treatise* that the orientation of his philosophical work was to attempt to apply the "experimental method" to questions of human nature and mind. We can now, it appears, significantly advance this aspect of Hume's empirically-oriented program by removing at least one important question from the realm of mere thought-experiment through performing the relevant experiment directly. Thus, although the Illuminative experience of the unitary consciousness corroborates aspects of Descartes, Husserl, Kant's, and other rationalistic theories of self, it does so in accord with empiricist experiential methodology (rather than by abstract a priori arguments).

Thus understood, we may see how much the Illuminative experiential theory of the unitary consciousness can helpfully supply a context in which to unify the apparently conflicting theories of self in modern thought.

APPENDIX

The Empirical Element In Sadra's Epistemology

In this appendix we would briefly discuss the role of the empirical element in Sadra's epistemology in a quick comparison with modern ones. In the following presentation we intend to employ "epistemology" or "theory of knowledge" in a broad sense to include the examination of the fundamentals of every kind of knowledge leading to or generating from the being. Considered thus, "epistemology" would constitute a variety of modes of cognition and information. On the one hand, it includes an assumption-free base for human knowledge; on the other hand, it embraces revelation as a source of knowledge.

What is the origin of knowledge? The origin of knowledge, according to Sadra,⁽¹⁾ is experience and its scope is nothing less than the comprehension of the being. The Illuminative philosophy is a presuppositionless one; at least this is the ideal. In this spirit, Sadra's examination of the origin and means of knowledge compels an artistic imagination of the individual, existential place of man in the ocean of being, and consequently aims to dislodge tradition from its very foundations. By so doing this school intended to give its theory of knowledge a radical beginning similar in this respect to Descartes, Hume, and Husserl. This similarity was previously discussed at length.

Sadra does not seem to endorse the Platonic theory that the mind comes into the world already in possession of certain innate truths, a theory handed on to medieval thought by Augustine and accepted by Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz; like Locke, Sadra in general holds that there are no such things as innate moral, mathematical or logical principles by which the mind, already fortified, begins its operation of thinking about the world. For instance, when we begin to comprehend nature, we do not disclose any moral sense or innate logical capacities. Only by observation and experience are we able to employ logical and inductive reasoning and a moral or religious sense.⁽²⁾

Indeed, it is possible to categorise Sadra's theory of knowledge as a process epistemology. Our mind develops and acquires strength and complexity through the process of growth and interaction with the environment. There exists a parallelism

between the development of the mind and the exploration of the surroundings. The mind acquires its texture after experience stamps itself on mind through the gradual process of growth. The more images are fixed in the mind the more powerful and penetrating our thinking becomes. Thus, through the passage of time the mind acquired keenness and sophistication, and more insights into problems.

The foregoing remarks are in perfect agreement with what John Locke charts in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. He says:

“Follow a child from its birth and observe the alterations that time makes, and you shall find, as the mind by the senses comes more and more to be furnished with ideas, it comes to be more and more awake; thinks more, the more it has matter to think on. After some time it begins to know objects which being meet familiar with it have made lasting impression.”⁽³⁾

This is, according to Sadra, exactly what happened to mind in its development: the richness of thought and the capacity of this thought to deal with the environment are made possible by the “fixed images in his mind” of objects in our immediate perceptual field. By using the impressions of objects we are able to perceive relationships by comparing the images of such objects to one another. These images in our mind become the carriers of thought and the source of our creative imagination in discovering the arts and the like. Mind improves by degrees in terms of innovation and comprehension.⁽⁴⁾ The modern tenability of such a view as that of the Illuminative school and Locke in the field of psychogenesis is a truism nowadays and needs no argumentation.

Also, unlike Plotinus, according to Sadra, when the soul dwells in the body it does not have any previous knowledge of the intelligible world. The soul does not entertain a pre-existence before birth; it is simply generated from the body when the body becomes prepared for it.⁽⁵⁾ Sadra demonstrates that the soul is the existential production of physical perfection of body and it springs from the substantial existential changing of human nature. This soul is the principle of life in the individual and does not innately possess fullness of thought in a Platonic, or even Kantian manner.

Since we are, as it is presupposed, a creation of God, we must contain an element of divinity. This element constitutes a bridge to the knowledge of the Truth. However, this is not to say that man is innately knowledgeable, but instead that he is disposed to develop a mind and knowledge under the proper circumstances.

Therefore, the mind is initially a sheer power, a capacity to form ideas when it encounters experience. The fact that the soul is God-given simply means that God endows the individual with the instinct of life and being and nothing more, and to be sure, at least in Sadra's philosophy, it performs through our substantial existential movement of our bodily growth.

Therefore, in a Lockean manner, Sadra's theory considers the mind as a *tabula rasa*,⁽⁶⁾ a blank sheet of paper with only the capacity of having water marks of any sort in its fiber given by the Being.

All of our ideas are, without exception, derived from the traces of experience stamped on the infantile virgin surface of the mind. To repeat, our processes of thinking and comparison commences after the images of objects are fixed in our mind. Experience is therefore the outcome of the interaction between the senses and the environment.

According to Sadra,⁽⁷⁾ our means of knowledge are the five senses through which the impressions of the external world are received. The basic sense which all animals possess is touch. It absorbs primarily the properties common to all bodies, the textures hard or soft, rough or smooth. The other senses perform more specialised functions; they suck from objects the qualities to which they are sensitive. Also the senses interact and aid one another in the process of knowing. Although localised in different organs of the body, they point to the one and the same object and yield not five different worlds but a configuration of one world.

The five senses are the means which the animal spirit employs to actualise perception. Thus the sense organs cannot function without the animal spirit and their being is totally dependent upon it. But the seat of the animal spirit is the heart which diffuses sensitivity and nutrition to the brain and liver; and although perceptions are effected by the help of sense organs our further awareness of the whole perceptible field cannot be located in them. The eye sees but it cannot be aware of its seeing; nor is our awareness that we are seeing or hearing, a seeing that we see, or a hearing that we hear.

The consciousness of our seeings and hearings which results from sights and sounds cannot be located in our eyes and ears in so far as they are exercising their specific functions of vision and hearing. According to Sadra, this consciousness physiologically speaking has its focal point in the brain. The animal spirit reaches the

brain from the heart. The nerves conduct the animal spirit from the cavities of the brain to the sense organs.

Similarly, the sense organs relay the sensible qualities of external objects to the nerves, and these in turn pass them to the brain.

Thus, Sadra emphasises the role of the brain in the different processes of knowledge and places the sense organs at its service. It also contends that the brain comprises different faculties. These are specialised in different performances to secure the accomplishment of the cognitive process. The act of perceiving, discerning colours, and the awareness of the smells and tastes as qualities of objects, take place in different areas of the brain. Even pleasure and pain, repulsion and attraction, owe their sources to brain processes. Moreover, imagination arises when the animal spirit commands the brain to visualise sensible objects or remember them after their actual presence ceases. Consequently, thought and all its constituent categories are contingent upon the material functions of the brain. Should a disruption occur in a certain brain compartment, the corresponding function of the disrupted compartment comes to a halt.

All knowledge, unaided, stems from experience resulting from the confrontation of the senses with the independent universe. Perception is not in direct contact with its object. It is an outcome of the integrating processes of the brain; the sense organs are its medium; and the qualities of the surrounding objects are sucked through a straw as it were: the air through the ears, the luminous medium through the eyes, odour through smell, flavours through taste, and solidity, softness and roughness through touch; in the words of Locke:

“Knowledge extends as far as the testimony of our senses, employed about particular objects that do affect them, and no further. . . . I think it is not possible for any man to imagine any other qualities in bodies howsoever constituted, whereby they can be taken notice of, besides sounds, tastes, smells, visible and tangible qualities. . . the idea of solidity is received by touch. . . and indeed hard and soft are names that we give to things only in relation to the constitution of our bodies.”⁽⁸⁾

Not only is touch restricted to the acquisition of the qualities of the material objects, but like the Illuminative theory, Locke maintains that the remaining senses provide us with other qualities: sounds through hearing, colours through seeing, flavours through taste, and odour through smell.⁽⁹⁾

One can discern a further resemblance between the initiator of modern empiricism and Sadra. Genuine knowledge, contends Sadra, is not of particulars. The qualities of objects furnished by the senses are retained and remembered.⁽¹⁰⁾ This persistence of the sensible qualities aids the mind in discerning their similarities and differences, and to compare their elements in an order not immediately given in sense data, and to abstract from them what is ordinarily called general ideas. The general idea is an essence or an abstract common quality of the members of the class in question. This is, for example, what Sadra says on this issue:

“For that understanding which we, and such as we mean is nothing else but that rational faculty which examines the individuals of sensory particulars, and from them abstract a universal notion.”⁽¹¹⁾

According to him this power of abstraction is not possessed by the animals but confined only to man.

Locke seems to be in agreement with Sadra. Locke also attributed to the mind the power to combine, add, and compare the different sense data imprinted on it.⁽¹²⁾ This sense data is a presupposition of reflection or thinking; abstract ideas are made out of the examination of the sense data and the formation of internal or intellectual general models:

“The mind makes the particular ideas received from particular objects to become general. . . this is called ABSTRACTION, whereby ideas taken from particular beings become representatives of all of the same kind: and their names general names, applicable to whatever exists conformable to such abstract ideas.”⁽¹³⁾

Like Sadra, Locke also maintains that the synthetic act of forming abstractions is predicable of rational beings and not of brutes.⁽¹⁴⁾

Therefore, on the basis of the preceding comparison between Sadra and Locke, one can infer that for both of them knowledge originates in experience. Their empiricism is corroborated by the preceding exposition of his ideas and his substantial agreement with the basic views of Locke. However, empiricism, as a school of epistemology, is of many brands and shades nowadays. It suffices to say that the Illuminative school anticipated its essential teaching. These are in total harmony with the school's existential outlook as well.

Moreover, our comparison of Sadra and Locke reveals that none of Locke's epistemological determinations, with regard to their essence and general outlook, is

philosophically new. He may have acquired the springboard for his empiricism from the medievals in the same manner as Brentano, and after him Husserl, did with the notion of “intentionality of consciousness.” While the impact of Islamic/Persian philosophy on the medieval west had its definite philosophic repercussions, one cannot decide with any degree of confidence that these had an influence on Locke himself.

Perhaps we should emphasise here that our comparison of Locke and Sadra was not intended in any way to smear the important philosophic differences between the two. For one thing, Sadra was a metaphysician-mystic, whereas Locke was somehow contemptuous of metaphysics, felt uncomfortable with the proofs for the existence of God, and was never a mystic.

ENDNOTES

Preface

1. Khatami M., *Ta'mmuli Dar Bab i Mataqaddam (Reflections Concerning the Transcendental)*, Unpublished M.A Dissertation, University of Tehran, 1369 A.H.[Solar]/ 1990
2. Khatami M., *To Be or Not To Be: A Philosophical Approach to the Mystical Consciousness*, Accepted for publication in *Revisioning Philosophy Series* (ed. Prof. David Applebaum), Peter Lang Publishing, New York; I have also written a paper in this relation entitled: 'Descartes and the Illuminative Path to the Self'. Submitted for Publication to *Theoria*, the Spanish Philosophical Journal, Summer 1996

Chapter One:

1. Rene Guenon (1886-1951), Muslim philosopher. Was born and educated in France where he studied philosophy and mathematics. He was severely critical of all that is called modern thought that he tends to refute completely. He was also thoroughly critical of modern science. He established a new critical school concerning modern thought and civilisation to which Schoun were to point later. Before turning to Islamic solution, he deeply was looking for a solution in Hinduism writing some valuable book concerning it. However, finally he openly embraced Islam, migrated to Cairo, lived in a traditional house leaving his modern western life and thought. In this period (thirty years) his best works came up among which we may mention here *Crisis of Modern World* and *The reign of Quantity and The Sign of The Times*. For more detail on his work and life see: Marcireau, *Rene Guenon et Son Oeuvre*, Paris 1946.
2. Frithjof Schoun (b. 1907). Muslim philosopher, was born and educated in Switzerland. He has profoundly studied, criticised and written on modern thought and civilisation seeking for a solution in Islamic wisdom, with which his works as a whole concern. He has tried to look at the oriental as well as old traditional wisdoms through his Islamic outlook, writing vast number of books, articles -- including those which he has written on the modern thought and philosophy among which we may mention here his *Light on the Ancient World* and *Spiritual Perspectives and Human Facts*. For an evaluation of his works see: Benolst J. . 'L' Oeuvre de Frithjof Schoun' in *Etudes Traditionnelles*, 79/459 (1978), pp. 97-101. On Guenon and Schoun also see: Nasr S. H., *Knowledge And The Sacred*, Edinburgh 1982, pp. 100-109
3. Etienne Gilson, Neo-thomist philosopher, approached modern thought from thomistic angle. His concern seems above all to relief metaphysics, then the problem of Being in the modern western crisis. His criticism is not however as vast as the other mentioned philosophers. For his critical review of modern thought see his *Unity of Philosophical Experience*, and for his description of Being see: *Being and Some Philosophers*.
4. Martin Heidegger, German Philosopher, Maintains that the modern subjectivism started from Descartes; Meanwhile, he believes that it already begun by Plato. (For a Detailed discussion see: Rosen S. , *The Question of Being: A Reversal of Heidegger* (London, 1993) esp. Chs. 1, 8.) Heidegger maintains that Plato's project ended up with some form of pragmatism. (For a criticism: Rorty R. . 'Heidegger, Contingency and Pragmatism' in *Heidegger: A Critical Reader*, ed. H. L. Dreyfus (Oxford, 1992) PP. 204 ff.
5. See for example, Heidegger's *Being and Time*; Gilson's *The Unity of Philosophical experience*; Schoun's *Spiritual Perspectives*; and Guenon's *The reign of the Quantity* also *Crisis of Modern World*.
- 5+1. This is Kant's well-known thesis; for a serious criticism of this thesis see: Heidegger M. , *The Basic Problems Of Phenomenology*, pp. 27 ff.
6. We said so, because as we will see (Ch. 8) one can read Descartes differently; because in his work, *Meditations*. There are evidences that show his intention could be not what the Post-Cartesian philosophers interpreted.
7. See Barrett W., *Death of the Soul: From Descartes to the Computer*, Oxford, 1987. See also Khatami M., *Binesh i Descartes va 'ilm i Mekanik*.
8. See Heidegger's discussion on Descartes in *Being and Time*, pp. 123 ff; Also, his *Basic Problems Of Phenomenology*, pp. 124 ff; See also: Richardson J., *Existential Epistemology*, Oxford 1986, pp. 80 ff. Also see: Marion J-L., 'Heidegger and Descartes' in: Mccann (ed.), *Critical Heidegger (London 1996)*; Marion tries to show in this article Cartesian traces in Heidegger's thought. Also see: Khatami M., *Descartes Payeh Gozar: i Tafakkur i 'ilmzadegi*.

9. We will not encounter Rorty in our present study. However we mentioned him here to point out that Humean theory of self is still lived not in empiricists only but in a figure like Rorty. For his doctrine see: Rorty R. . *Philosophy and the Mirror of the Nature*. Princeton 1979, pp. 70 ff; also: his 'Comments on Dennett' in *Synthese* 53 (1982) pp. 181-7.

10. *Meditations*, in *Descartes Philosophical Writings*, p. 66.

11. *Ibid.* , p. 67.

12. *Ibid.* , p. 67.

13. *Ibid.* , p. 69.

14. *Ibid.* , p. 70.

15. *Ibid.* , p. 76.

16. *Ibid.* , pp. 121, 117, etc.

17. *Ibid.* , pp. 121, 73, etc.

18. According to Descartes' reasoning, the self and the contents of imagination and perception are radically different kinds of things. The self is indivisible (there cannot be half an experiencing self for example) while all objects of perception and imagination are divisible. Furthermore the self is logically necessary, while the contents of perception are not, for they can all come and go, the leaving the self intact. Thus, since the self's existence is so different from and (logically) independent of all such contents, these contents cannot display its true nature. *Meditations*, p. 70.

19. *Ibid.* , p. 70.

20. David Hume. *A Treatise of Human Nature*, edited by L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1958) p. xx.

21. *Ibid.*, book I. part I. pp. 1-26

22. Especially Locke's formulation in his *Essay on Human Understanding*.

23. *Treatise*, p. 251

24. *bid.* , p. 251.

25. *Ibid.* , p. 252.

26. *Ibid.* , p. 259.

27. *Ibid.* , p. 252.

28. *Ibid.* , p. 251

29. *Ibid.* , p. 259-61.

30. *Ibid.* , p. 259. . But by the time his *Treatise* was ready for publication he felt constrained to add an "Appendix" stating that he now felt that this account was very defective. He recapitulated those earlier arguments which he still felt to be correct, and then expressed his inability to adequately account for our naturally assumed identity of self by means of collections and relations.

31. *Ibid.* , p. 634.

32. *Ibid.* , p. 635.

33. *Ibid.* , p. 633.

34. *Ibid.* , p. 635.

35 The reference to his earlier theory, already clear from the content of the text, is made explicit in his footnote to the passage quoted above. *Ibid.* , p. 635.

36. Hume, of course, went much further, and offered a variety of additional arguments calling into question our natural assumptions about causality, the nature of physical objects as independent of perceptions, etc. Neither these further inferences, nor the assumptions underlying them, need concern us here however.

37. *Ibid.* , p. 634.

38. *Ibid.* , pp. 635-6.

39. Suppose (i) it is possible to define oneself in terms of some collection of perceptions, and some relation R specifying the conditions which possible perceptions must fulfill in order to be a member of this collection. (ii) If R specifies any conditions at all (that is, if R is non-vacuous) there must be possible perceptions P which do not fulfill these conditions. (iii) But since R (supposedly) defines oneself, it is logically impossible for one to have the perception P. (iv) But, as we saw above, there is no possible perception P which one cannot conceive of the logical possibility of having oneself. (v) Therefore R cannot be significantly defined, for it cannot properly exclude any logically possible perception, and it therefore cannot be used to define oneself.

The argument can also be formulated as follows: (i) Suppose R defines (non-vacuously) those perceptions that can be one's own. (ii) Then there exists some possible perception P which R excludes. (iii) Since P is a possible perception one (logically) could have it. (iv) But then one would be having a perception that was not one's own (by (i) and (ii)). This is absurd, and our supposition that there can be some (non-vacuous) relation R capable of defining one's self by specifying the collection perceptions proper to it is false.

40. Many candidates for such relations have been suggested, including Hume's contiguity and resemblance, and various sorts of memory-relations. See, for example, William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, Vol. I (New York: Dover Publications, Inc. . 1950) Chapter X, and Paul Grice, "Personal Identity," *Mind*, Vol. I, No. 200, Oct. 1941.

41. we should note again that this analysis says nothing at all about whether, given the laws of the universe we actually live in, such experiences are possible in actual fact. Its purpose is only to display the relation of relations (R) and their excluded perceptions (p) to our basic concepts of self, and it concerns itself only with logical and not with factual possibility.

we can also note that contemporary linguistic philosophers often argue that we cannot in fact even imagine experiencing independently of association with our body, and they offer sophisticated linguistic arguments to support this claim. However on all ordinary usage of the "imagine" (and its cognates in other languages throughout history) this claim is simply false.

42. *Ibid.* , p. 636.

43. Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics* (Indianapolis & New York, Library of Liberal Arts, Bobbs-Merrill Co. . Inc. . 1950) p. 8.

44. Immanuel Kant Critique of Pure Reason, translated by Norman Kemp Smith, Macmillan & Co. Ltd. , New York; 964, pp. 42-4. One point may be mentioned here: The transcendentalisation of the self is officially risen by Kant and took up by his followers in post-kantian period. For a short study see: Solomon R. C., *Continental Philosophy since 1750: The Rise And The Fall Of The Self*, Oxford 1990, Parts One And Nine. 45. *Ibid.* , pp. 22-3. 42. etc.

46. *Ibid.* , p. 152.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 155.

48. *Ibid.* , pp. 197, 207. etc.

49. *Ibid.* , p 131.

50. *Ibid.* , pp. 141-2, 335.

51. *Ibid.* , p. 141-2

52. *Ibid.* , p. 136.

53. *Ibid.* pp. 152-3.

54. *Ibid.* , pp. 329-30, 332-3, 153. etc.

55. *Ibid.* , p. 331.

56. Indeed, the two chapters on the self in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, comprising about one-tenth of the whole volume, were the only ones, aside from the preface, that Kant felt constrained to rewrite extensively for the second edition of the work.

57. *Ibid.* p. 337.

58. *Ibid.* pp. 332-3.

59. *Ibid.* , p. 131.

60. *Ibid.* , p. 329.

61. *Ibid.* , p. 153.

62. *Ibid.* , p. 154.

63. ". . . time is represented, strictly speaking, only in me." *Ibid.* , p. 342. Thus the self itself is somehow both outside of and independent of time as its container and precondition. Space is analysed in a similar fashion.

64. *Ibid.* , p. 382.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 366

66. *Ibid.*, p. 337-40, 369-70

67. *Ibid.*, p. 340

68. *Ibid.*, p. 370

69. *Ibid.*, p. 327

70. *Ibid.*, p. 380.

71. *Ibid.* , p. 382.

72. *Ibid.* , p. 328.

73. For a discussion on Husserl's Transcendental self/cgo see: Kockelmans J. J. , *Edmund Husserl's Phenomenology*, (Indiana, 1994), pp. 261-8; See also: Solomon, *Continental Philosophy*, Part Nine.

74. *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 83

75. *Ibid.* p. 83

76. *Ibid.*, p. 69

77. *Ibid.*, p. 21

78. *Ibid.*, p. 99

79. *Ibid.* pp. 22-3

80. See: Spiegelberg, *Phenomenological Movement*, p. 125

81. *Ideas*, p.
82. Ricoeur P. , *Husserl*, Ch. 3. 'Husserl's Ideas II'. p. 52 ff.
83. see: *Ibid.*. 'Kant and Husserl'. pp. 175 ff.
84. *Cartesian Meditations*, p.
85. *Ibid.* parag. 30, p. 65
86. See *Ibid.*, Meditation 5, para. 42
87. see: *Ibid.*, para. 40-1; also para. 81-8
88. *Ibid.*, p. 86; For a discussion on Transcendental Idealism in Phenomenology see: Philips H., 'Transcendental Idealism' in *Cambridge companion To Husserl*; Also: Kockelmand, *Op. Cit.* pp. 269 ff.
89. *Ibid.*, p. 30
90. See: *Ibid.*, med. 2, 4; Also: Ricoeur, *Husserl*, p. 107
91. *Ibid.* pp. 18-21
92. treatise, p. 633
93. A safe way to fill the gap should supply this need; This may be clearer through our following discussion in Ch.2-4

Chapter Two:

1. See: Ibn Sina, *Alantiq al-Mashreqiyyin*, 'Introduction', p.4
2. Concerning Suhrawardi in English see: Nasr s. H. , *Three Muslim Sages*, Ch. II; Nasr H. , 'Suhrawardi' in MM. Sharif(ed). *A History of Muslim Philosophy*; McCrackon and Tehrani, 'Persian Philosophy'. in Solomon R.C., *World Philosophy*. pp.164-167 Netton I. R. , *Allah Transcendent*. Ch. 6. Corbin H. . *History Of Islamic Philosophy*, trans. L. Sherrard (London 1993), Ch. VII, pp. 205-220; Iqbal. *Development Of Metaphysics In Persia*, (London 1908) Ch. V; Fakhry M. , *A History Of Islamic Philosophy*. (NJ 1970). Ch7, pp. 325-339. In French, see: three prolegomena of H. Corbin to Suhrawardi's *Opera Metaphysica et Mystica*, v. I, II, III (Tehran 1976-7); Also, Corbin H. , *En Islam Iranien*. V. II. (Paris 1972); also Corbin H. , *Suhravardi, l' Archange empouere*, (Paris 1976).
3. Concerning the notion of "Light" see below. Ch. 3. 3. 1. For more discussion on Illuminative notion of 'Light' in english see: Netton.*Op.Cit.*; also Corbin H., *The Man of Light*,(London 1978)
4. Concerning Sadra in English see: Nasr H. , *Sadra al-Din Shirazi: His Transcendent Theosophy*(Tehran 1978); Also Morris J. W. 'An Introduction to the Philosophy of Sadra' in his translation of Sadra's *The Wisdom of the Throne*. Fakhry M. , *Op. Cit.* , pp. 339-370; Fazlur Rahman, *Philosophy of Mulla Sadra* (Albani 1976); Rajaii M., *Philosophy of Mulla Sadra and Its Epistemological Implications*; McCrackon and Tehrani, *Op.Cit.*, pp.175-180. For more bibliography on Sadra in European languages see: Nasr, *Op. Cit.* pp. 99-100.
5. *Al Hekmat al-Muta'aliyah fi al-Asfar al-'Aqliyyah al-Arba'ah*. ed. by S. M. H. Tabatabaai, Tehran 1983 (Hereafter *Asfar*); for a description of this book in English see: Nasr, *Op. Cit.* , pp. 55-69
6. See for example: Mutahhari M. , *Sharh i Mabsut i Manzumeh*. Tehran. 1986. V. III, pp. 70 ff, note 1.
7. We said 'excert', because our description of the Illuminative method has not been discussed in this form of presentation and classification as yet. We try to bring up the novel aspect of this method that is hidden in the Illuminative literature: thus, we exert it. See in this relation, for example, Lahiji's *Sharh i Gholshan i Raz* and Kashani's *Sharh i Manazil al-Sairin*.
8. Farber M. , *Basic Issues In Philosophy* (NY. 1968), p. 39
9. Farber M. , *Naturalism and Subjectivism*, pp. 383-84
10. For a description of these journeys in English see: Nasr, *Op. Cit.* . It must mention here that the Illuminative philosophy though uses the method of reduction however it is not a philosophy of reductionism.
11. Since so far as I know the word 'ontetic' is used for first time, the reason should, then, be explained here. As hinted and will be seen in detail, there is a reduction in the Illuminative method to Being which in my best knowledge has no correspondence in modern philosophy. Since I could not find a proper word in English to indicate the special sense of this reduction as supposed by the Illuminative philosophy, I dare to make this word, 'ontetic', drived from the Greek 'ontos' meaning pure being, in comparison with Husserl's 'eidetic', drived from the Greek 'eidos' meaning pure essence [see: *Ideas*, pp. 59-61 and 55-67]. I also use 'ontetic', neither 'ontic' nor 'ontologic', to avoid any confusion with Heideggerian sense of these words.
12. *Asfar*, V. I, p. 12

13. This *beginningless* symbolised in their emphasis on *Tawbah* meaning return and *Tazkiyah* meaning Purification. This is seriously recommended in the Illuminative philosophy to do *Tawbah* and *Tazkiyah* before starting any philosophising. See, for example, Suhrawardi's *spiritual Will* in the end of *Hekmat al-Ishraq*; also, Sadra's advice in *Asfar*'s Introduction.
14. Sadra, *Mafatyh al ghayb*, trans. M. Khajavi, Tehran, 1988, p. 139
15. Sadra, *Asfar*, V. I, p. 11
16. Sadra, *Asfar* V. III, p.
17. Western Orientalists and the previous writers are perhaps to be excused for their failure to recognise the relevance and modernity of this particular method of Illuminative school. Despite their erudition and exacting scholarship, scholars such as Gauthier, Corbin, and MacDonald failed to discern this method, possibly because of their predominant interest in history and culture and not in philosophy as such.
18. There are various techniques in the Illuminative mysticism by which such a thing is possible.
19. Hume, *treatise*, Book I: 'Of the Understanding', pp. 45-81, 133-9, 205-23
20. See: This is obvious specially if we consider the practical, mystical aspect of this school. The phrase "*Khal' al-Na'layn*" used in their language indicates that we should give up in first instance our knowledge bracketing our *ratio* to freshly restart. See for example, Lahiji's *Sharh i Golshan i Raz* and Kashani's *Sharh Manazil al-Sairin*
21. Descartes, *Meditations*, p. 17
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-44
23. Phenomenological Movement, p. 77; See also: Pivcevic E. , *Husserl and Phenomenology*, pp. 11-21, 34 ff.
24. *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 5-7
25. See: Husserl E. . *Idea of Phenomenology*, Lecture 2; also, Hammond M and others, *Understanding Phenomenology*, (oxford, 1991) pp. 1-3; also, Kockelman J. J. , *Edmund Husserl's Phenomenology*, PP. 118-127, 137-9.
26. See Below in this chapter
27. See Sadra . *Asfar*, V. III, PP.
28. *Ibid.*, pp. 62-3
29. . See. below and Appendix
30. See Sadra *Asfar* 'Introduction': This ideal is commonly reminded through the Illuminative texts.
31. See *Asfar* V. I pp.
32. Farber, *Basic Issues In Philosophy*, New York, 1968, p. 116
33. Compare these two senses with Heidegger's first and third senses of essence as described in: Grieved A. , 'What did Heidegger mean by "Essence"'. *Journal of the British society for phenomenology*, V. 19, no. 1, Jan. 1988, pp. 64-89
34. *Asfar*, V. I, pp. 56-8, 243-5
35. *Ibid.* , 262-326
36. *Ibid.* , pp. 245 ff. 75 ff
37. *Ibid.*, 245-59; also V. III, pp. 275-77
38. *Ibid.*, V. I, p. : V. II, pp. 35 ff
39. *Ibid.*, V. I, pp. 265-7
40. For a discussion on Husserl see Kockelmans, *Op. Cit.* , pp. 118-127, 206-327; also see: *Phenomenological Movement*, pp. 679 ff. Of course it must be mentioned here that Sadra also leads to a Hermeneutic science of Higher apprehension or mystical consciousness (Irfan), however, it is not the same as Husserl's Eidetic Science.
41. Sadra, *Mafatyh*, p. 139
42. *Ideas*, p. 155
43. See *Mafatyh*, p. 287-291 also *Asfar* V.
44. This can be an evidence for Husserl's saying that phenomenological method has been used by philosopher before him. For a discussion on this saying see Gorwitsch A. *Psychology and Phenomenology*, p.173
45. Husserl, *Phenomenology* in Encyclopaedia Britannica.
46. Spiegelberg, *Phenomenological Movement*, p.749, also pp. 93, 126
47. Husserl, *Phenomenology*
48. *Ideas*, pp 235-57, pp. 56-7, 156-67. That the phenomenological tendency lends itself to such a mystical interpretation is attested by the work of Edith Stein, Husserl's student, in *On The Problem Of Empathy*[The Hague, 1964] and by the opinions of other specialists on the subject. [see Farber m. , *The Aims of Philosophy*, NY, 1966, p. 11)

49. Ricoeur, *Husserl*, p. 190: In this relation also see: Gorwitsch's 'Problem of Existence' in *Phenomenology and Psychology*, p.116 ff; also his *Field Of Consciousness*, part 6, pp.377 ff, also, pp. 404 ff.
- 49+1) See Kockelmans, *Op. Cit.* , pp. 137-9
50. Fink E. "l'analyse intentionnelle et le problem de la pense speculative" in *Problemes Actuels de la Phenomenologie*, ed. by H. L. Van Berda. Brussel 1952. p. 68; quoted in Farber, *Naturalism and Subjectivism*, p. 240
51. *Ideas* para. 15
52. *Idea of Phenomenology*, lecture 2
53. *Ideas*, parag. 15
- 53+1) For a discussion on the transcendental phenomenology and ontology see: Kockelmans, *Op. Cit.* , pp. 246 ff. esp. 254-7, 281 ff. Also see: Pivcevic, *Op. Cit.* , pp. 102-111
54. Farber, *Naturalism*, p. 240
55. Heidegger , *Being and Time*, p. 21; For a discussion on Heidegger's project of being see: Frede D., 'The Question of Being: Heidegger's Project', in *The Cambridge Companion To Heidegger*, (Cambridge 1993), pp.42-69; also see: Rosen. *The Question of Being, Op.Cit.*.
56. 'Letter on Humanism' in *Basic Writings*, ed. D. F. Krell (London 1993)p. 258
57. Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 20
58. *Ibid.* p. 21
59. *Being and Time*, 32
60. *Ibid.*
61. *Ibid.*, 34
62. *Ibid.*, 35
63. See: Heidegger M. , *The Question of Being*, trans. J. T. Wild and W. Kluback (New Haven, 1958) esp. pp. 74 ff.
64. Farber, *Naturalism*, pp. 240-1
65. *Being and Time*, p. 63
66. . See Husserl's *marginals*, transcribed by Husserl Archives of Louvain, quoted by Farber, *Naturalism* p. 364
67. See: *What is Metaphysics?* in *Basic Writings*, pp. 89-111 .
68. Olafson maintains that in later Heidegger's works, it is Being that grounds the presence(i. e. , Dasein). See: his book *Heidegger and the Philosophy of Mind*.
69. *Being and Time*, p. 19
70. *Asfar*, V. I, Part I, Ch. I. For a linguistic study of the word 'being' in Islamic Persian philosophies see: Shehadi F., *Metaphysics In Islamic Philosophy*, (New York 1982); For Sadra pp. 119-143.
71. Heidegger, *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 'Introduction'
72. *Asfar*, V. I, Part I
73. *Asfar*, V.6 Compare Heidegger "Very being has a way-of-being" [*Basic Problems of Phenomenology* p. 18]
74. *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* p. 16
75. *Ibid.* 'introduction' esp. 19 ff.
76. *Ibid.*, p. 23
77. The similarities between Heidegger and Sadra do not prove that their aims of returning to Being are the same; Sadra has a mystical aim in mind, but Heidegger seems not definitely to have. On his relation to Mysticism see: Macquarrie J. , *Heidegger and Christianity*, (London 1994), pp. 117-121
78. *Asfar*, I, pp. 263 ff
79. One can say here that Heideggerian deconstruction is deconstruction of subjectivism; if so it is similar to Sadraean task to deconstruction of subjectivism: the difference is that Heidegger acts through analysis of history of western thought but Sadra acts through analysis and rejection of the essentialism which according to him is the ideology of subjectivism.
80. *Asfar*, V. I, p. 37. Translations No.. 80,81,83 and 84 are Rahman's whose summarising of Sadra's discussion on internal components of essence is used in this section. However it must mention that Rahman is far from the context of our approach towards Sadra's existential analysis of essence.
81. *Ibid.*, p. 103
82. See: *Ibid.*, V. I, 'Phenomenology of Mind'
83. *Ibid.*, V. II, p. 35
84. *Ibid.*, p. 36

Chapter Three:

1. See, Sabziwari H. , *Sharh al-Manzumah*, p. 12
2. See: Suhrawardi, *Qissat al-Ghurbat al-Gharbiyyah*, in *Opera*, V. II; Also see: Corbin, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, *Op. Cit.*
3. Suhrawardi, *Hekmat al Ishraq*, pp. 106-7
4. *Ibid.*, 107-8
5. *Ibid.* , p. 108
6. *Ibid.* , pp. 107-8
7. Sadra ad-Din Shirazi, *Kitab al-Asfar*, Vol. I, p. 45.
8. *Ibid.*, 327-80; also 171, 143 ff
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 206-8, 219-21
10. The problem of ontology and the meaning and reality of existence has been treated so thoroughly and so systematically in this philosophy that the whole area of this philosophy is characterised by that sense of existence. *op. cit.*
11. The vertical and horizontal lines are obtained from the Avicennian principle of the "nobler possibility" (al-imkan al-ashraf) together with Suhrawardi's principle of the "more posterior possibility" (al-iakan al-akhass). *Kitab Hikmat al-Ishraq*, pp. 154-157.
12. "Undetachability" and "indistinguishability" are other expressions of implication, because a thing implied in another means it is undetachable and indistinguishable from that other. Conversely, a thing undetachable and indistinguishable from another means it is implied by and contained in that other.
13. A description of the "Illuminative relation" will be given in Chapter 5[below] where we speak of the relation between the unitary consciousness and reflective knowledge. Further explanation on this specific subject can be obtained in Sabziwari, *Sharh Manzumah*, (1969 ed.). p. 571.
14. , Sadra ad-Din, *Kitab al-Asfar*, Part I, Journey I, pp. 210-262.
15. *op. cit.* , part 2, Ch. I
16. *Ibid.*, p. 224-7
17. *Ibid.*, p. 201.
18. ⁽¹⁾ Possibility is the negation of necessity: 'X is possible' = 'X does not necessarily exist or not exist.' ⁽²⁾ Impossibility is the negation of possibility: 'X is impossible' = 'X cannot possibly be.' ⁽³⁾ The necessity of being exemplifies the negation of the possibility of not being: 'X is a necessary being' = 'X cannot possibly not be.' ⁽⁴⁾ The necessity of not being exemplifies the negation of the possibility of being: 'X is necessarily non-existent' = 'X cannot possibly be.' ⁽⁵⁾ The necessity of being implies the denial of the impossibility of being, on the one hand, and identifies itself with the impossibility of not being, on the other. ⁽⁶⁾ The necessity of not being implies the denial of the impossibility of not being, on the one hand, and is identical with the impossibility of being on the other.
19. Avicenna, *Kitab al-Isharat*, 'Logic', Part I, p. 295
20. *op. cit.* , 296.
21. *Op. cit.* , 296-300.
22. Sadra ad-Din Shirazi, *Kitab al-Asfar*, Journey I, Vol: I, pp. 215-220.
23. Suhrawardi, *Kitab at-Tahwihat*, p. 41, pp. 42-43.
24. *Asfar*, V. I, pp. 215 ff esp. 118; see also Sabziwari's note no. 1
25. Sartre J. P. , *Being and Nothingness*, p. 308
26. *Asfar*, V. II, 'On definition of Essence': also see: Etienne Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers*, (Toronto, 1952) pp. 74-107.
27. Sabziwari, *Sharh Manzumah*, (1969 ed.), p. 410.
28. *Op. cit.* , pp. 408-409.
29. Sadra ad-Din Shirazi, *Kitab al-Asfar* Journey I Vol. I, p. 47.

Chapter Four:

1. See: Mudhaffar's 'Introduction' to *Asfar*, V. I, p. 6
2. *Asfar*, v. 8, p343
3. *Ibid.* , I, p. 20
4. Sadra, *Sharh al 'Usul al Kafi*, p. 90. It must be mentioned here that Sadra holds that the self access to and may possess all gradation of perfection that stand under his divine authority (God's Caliph) through generating in an existential process of the substantive movement. He has discussed all ontological, psychological and epistemological aspects of this thesis in detail. (See for example: *Asfar* Vols. 8-9). Since we are in this study confined to the ontetic aspect of the self, we only consider

- the self in its final humanistic state. that is what Sadra calls 'Discursive self' or the logos of the self (*al-nafs al-natiqah*) (see *Ibid.*, V. 8, 260 ff.) the nature of which is the unitary consciousness.
5. *Asfar*, V. I, p. 197
 6. *Ibid.*
 7. Sadra, *Kitab al-Asfar*, Journey I. Part I. Vol. I. pp. 326-380. 'An Inquiry into Prepositional Existence.'
 8. *Being and Time*, p. 78
 9. The official term used almost by the illuminationists and Sadra is "al 'ilm al shuhudi (or al hudhuri or al ishraqi)" (*Asfar*, V. III . pp. 447 ff). Perhaps, the phrase, 'the unitary consciousness' is the best to convey the meaning; however, the word 'consciousness' has its own difficulty because of its employment in the reflective, eidetic field.(See for example Gorwitsch's *Phenomenology and Psychology*, pp. 89-107, pp. 390-97) As we will see soon in this chapter, this word has no eidetic, reflective or intentional sense for our employment of this word here in the Illuminative context.
 10. Sadra, *Shawahid*, p. 200
 11. *Ibid.*, p. 172, 157-8
 12. *Asfar*, V. III, p. 297; see also p. 382)
 13. *Ibid.*, pp. 278-9
 14. *Ibid.* , 280 ff
 15. Sabziwari's note no. 2 in: *Ibid.* , p. 466
 16. *Asfar*, V. III, p. 465-87
 17. *Ibid.* , p. 465
 18. *Ibid.* , p. 466
 19. See: *Shawahid* pp. 242 ff; also *Asfar*, V. III, p. 312 ff; also Sadra's treatise on *Ittihad al 'aaqil wa al m'aquul*, in *Rasa'il*.
 20. *Asfar*, V. II, pp. 339-43
 21. See: Gorwitsch A., 'A Non-egological Conception of Consciousness' in Glynn S. (ed), *Sartre: An Investigation of Some Major Themes* . (Averbury 1987).
 22. A point should be remind here: Heidegger unlike Sartre does not like to use the term 'Consciousness'. In explaining why he does so, see: Olafson, *Heidegger and the philosophy of Mind*, (New Haven, 1987)pp. 14, 262 n. 20. For Sartre: Gorwitsch A. , *A Non-Egological Consciousness*; For Heidegger's influences on Sartre see: Rockmore, *Heidegger and French Philosophy*(London 1995) Ch. 3, pp. 40-58
 23. Like Sadra, Sartre similarly denies the transcendentalising the self or the ego in its 'primitive' status, even in phenomenological analysis. For Sartre's theory of self, see specially his book: *Transcendence of Ego*. trans. Williams (New York 1957). For more discussion see also: 'Sartre on the Transcendental Ego' in Glynn (ed.). *Sartre*, pp. 1-21; also: Solomon, *Op. Cit.* , Part 12; Pivcevic, *Op. Cit.* , Ch. 12, p. 123ff.
 24. See Sartre, 'consciousness of self and knowledge of self' in *Readings in Existential Phenomenology*, ed. N. Lawrence and D. O'connor (NJ 1967) pp. 113-142; See also: Danto A. C. , *Sartre*, (London 1991), Ch. 2, pp. 35-70
 25. For Rorty see his book: *Philosophy and the mirror of Nature*. 70 ff; for Foucault and Derrida see: Solomon R. C. , *Op. Cit.* , 'Supplement; The End Of The Self'. See also : McNay I., *Foucault*, pp. 133-63
 26. *Being and Nothingness*. p. xix
 27. *Asfar*, v. I, pp. 78-82
 28. *Ibid.*, V. III. pp. 312 ff
 29. See Horgby's article in: Durfee H.A. (ed.), *Analytic Philosophy and Phenomenology*, (The Hague 1976), pp.96-125
 30. Glock H-J., *A Wittgenstein's Dictionary*,(Oxford 1996). The term: "Consciousness", pp.84-86
 31. *ibid*
 32. For Wittgenstein's "solipsism," see: *ibid* pp.348-352
 33. *ibid* p.84; see also: *ibid*, pp.174-179
 34. Quoted in *ibid*, p.84
 35. *ibid*
 36. *ibid*
 37. See: Hanfling O., *Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy*, (London 1989). Ch.2, pp.152 ff.
 38. *Tractatus*, 5.641.
 39. See: Genova J., *Wittgenstein: A Way Of Seeing*,(New York 1995), Ch.2 'Don't Think, Look!' pp.55-92; Also part three, pp.135 ff. See also below in this research. Ch.6 for a comparison on 'Pain'.

40. *Asfar*, V.III, pp.
41. This understanding may be completed by saying some words about Sadraean semantic. Our semantic reading of 'Sense' in Sadra is based on some of his ontetic principles. For example, Sadra established for the first time an ontetic rule reading that Being is all things and at the same time, it is not any thing. (*Basit al-Haqiqat Kull al-Ashya' Wa Laysa Biha*). Also he justified that Being is the truth and the real sense of objects, and is hidden behind every thing. (*Al-Wujud Mukhtaf/Muhtajah Bi/Fi Kull al-Ashya'*). Also, Sadra has demonstrated an ontetic univocity for Being in all of its gradations. (See *Asfar*)
44. *Ibid.*, V. 8, pp. 260 ff
45. See Suhrawardi's *Hayakel al Nur*
46. *Asfar*, V. 8, p. 343
47. Solomon, *Continental Philosophy*, 'Supplement'.
48. Suhrawardi, *Kitab at-Tahihat*, p. 41.
49. Sadra ad-Din, *Kitab al-Asfar*, Journey III, Part 1, Ch. II, Vol. I.
50. Suhrawardi, *Op. Cit.*

Chapter Five:

1. *Asfar*, journey I, Part 3, p. 313
2. See: Russell, *The Problem of Philosophy*, Ch. XII, 'Truth and Falsehood'
3. See Tabataba'ii, *'Usul i Falsafa wa Ravesh i Realism*, ed. M. Mutahhari, Article 4. Also In this respect we may mention another characteristic of the unitary consciousness expressed by Sadra. This characteristic is its freedom from the distinction between knowledge by "conception" and knowledge by "belief." The unitary consciousness is not subject to this distinction, but reflective knowledge is. Chronologically this distinction may be first made by Avicenna in his "*Logica*" in order to disentangle the problem of "definition" from the problem of "demonstration". He says: "Every piece of knowledge and apprehension is either by conception (*tasarrur*) or confirmation (*tasdiq*). Knowledge by "conception" is the primary knowledge that can be attained by definition or whatever functions as definition. This is as if by definition we understand the essence of human being. Knowledge by "confirmation" on the other hand is that which can be acquired by way of "inference". This is as if we believe the proposition that "for the whole world there is a beginning." (Ibn Sina, *Ketab al-Nijat*, 'Logic', Ch. II)

It seems that this may similarly be close to the distinction made by some modern logicians between "meaning" and "truth value". On the grounds of this distinction a word or a sentence can have perfectly good sense by definition without having any truth value. To have only a meaningful word, phrase, or sentence we need not bring out any demonstration justifying the belief that it is true. All we have to do is to appeal to a verbal or logical definition of that word, phrase, or sentence. But to know a confirmative judgement we are logically obliged to rely upon a justification for the belief that the judgement is true.

No matter how valid it may seem, this distinction does not have any applicability when the unitary consciousness is under consideration. This is so because both of these two alternatives, i.e., conception and confirmation, are intrinsic characteristics of conceptualisation that belongs to the order of meaning and representation, not to the order of "being" and the factual truth. But the alleged reality of the unitary consciousness does not involve any sense of conceptualisation and representation. Therefore, the unitary consciousness does not involve any sense of conception and confirmation.

One should notice that by denying the dualism of truth and falsity to the unitary consciousness the Illuminative philosophy does not mean that no senses of truth are applicable to it. There is, however, another sense of truth in the linguistic technique of Illuminative philosophy, which we can call non-phenomenal. But it is, strictly speaking, equated with the notion of "being" -- just as Heidegger identifies them. In this system of philosophy, when one speak of the unitary consciousness, he would apply such an existential sense of truth to its reality. But here the point is that the logical dualism of "truth" and "falsity" as well as the logical distinction between "concept" and "belief" have no applicability in the domain of knowledge by presence, but rather both of them are appropriate properties of the reflective knowledge.

4. *Asfar*, V. I, pp. 264-8
5. See *Asfar* V. I, pp. 221-230
6. *Cartesian Meditation*, p. 69
7. *Ibid.*, p. 157
8. *Ibid.*, p. 22-3

9. *Asfar*, V. I, 'The Problem of Knowledge'
10. Hekmat al-Ishraq, sec. 2, p. 106
11. *phenomenological Movement*, p. 125; See also above Ch. I
12. *Asfar*, 'The Problem of Knowledge'
13. Cf. above, Ch. I
14. *Critique*, p. 194 (A158)
15. *Ibid.*, 142. note a
16. *Ibid.*, p. 141(A116)
17. *Ibid.*, p. 142, note a
18. *Ketab al Mutarihat*, p. 485
19. The word representation is quite often used in this rescarCh. However, a short note should be said on it so far as the Illuminative terminology is concerned. In Illuminative philosophical language, the following words are used synonymously to refer to the mental image of an objective reference. (1) *mithal*: meaning analogue. (2) *surah*: meaning form. (3) *al-wujud al-dhihni*: meaning mental existence, (4) *al-zuhur al-dhihni*: meaning subjective appearance, (5) *al-mahiyat adh-dhihni*: meaning subjective essence or object. (6) *al-shabah*: meaning mental image. The first two are much more frequent in this language than the others. All of them, especially the first two, are extremely ambiguous, and quite often homonymous.
20. Suhrawardi. *Hikmat al-Ishraq*. p. 111. para. 115.
21. By "phenomenalist" theory we mean the phenomenon of representation. We could also have said "representationalist" theory. In general, phenomenon and representation are interchangeable in our terminology.
22. Sadra. *Asfar*. V. I. Part 3. PP. 465-69
23. Suhrawardi, Hekmat al-Ishraq. p. 111
24. Op. Cit. , PP. 111-12
25. Suhrawardi, *Talwihat*. P. 72
26. Suhrawardi, Hekmat al-Ishraq. p. 112
27. *Being and Nothingness*. pp. 559-60
28. *Ibid.* , p. 568
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Asfar*, V. 8, pp. 221-230
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 325-380

Chapter Six:

1. *Ketab al-Mutarihat*. p. 485
2. *Mutarihat*, p. 485
3. *Ibid.*, parag. 6-12, pp 485
4. *Asfar*, V. 8, pp. 343-380
5. *Meditations*,
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Asfar*, V. 8, p. 11, 345-6
8. *Ibid.*, p. 347
9. *Ibid.* , p. 345-7
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 155-204
11. *Ibid.*, 325-330
12. *Ibid.*, p. 221 ff
13. We have exerted this by reading Sadra's theory of Soul-Body in the context of his discussion of singularity (*Tashakkkhus*) (*Asfar*. v. II, pp. 10-16)
14. Compare our following discussion with the existential phenomenological approaches. See for example: Merleau-Ponty. *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. C. Smith (London 1981), Part I, Ch. 3; also see: De Waelhens A. . 'The Phenomenology of Body, in *Reading in Existential Phenomenology*, pp. 149-167
15. *Being and Nothingness*, p. 305
16. *Ibid.* p. 310
17. *Ibid.*, p. 304
18. *Ibid.*, p. 308
19. *Ibid.* , pp. 309-310
20. Suhrawardi, *Mutarihat*, p. 485
21. *Philosophical Investigations*. Parag.246

22. See: Hanfling O., *Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy*, pp.144-5, 157,158;
 23. On the same issue see *Asfar*, Journey I. Part I.V.I

Chapter Seven:

1. Cf. Correspondences with Arnold
2. *Cartesian Meditations*, pp. 65, parag. 30
3. Ricoeur, *Husserl*, pp. 157-59, 191
4. *Being and Time*, pp. 151-2
5. *Asfar*, V. I, 'The Phenomenology of Mind'
6. We have already mentioned that it is a methodological habit for Sadra that start with explanation of philosophical problems from the standard, traditional, and official terminology, assumes, suppositions and even argumentations: but ultimately he comes to his theories through interpretations, rejections or reductions of these problems in terms of his principles. One of those problems is that in question. He starts with causal explanation in the Aristotelian style. However, it would be noted that Sadraean interpretation of Causation is absolutely existential, properly on the basis of his theory of Being. (see: *Ibid.* Also see: Tabataba'ii *Nahayat al-Hekmah*, Chapter concerning 'the nature of Causal Relation'.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 112
8. *Ibid.*
9. See: Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal time-Consciousness*. Para. 8-10. pp. 44 ff., Para. 37, pp. 100 ff.
10. *Phenomenological Movement*, 746
11. Phenomenology of Internal time-consciousness, p. 100: Husserl sometimes speaks of the immanent object as 'appearance' and of the transcendent object as "the primary content of an immanent object" (*Ibid.*, p. 100).
12. See: *Ibid.*, Para. 40. p. 110: See also: Gorwitsch's 'On The object Of Thought' in *Phenomenology and Psychology*, pp. 141 ff.
13. See Sadra, *Asfar*, V. III, pp. 312 ff
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*
16. Kant's Critique of pure Reason. p.
17. *Asfar*, J. I, Part 10, V. III, esp. pp. 280 ff.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 280
19. see, *Ibid.*, V. 3, p. 280 ff
20. See: 'Appendix'
21. See: *Phenomenological Movement*, p. 752: for a discussion on reflection in phenomenology see *Naturalism and Subjectivism*, Ch. II
22. *Mutarihat*, p. 479
23. This is the typical sense of phenomenology of mind in Sadra's Philosophy: see: *Asfar*, Part 4, V. II
24. Sabziwari, *Manzumah*, 'The Problem of Human Mental Existence' (1969 ed. pp. 58-85)
25. This kind of opposition is called 'adam wa malakah'; See: *Ibid.*, p. 153
26. See: Sadra, *Asfar*, V. III, 'On the Knower, Known and Knowing'; Also see: his Treatise on *The Unity Of The Knower and Known [Tittered al-'aqel wa al-ma'qul]*
27. *Ibid.*s; also Sadra, *The wisdom of the throne*, trans. Morris.
28. *Mutarihat*, pp. 487-89
29. *Tahvihat*, p. 70
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 71-80
31. *Asfar*, V. III, pp. 280 ff; See esp. Sabziwari's note; Also see Tabataba'ii, 'Usul i Falsafa, Articles 3-5.
32. *Asfar*, V. I, P. 264
33. *Asfar*, V. III, pp. 292 ff; 344 ff; Also *Mafatyh*, pp. 283-287
34. *Mafatyh*, p. 286
35. *Being and Time*, 252
36. *Ibid.*, p. 493, note xvi.
37. Tabataba'ii, 'Usul i Falsafa, Article 5, p. 190: See Mutahhari's note no. 2.
38. *Asfar*, V. I, 'Phenomenology of Mind' (wujud dhihni)
39. *Ibid.*, v. III, 'Theory of Apprehension and Knowledge' (Mabahith al-'Aql wa al-'ilm); also see *ibid.*, V. 8.

40. This does not indicate that the unitary consciousness is a priori in Kantian formal sense, nor does it imply such a theory of innate *Ideas* in Cartesian rationalistic sense. As we have already seen, it is our being and thus supplies an existential background for interpreting those subjectivistic theories. (see also, *Asfar*, V. III, pp. 443 ff.)

41. See *Asfar*, V. I, pp. 264-8

42. *Ibid.* , pp. 388 ff

Chapter Eight:

1. see above Ch. I

2. *Asfar*, V. III, pp. 312 ff.

3. Our description of skepticism, solipsism and idealism depicts their general spirit as commonly understood in modern philosophy. There are, however, different versions, expressions and formulations for these terms depended on the peculiar angle from which the cases are seen

4. Can we not understand this theory as a basis to interpret Leibnizian Harmony, Husserlian Intersubjectivity, and Wittgensteinian thesis of common usage of the words in public language -- all elaborated to escape from solipsism, skepticism and idealism -- in this Illuminative context?

5. We have justified it elsewhere in our work *To Be or Not To Be: A Philosophical Approach To The Mystical Consciousness*.

6. *Asfar*, V. 8, pp. 221 ff.

7. Bertrand Russell, "Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description," reprinted in *Mysticism and Logic* (New York. Norton & Co. . 1929) p. 210: Also see his *Problems of Philosophy*, Ch. 5

8. *ibid.*, p. 224.

9. Bertrand Russell, "On the Nature of Acquaintance." reprinted in *Logic & Knowledge, Essays 1901-1950*, R. C. Marsh editor (London. Allen & Unwin, Ltd. . 1956) p. 164.

10. Bertrand Russell, "On Propositions: what they are and how they mean." in *Logic and Knowledge, Essays 1901-1950*, p. 305. see also. "On Acquaintance." in the same volume, p. 276.

11. *Descartes' Philosophical Writings*, pp. 139, 142, 136.

12. *Ibid.* , p. 299.

13. *Ibid.* , p. 301, from a letter to The Marquis of Newcastle.

14. *ibid.* , p 301.

15. *Meditations*, p. 65.

15+1. It is interesting to see that Descartes is read in a supportive and similar (not of course Illuminative) manner by M. Gueroult and M. Grene: See M. Grene. *Descartes* (Sussex 1985) esp. pp.3-23

16. *Meditations*. p.65 .

17. *Ibid.* p. 66.

18. *Ibid.* p. 76.

19. For, according to Descartes, awareness of (himself as a) "finite" consciousness presumes awareness of "infinite" consciousness as its context and condition of intelligibility. For the concept of "finite" is only intelligible in its contrast with that of "infinity." *Ibid.* , p. 86.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 85-7. Descartes' arguments here are often complex, contain scholastic elements, and (to modern readers at least) often appear quite unconvincing. Our present concern, however, is only with the phenomenological significance of his statements, and not the validity of his arguments or truth of his conclusions.

21. *ibid.* , p. 90.

22. This can be found in all traditional texts of the Illuminative mysticism, for example see: Bahr al-'Alum, *Resala i Sayr va Suluk*, ed. Hosaini (Tehran, 1984).

23. *Ibid.* , p 91.

24. The above literal reading of Descartes in the context of Illuminative school also makes a number of his other claims much more understandable. These include (1) his claim to have an idea of unbounded consciousness ("God"). (2) his claim that this idea and that of self are the two most "clear and distinct" *Ideas* that he has, and that they are both innate, and (3) that he experienced "light" and great bliss in the contemplation of this "idea" of God. The fact that such a subjective mode of experience exist of course says nothing about the objective truth of its contents, but the supposition that Descartes may have had this experience might make his insistence on his doctrine of clear and distinct *Ideas* somewhat easier to understand.

25. Both Hume and Kant kept open at least the logical possibility of experience that could fulfil the otherwise rejected notion of self. Hume allows the possibility that someone else might be able to

conceive of a notion of self existing entirely without perceptions, but adds: "I must confess I can reason no longer with him. All I can allow him is, that he may be in the right as well as I, and that we are essentially different in this particular" (Treatise, p. 252). Kant allows the logical possibility of experience of "noumena" such as the self completely independent of all perceptions, but he maintains that it is impossible for us as human beings not only to have but even adequately to conceive of such experience. (Critique of Pure Reason, p. 157. See also pp. 90, 164, 250, etc.)

26. Ibn Sina, *al-Shifa' [De Anima]*, V. I, p. 281. Copleston describes Avicenna's thought-experiment as follows: "Imagine a man suddenly created, who cannot see or hear, who is floating in space and whose members are so disposed that they cannot touch one another. On the supposition that he cannot exercise the senses and acquire the notion of being through sight or touch, will he thereby be unable to form the notion? No, because he will be conscious of and affirm his own existence, so that, even if he cannot acquire the notion of being through external experience, he will at least acquire it through self-consciousness." (A History of Philosophy, V. II, Part I, p. 216. See also: Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, vol. 1, pp. 228.

27. Treatise, p. 252. See also pp. 634-5.

Appendix:

1. *Asfar*, V. III, pp. . also, *Ibid.*, V. IXpp. See also, *Mafatyh*, pp.
2. This idea can be found variously through his books. For example see:
3. Locke J. , *Essay*, V. I Ch. I, pp. 37-63
4. *Asfar*, V. 8, pp. 211 ff
5. *Ibid.* , pp. 347 ff
6. *Ibid.* , pp. 228
7. *Ibid.* , pp. 115-205
8. *Essay*, V. II, Book IV, Ch. XI, p. 334
9. *Ibid.* , V. I, p. 295
10. *Asfar*, V. 8, pp. 205-221
11. *Ibid.* , pp. 230; also see V. III
12. *Essay*, Book II, Ch. XI, pp. 200-206
13. *Ibid.* , pp. 206-7
14. *Ibid.* , pp. 207-8

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<http://www.cogsci.indiana.edu>

Derrida:

http://www.lake.de/sonst_homepages/s2442.jd.html

Descartes:

<http://www-und.ida.liu.se/~y92bjoch/filosofier/descartes.html>

Descartes and the Legacy of Mind/Body Dualism:

<http://serendip.brynmawr.edu/Mind/Descartes.html>

Foucault References :

<http://www.whistler.net/worldtour/homepage/ejournal/foucault.htm>

Hegel Listserv Archive:

gopher://gopher.bucknell.edu/11/Services/listserv/hegel-l

Heidegger Listserv Archive:

gopher://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/11/pubs/listservs/spoons/heidegger.archive

Heidegger:

<http://www-und.ida.liu.se/~y92bjoch/filosofier/heidegger.html>

The Hume Archives:

<http://unix1.utm.edu/departments/phil/hume.ht>

Husserl Studies:

gopher://gopher.wkap.nl/11/gopher_root%3A%5B_journal._jrnل.hstu%5D

Husserl Archive:

gopher://ldap.eur.nl:7775/1Mou%3DHusserl-Archiv%2

Kant Listserv Archive:

gopher://gopher.bucknell.edu/11/Services/listserv/kant-l

Non-Cartesian Cognitive Science:

<http://www.cogs.susx.ac.uk/users/ronald/noucartesian.html>

(Including valuable Sources on Consciousness, Experience, Phenomenology, Embodiment, Existentialism)

Sartre:

<http://home.navisoft.com/darkstar/exist/Sartre.html>

Wittgenstein:

<http://www-und.ida.liu.se/~y92bjoch/filosofier/wittgenstein.html>

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