USE OF THESES

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Be a bud sitting quietly in the hedge.....

The Subject/Object Distinction in Mystical Experiencing

by

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Be a bud sitting quietly in the hedge
Be a smile, one part of wondrous existence
Stand here. There is no need to depart.
This homeland is as beautiful as the homeland of our childhood
Do not harm it, please, and continue to sing...
("Butterfly Over the Field of Golden Mustard Flowers")

from The Miracle of Mindfulness p.30
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CHAPTER 1

SELF IN MYSTICAL EXPERIENCING
1.1 Introduction

For human beings, consciousness is that which determines and constitutes the content, order and form of all of our experience. It is consciousness which generates our awareness as our own. Both experience and awareness provide the ontological basis to all that is possible for us. The conscious experience that we have - our thoughts, our feelings, our being aware of our existence in the world and our behaviour - either as isolatable goings-on, or in a more general everyday sense, can be divided into the rational and the intuitive. This is a rough division only, and is meant to represent the mediating or non-mediating role which consciousness plays in our experience, in terms of the structures which consciousness imposes to constitute the experience as it is.

Generally speaking, rational experience is that which is bounded and constructed by the constraints of logic and language. Rational experience provides the framework within which nearly all of our thinking and behaving is manifested. At a very basic level this is seen in the simple stimulus/response mechanism with which we are all very familiar. (For example, when we are hungry, we know that the hunger can be satisfied by eating.) At a more sophisticated level, it is manifested in the complicated mental processes we might go through in order to solve a mathematical problem.

The richness and complexity of our rational experience is open to hermeneutic, and thus interpretive, assessment\(^1\); and also to evaluation in terms of Hempelian-type laws derivable from the explication which we are prepared to give the constituents of the rational framework.\(^2\) Hence our experience can be understood in terms of both reasons and causes. For example, that we can have the experience of learning to read, or solving problems in logic, can be explained by appealing to certain psychological

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\(^1\) Jung, Freud and Levi-Strauss are good examples of theorists who take this approach.

\(^2\) Skinner's work falls within this sphere.
characteristics or predispositions we predicate of ourselves and also, by the society in which we live and the expectations which it places upon its citizens. Or the experience of seeing a tree can be explicated by way of the physiological, psychological and neurological characteristics of human beings and the interplay between a tree's physico-chemical structure and its macroscopic appearance.

But there is experience which falls outside this mediated framework; experience which is constituted and determined by consciousness as *intuitive* experience: experience which arises spontaneously, quite outside the usual forms and structures which consciousness imposes upon us. The laws of logic and rationality do not seem to apply in these cases; indeed we might be at a loss to give any sort of rational explanation at all of the experiences as they occur. Creative genius in the persons of a Marie Curie or an Albert Einstein; artistic talent such as that of Anna Pavlova or Van Gogh; or religious insight and depth expressed in the thought, writings, work and experience of Jean Houston or Siddharta, are not always, if at all, explicable within a rational or logical framework. And there are, of course, moments in all of our lives, when we have a flash of inspiration or insight, which we are at a loss to explain rationally.

Mystical experience falls within this second category of experience, viz. it is unmediated experience; and for those to whom and in whom it happens, it is ineffable. The experience seems not just to fall outside the laws of logic but in some cases to actually defy those laws and the constraints within which we normally work.

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Marghanita Laski maintains that such experiences do not fall outside the rational framework and are explicable in terms of overbeliefs. I do not agree with her because her arguments cannot take account of how, e.g., a former Christian can continue to have experiences which are no longer consonant with his beliefs, although I do agree that overbeliefs are vital in the ordering and constitution of many of our experiences. For further reading, see her book *Ecstasy: A Study of some Secular and Religious Experiences* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1962) and also, *Everyday Ecstasy* (Thames and Hudson, 1980). For an examination of the problem of continuing experiences which are similar once one's beliefs have changed, see Kevin Presa, "Can an Atheist be a Christian Mystic?" (Philosophical Papers Vol. 14, 1985)
Historically speaking, mystical experience has been (and remains) characterised in the context of the larger category of religious experience. This is true of both the Western Judeo-Christian tradition, and the Eastern traditions of Hinduism, Taoism, and Buddhism. There is also evidence to suggest that mystical experience has occurred within the religious traditions of the North American Indians and in the fertility rites associated with the Nature religions of the early Babylonians and Greeks. Hence the occurrence of mystical experience seems to be a universal phenomenon with an identifiable history.

Because mystical experience either falls outside the normally mediated categories of consciousness, or actually defies those categories, it can be thought of as transcendent experience. Through that experience, the mystic is able to go beyond the everyday to encounter or uncover another way of being which does not seem explicable in the discourse of everydayness. Put crudely, the mystic discovers another level of Reality with which she becomes totally concerned. The emphasis on transcendent experience cannot be stressed enough, for an understanding of mystical experience requires that the nature of transcendence is itself understood.

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4 for example in the Hopi Indians

5 Margaret Smith in her book, *The Way of the Mystics*, points out that the rites of the early Greeks' mystery-cults were the precursors of Christian mysticism. See Smith, Margaret *The Way of the Mystics* (Sheldon Press 1976) p.1. William Johnston traces the origins of Christian Mysticism, albeit very briefly, back to the early Greeks in name only. He argues that the early Christian writers on mysticism had a different understanding of the concepts involved. There is obviously room for inquiry and interpretation here, as the area seems problematic to me. See Johnston, William, *Christian Mysticism Today* (William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd 1984) p. 14

6 This is one of the few times I will use or mention this word in my thesis. Because of the implication and overtones of thingness, thus object, in its etymology, the word is best avoided. Then there is the further question of what or how Reality is, or is constituted, and that is not my concern here. I also use the word 'reality' in the context of Catholic sacramental theology, in the course of Chapter 2 to make a point about 'I' and Self.
There appear to be two relevant aspects to transcendent experience, one of which deals directly with the content of mysticism, and the other, with how it might come about. In this thesis, I will be preoccupied with the latter, as I believe that the content of mystical experience is dependent upon the mystic's *modus operandi*, as well as her place in history.\(^7\)

But there are several interesting and relevant points that can, and should, be made on behalf of the content of mystical experience. For the mystic, something mysterious happens and that experience cannot be considered everyday, or within the context of her usual conceptual and empirical framework. That experience ultimately transforms the mystic's apprehension of personal and universal ways of being. The something which the mystic experiences and which is quite outside her usual consciousness moves the mystic to a more profound understanding of the depths and vastness of the cosmos, from both an individual and universal perspective. The numinous, as Otto calls it,\(^8\) is called into being for her, and the *mysterium tremendum*,\(^9\) a feeling of awe and mystery pervades her very existence.

The quality of numinous experience, viz. the sense that there is something totally "Other" on which one is fully dependent,\(^10\) is, in Western culture, perhaps that which marks off mystical experience from all other kinds of experience. For this reason, Otto's analysis cannot be overlooked as an expression of that which is peculiar to the Judeo-

\(^7\)The religious, cultural and socio-economic factors with which the mystic lives, play an important role in the mystic's development and understanding of her own experience. Consider for example Siddharta, John the Baptist, Jesus Christ or Augustine of Hippo, all of whom can be considered as "products" of their times, yet were able to see beyond that to a greater and deeper possibility for human beings.


\(^9\)ibid. Ch.1V

\(^10\)Otto cites Abraham's experience in favour of this.
Christian context and indeed, to any identifiably theistic mystical experience. Although this thesis is not about God, much of mystical literature has an unmistakable "God-content", for in Western society, mysticism has been nurtured by those seeking to encounter God during their earthly existences. In attempting to reconstruct their experiences, many mystics, Christian as well as Buddhist for example, use metaphor as a literary device: literal interpretation, whilst not impossible, does not, and cannot, convey the fullness and depth of the experience, particularly as that experience, in the case of Christians, is concerned with an ineffable encounter with the author of being. John of the Cross' marriage metaphor is a good instance of this.

When the soul has lived for some time as the bride of the Son, in perfect and sweet love, God calls it and leads it into his flourishing garden for the celebration of the spiritual marriage. Then the two natures are so united, what is divine is so communicated to what is human, that, without understanding any essential change, each seems to be God - yet not perfectly so in this life, though still in a manner which can neither be described nor conceived.11

The point that I am making here is that God-talk is necessarily a part of the Christian mystical experience, but that the God-talk can be bound up in metaphorical expression, just as any mystic description can be. This being the case, the sources from which I quote will variously be both theistic (Christian or non-Christian) and a-theistic, or even agnostic. My primary concern, however, is with the role of consciousness within mystical experience and not with what might be considered "the Other side" (the nature of God or Nirvana as Beings or States in themselves).

Hence Otto's analysis should be understood as especially pertinent to the Judeo-Christian tradition and need not be seen as typical of other mystical traditions.

Buddhism for example, where the realisation of the cycle of birth and death, or the realisation of the Nothingness of existence is paramount, does not have a theistic element, in the same sense (if at all), as its Western counterparts.\textsuperscript{12} If there is a numinous "Other" within this context it seems to have more to do with the experiential content of consciousness rather than with an encounter with a "higher" being.

Regardless of the cultural setting of the mystic, something profoundly mysterious nonetheless happens to/for the mystic. What is it and how are we to understand it? And what is it that makes mystical experiencing different from any other kinds of experiencing? These questions are not easy to answer as the considerable body of literature devoted to them, either first person reports or commentaries, will attest.\textsuperscript{13}

It is important to acknowledge that there are many experiences which might be called "mystical", from the elation of feeling one with Nature, to the Baroque Catholicism of Teresa of Avila, to the "simple" agnosticism of Buddhism. Apart from referring to the experience as transcendent, to pick out something which all of these experiences have in common is, therefore, very difficult. William James was one of the first to document what he thought to be unique characteristics associated with all mystical experiencing. Those characteristics or marks are:

- a) ineffability
- b) noetic quality
- c) transiency
- d) passivity\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{12} For information on the cycle of birth and death see any Buddhist texts. Suzuki D.T. \textit{Zen Doctrine of No Mind} (Samuel Weiser, Inc. 1977) also contains a good outline of the non-theistic content of Zen Buddhist experience.

\textsuperscript{13} See for example, the Bibliography at the end of the thesis. This contains only a small sample of the literature on mysticism and its attendant problems and concepts.

James claimed:

These four characteristics are sufficient to mark out a group of states of consciousness peculiar enough to deserve a special name and to call for special study. Let them be called the mystical group.\textsuperscript{15}

Stace\textsuperscript{16} and Zaehner\textsuperscript{17}, undoubtedly aware of James' contribution to the area, have also endeavoured to characterise mysticism. Zaehner acknowledges his debt to Aldous Huxley, who, in \textit{The Doors of Perception}\textsuperscript{18}, describes his experiences whilst under the influence of mescaline, a mind altering drug. The main concern of these philosophers, is to distinguish various kinds of experiences which \textit{might} be called mystical and then to adjudge the appropriateness of such a categorisation. Of the three philosophers, James is, by far, the most disinterested, as both Stace and Zaehner are certainly concerned to promote a particular ideological viewpoint. From James, therefore, we obtain a more balanced assessment of the nature of mystical experience, which is free of dogmatic posturing.\textsuperscript{19} However, the problem of what constitutes mystical experience, how it is to be characterised and if it is significantly different from other kinds of experiences, is not my concern in this thesis. Nor is it my concern to follow in the footsteps of either Stace or Zaehner in the pursuit of ideological purity.

\textsuperscript{15}ibid

\textsuperscript{16}Stace W.T. \textit{Mysticism and Philosophy} (J.B. Lippincott Company Philadelphia & New York 1960)

\textsuperscript{17}Zaehner, R.C. \textit{Mysticism sacred and Profane} (Oxford at the Clarendon Press, London,1957)

\textsuperscript{18}Huxley, Aldous, \textit{The Doors of Perception} (Chatto and Windus, London. 1954)

\textsuperscript{19}My reading of both Stace and Zaehner leads me to believe that they each have a religio-philosophical barrow to push. This limits their vision and predisposes them to a rather narrow (and perhaps unjustifiably biased) understanding of the extent and range of mystical experience.
The marks which James picked out are significant however, because, along with Otto's analysis, they suggest a dispassionate way of viewing the content of mystical experience. That is to say, the content of the experience seems to generate a description such that remarks about its noetic quality or its ineffability are entirely appropriate. When one considers that ineffability and noetic quality appear to be the main stumbling blocks for any understanding of mysticism at all, we can then look to the content for an explanation of this.

But is this the case? Because the content of mystical experience can vary so much across cultures, yet there might be some universal characteristics to be drawn out from all mystical experience, I suggest that it is to the structure of that experience we should look for that explanation. How mystical experience comes about in terms of the operations of consciousness, is, therefore, preeminent in the following discussions.

Generally speaking, the language we use primarily serves to convey and to a certain extent, determine, our everydayness. Since mystical experiencing falls outside that everydayness, it is extremely difficult to articulate. James' mark, noetic quality, faces the problem that it cannot be successfully captured by the subtleties of language. This contributes to the ineffability of the experience.

There are a number of ways at looking at the ineffability of mystical experience and this is why I say noetic quality contributes to mysticism's ineffability. Partly, it is due to the failure of our language to be fully expressive of all our experiences, mystical or otherwise. We say that we are "lost for words". But once we say that mystical experience is ineffable, that becomes integrated into the linguistic description which we are giving. In that sense, language does not actually fail us, for there is a word that says that something cannot be said!
Nonetheless, ineffability is a language problem for the very fact that language does fail as an adequate vehicle for capturing the experience as it is. That is why mystics resort to metaphor in their descriptions. On the metaphorical level, language can be seen as a successful way of conveying the mystical experience, but this only adds to the ineffability, for questions of meaning, sense and intention are not eliminated, but invited. If the experience itself is ineffable then, this is due in part to the nature of the experience, as abstract and beyond the everyday; and partly to the inability of our conceptual scheme in terms of its linguistic structures, to accommodate that experience. There will be more on this in the final chapter.

The abstract nature or noetic quality of mystical experience, and its subsequent ineffability, render mystical experience paradoxical. The paradoxical elements of mysticism are best seen in the kinds of pronouncements which mystics make, some of which can sound like the ravings of madpeople.

"Listen, Sariputra, form is emptiness, emptiness is form, form does not differ from emptiness, emptiness does not differ from form. The same thing is true with feeling, perception, mental functioning, and consciousness. ...." 20

......neither is he darkness or light, nor the false, nor the true; nor can any affirmation or negation be applied to him, for although we may affirm or deny the things below Him, we can neither affirm nor deny Him, inasmuch as the all-perfect and unique cause of all things transcends all affirmation, and the simple pre-eminence of His absolute nature is outside every negation - free from every limitation and beyond them all. 21

20Thich Nhat Hanh The Miracle of Mindfulness (Beacon Press, Boston) The Heart of the Prajnaparamita. (Trans from the Chinese by Nhat Hanh) p. 139

In spite of, or perhaps because of, this paradoxicality, the mystic becomes more and more involved in her own way of being. She progressively changes her understanding of the nature of her experience and this can lead to newer and even deeper experience for her.

Teresa of Avila\textsuperscript{22} and John of the Cross\textsuperscript{23} amongst others, have indicated the different stages that the mystic can pass through during this process. As Happold suggests, these are only a rough guide. The Eastern mystics adopt a slightly different terminology, but in the end, the general picture is the same.\textsuperscript{24}

In the Western Christian tradition, those stages are designated the Way of Purgation, the Way of Illumination and the Way of Union, or what is also called the Unitive State. Corresponding stages or states are found in the East and are called by Radhakrishnan, Purification, Concentration, and Identification.\textsuperscript{25}

There are several points to note about these states and I begin with what they are not, rather than what they are. The via negativa approach seems to be appropriate here because of the nature of the subject: it is easier to say what mysticism is not rather than what it is. Firstly, the states are not hierarchical in terms of one state’s being accomplished or attained, and then the mystic moving on to the next. Secondly, in each state, Self is the object from which the mystic seeks to liberate herself in order for her to become more acquainted with the mystical way of being. Thirdly, the states should

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\textsuperscript{22}See The Life of St. Teresa (Written by herself) (Trans. David Lewis) (Burns and Oates 1962) Chapters 8ff.

\textsuperscript{23}See John of the Cross The Ascent of Mt. Carmel (Trans. J. Venard) (Darlington Carmel 1981)

\textsuperscript{24}Happold p.56

\textsuperscript{25}Op. Cit. Happold. p.57 Laski also identifies the various kinds of experiences as adamic, knowledge and contact experiences. Op Cit. Everyday Ecstasy pp 14-18
not be understood as static conditions but as process through which and in which the mystic is intimately involved and which she therefore lives. Fourthly, the second and third stages cannot be precisely delineated. Lastly, all stages contribute, in varying degrees, to the realisation that the subject/object dichotomy need not be present, as an integral part of every experience that we, as human beings, have. In other words, it is deceptive distinction, perhaps valid as an active ingredient only in some areas of our experiencings. I shall return to this last point at a later stage.

Because all of these stages can overlap, it is difficult to pick out precisely what constitutes each stage. Happold suggests that they are rather elusive in terms of progress: "the mystic Way is more like a slope than a staircase, and is sometimes a slippery slope, with constant slippings back." This is the sense in which I mean that the stages are not hierarchical. Perhaps they are better thought of as the broadening or expansion of consciousness to embrace more and more profound degrees of experience. Hence the mystic is able to move within potentially ever extending boundaries and may find herself anywhere within those bounds at a given time. The mystic can have a deep and moving experience one day, yet find that her prayer or meditation is fruitless and frustrating on the next.

They take great pleasure in the matter, but find little sweetness or none; nay rather, dryness, weariness, and disquiet of soul increase and grow the more they search after the sweetness they had before, because it is now impossible for them to have it as they had it at first.

There is a definite movement however, from the initial stages of mystical endeavour to the later stages. The process of beginning her adventures into mysticism and undertaking to strive for the perfection she seeks in Union or Identification, has its

\[ \text{ibid. p.56} \]

origins in the struggle between the mystic's worldly desires and her ultimate aim of achieving Union or Identification. Hence the title, the Way of Purgation or Purification. The would-be mystic feels a deep sense of disillusion with the world and what it offers her and attempts to find greater meaning and experience in rejecting the pleasures of that world. She is able to use this stage as a basis for entering the Illuminative and Unitive states, but must be constantly on her guard against her senses and material urgings and desires.

The Desert Fathers\(^\text{28}\) practised asceticism, as have many mystics. The strong and widespread\(^\text{29}\) occurrence of ascetic practices, reflects, I think, a rather unhealthy suspicion that the body was in some way inherently evil\(^\text{30}\). The rejection of the body, constant fasting and prayer, and even flagellation and the wearing of hairshirts were also conspicuously associated with the mystics of the medieval and post-medieval period. Would-be mystics withdrew from the world, denied themselves the companionship of other human beings and were advised, in some cases to avoid looking women in the face (because of the temptation which women represented).\(^\text{31}\) Of

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\(^\text{28}\) e.g. Even in pre-Christian times, the community at Qumran was made up of desert ascetetics. In the early Christian era ascetic Christian communities sprang up, amongst whom numbered figures such as Cyril of Alexandria and Athanathius.

\(^\text{29}\) The belief that the body is evil and a source, perhaps the source of sin, has permeated Christianity, particularly from Augustine onwards and the Hellenistic influence cannot be overlooked here. Matthew Fox has referred to this as the Fall/Redemption Spirituality (See his book *Original Blessing* (Bear and Co 1986)

\(^\text{30}\) The belief that the body is inherently evil and the source from which all sin has emanated, is derived, in the Judeo-Christian setting, from the Garden of Eden myth, but is a post-Hellenistic, rather than Hebrew interpretation. The Greek interpretation, as it has now come to us, was, in its day influenced by the Orphic mystery cults, themselves a very early Greek development. The early Persians also maintained that the body was evil. Although there are many possible interpretations of the story of Eve's eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, Eve has been variously interpreted as eating an apple. This suggests that she was giving in to her carnal desires (although the Hebrews were more concerned with the arrival of evil into the earthly paradise).

\(^\text{31}\) See for example *The Imitation of Christ* (trans Betty I. Nott) (Collins, Fontana Books 1965)
course, such practices were not restricted to that period of history but were better
documented during that time.

And since Augustine,\textsuperscript{32} it has not been just an accident of history that many Christians,
both mystics and non-mystics, have adopted, unconsciously, I suspect, a Manichaean-
influenced way of being. The moral imperative to view sex as primarily a pro-creative
act, rather than a pleasurable pursuit in itself, which is prevalent even today,\textsuperscript{33} reveals
this very clearly. A corollary of this attitude seems to be that some mystics, in believing
the body to be evil, would attempt to dampen all carnal desire. That is precisely what
many have done. A "split" between body and mind/soul, in which the mind/soul was
viewed as a more noble facet of the human person, over and above the body, became
fully expressed in the lives of many mystics. From a philosophical point of view, it is
also interesting to note that the division between body and mind became a fully fledged
philosophical doctrine in the works of Descartes in the post-medieval period.

For the mystic then, the tendency to deny Self has been seen in the light of eliminating
worldly, hence carnal, desire in a process of purification. But the real problem with
which the mystic must deal, is not the world per se. As John of the Cross points out,
worldly desire and the aggrandisement of Self are great enemies to the aspiring mystic.

There is no detachment, if desire remains ... detachment ... consists in
supressing desire and avoiding pleasure; it is this that sets the soul free, even
though possession may still be retained. It is not the things of this world that
occupy or injure the soul, for they do not enter within, but rather the wish for,
and desire of them, which abide within it.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{32}354-430 CE

\textsuperscript{33}Consider the Catholic Church’s official view on contraception.

\textsuperscript{34}Op. Cit. John of the Cross p.7
The steps the mystic takes to eliminate desire can be very little at first. Once she becomes more accepting and less Self oriented and Self centred, Illumination and Union can come to fullness in her. But the two stages merge into one another, rather than being distinct. The Way of Illumination typically is signified by a lessening of the strength of desire to conform to the temptations of the world. In a sense, it becomes "easier" for the mystic to become more involved in her way of being because the struggle with her Self is not as intense. The specific activities in which the mystic engages - prayer, meditation, contemplation - now begin to reveal to her the layers of meaning and the depth of experience which she has sought. Perhaps a greater apprehension of Otherness in terms of her intuitively "seeing" beyond-the-everyday, becomes possible for her. This brings forth acclamations such as:

15. I see in thee all the Gods, O my God; and the infinity of the beings of thy creation. I see god Brahma on his throne of lotus and all seers and serpents of light.

16. All around I behold thy Infinity: the power of thy innumerable arms, the visions from thy innumerable eyes, the words from thy innumerable mouths, and the fire of life of thy innumerable bodies. Nowhere I see a beginning or middle or end of thee, O God of all, Form Infinite.

The changes from the first stage to this second are extremely subtle, so subtle that the mystic may not be aware of the magnitude of her consciousness-expansion. But she must be on her guard lest her vanity leads her to self-congratulation. The author of the Cloud of Unknowing warns against this. The sense of Otherness and the transcendence of God now become greater, and a more immanent presence in the life

35In Section 1.2 I will be exploring the relation between the mystic and her Self more fully.

36Bhagavad Gita 11 (Trans Juan Mascaro ) (Penguin 1962) Arjuna 15 & 16

of the mystic. Furthermore, the discursive, rational intellect, as the vehicle of understanding and comprehension, is gradually complemented by the development of an intuitive and less structured mode of consciousness. The mystic can be launched into the "realm" of no-being, no-mind, no-Self, from this moment.

The ultimate state for some mystics is Union or identification, in which the mystic's consciousness is such that all categories of the rational intellect, including that of language, seem to become inept. The operations of consciousness, during this condition and why consciousness operates thus, are my primary concern throughout this thesis. For it is in that state, that the phenomenon of the annihilation of the subject/object distinction occurs. Part of that phenomenon is the realisation for the mystic that Self does not exist, so I now turn to the concerns which are raised there.

1.2 Self and Mysticism

I first came across the idea that Self might not exist when I read a naive account of the Buddhist doctrine of no-self or no-mind, several years ago. The idea shocked me, because, as Watts explained the concept, any adherent to such a dogma would have to abandon her commitment to a personal ego. That one is not, or does not have, a personal ego, was anathema to me. Many years of thinking and reflection brought me to view this extreme doctrine less harshly. Out of my ponderings, I came to the more comfortable conclusion (I thought), that Self and the personal ego are not the same entity at any rate, so that to deny the existence of the Self did not matter all that much: the ego, ('I') could remain intact (and the Buddhists and Alan Watts are wrong).

38 Marghanita Laski argues, in Everyday Ecstasy, that this state is forbidden to Christians. Whilst this may be the case for some, it is certainly not so for mystics like Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, or Eckhart.

39 Alan Watts The Book On the Taboo against knowing who you are (Abacus 1973)
There has been considerable philosophical discussion of the concept of Self, so when I placed the idea in that context, I was not all that concerned at the prospect of the non-existence of Self. The philosophical discussion and speculation has ranged from Locke and Hume to Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Williams and Strawson. Self, I realised, is a problematic entity and the repository of many conceptions and misconceptions. But I became concerned that although I now thought of 'I' as distinct from Self, most philosophers do not make such a distinction. That being the case, my original antagonism towards the doctrine of no-self, returned.

But I also began to look a little more circumspectly at the distinction I was prepared to make and realised that, from a logical point of view, although each of "Self" and "I" can occur as logical subject and appear in the predicate of a sentence, "Self" refers to an object, whereas "I" does not. I is subject only, and is never referred to, and cannot be an object (except in an extended sense of, for example "The I which thinks" or Kant's transcendental 'I'). I thought this position (that 'I' does not refer), obvious, until I began to explore the literature, when it became clear that my hypothesis was not quite so obvious to other philosophers. But it was on this basis that I started looking for ways to examine the problem philosophically and especially in respect to mysticism.

The subject/object distinction is something which most of us take for granted. But let us suppose that it is a valid distinction when and only when, it is seen as the basis for, and constitutive of, how our consciousnesses work on an everyday level. Beyond that, the distinction might not hold. This would mean that what we may have taken to be...
absolute - in the sense that regardless of what we think, there must be an object if there is a subject - would not be absolute at all.

The subject/object distinction presupposes a certain logico/rational and psychological structure which we impose upon our experience, hence on our worlds. That our experiences are the kinds of experiences that they are, and that we can understand and reflect upon those experiences, assumes that they are constituted and ordered, in some way, by our consciousnesses. We do engage in activities and involve ourselves in the world, as if we are in some sense observers as well as actors. That we can be both observers and actors suggests that we are the subjects and there is the world "outside" our consciousnesses.

Now let us suppose that there is another way of playing in this world, and that although this other way is fundamentally dependent upon the subject/object distinction, the way ultimately shows that the very distinction on which consciousness is posited, is relevant to consciousness, as its primary ontological process, on the level of everydayness alone. For that way entails the collapse and abandonment of the subject/object distinction.

By embracing the kind of life and way of being that the mystic commits herself to, she is able to go beyond the everydayness of consciousness. She is able to collapse and abandon the structures which constitute the subject/object distinction and is therefore able to be open to other possibilities of being. Because of the nature of those possibilities, the mystic finds that what happens to her is extremely difficult to articulate. But those possibilities of being are what give the articulation of mystical experience its noetic and paradoxical character.
The proposition that there is no Self, or that Self does not exist arises out of the mystic's experience of the collapse of the subject/object distinction. But the loss of Self and the realisation that Self does not exist come at the end of a prolonged and difficult period of preparation for the mystic.\(^4\) One of the first activities in which the mystic engages is to rid herself of herself.

Where the creature stops, there God begins to be. Now God wants no more from you than that you should in creaturely fashion go out of yourself, and let God be in you.....Go completely out of yourself for God's love, and God comes completely out of Himself for love of you. And when these two have gone out, what remains there is a simplified One.\(^44\)

To follow Christ is to deny self; this is not that other course which is nothing but to seek oneself in God, which is the very opposite of love. For to seek self in God is to seek for comfort and refreshment from God. But to seek God in Himself is not only to be willingly deprived of this thing and of that for God, but to incline ourselves to will and choose for Christ's sake whatever is most disagreeable, whether proceeding from God or from the world; this is to love God.\(^45\)

Hence, it is within the setting of the mystic's endeavours to purify herself, that we first come across the idea that Self is an object. For the denial and elimination of Self was, and is, seen by many as a first step in mystical experiencing. There are at least two quite distinct ways in which this can be carried out - the strictly ascetic manner in which one is purged of all desire, comfort, worldly possessions and pleasures - or the more

\(^4\)See above

\(^44\)Meister Eckhart THE ESSENTIAL SERMONS, COMMENTARIES, TREATISES, AND DEFENSE (Translated and Introduction by Colledge and Mc.Ginn) S.P.C.K. 1981 German Works, Sermon 5. p.184

\(^45\)John of the Cross THE ACTIVE NIGHT OF THE SPIRIT p.19
gentle approach in which everything is accepted for what it is and no claims are laid upon it in terms of desires and possessions. The latter, which includes yoga practises, or certain meditation techniques (like gazing at a candle or listening to sound) actually emphasise the senses and the role they play in consciousness. By becoming completely aware, the practitioner loses sense of herself and her consciousness and lets go of the subject/object dichotomy.\textsuperscript{46}

A basic distinction between one's Self and oneself ('I'), which I will be making throughout this thesis, is not, however, made explicitly by mystics, even though the mystic conceives of Self as an object from which she wishes to be freed. Certainly, a distinction is made in Hindu philosophy, between Self and the Great Self or Atman, where the Self is distinguishable from the Great Self in terms of the former's being a personal and empirical entity, whilst the latter is the ground of being. But this is not the same distinction as that which I will be making.

In all cultures it is that personal Self of which the mystic strives to be rid, strives to overcome; and it is that Self to which the passions and senses are tied. Many mystics have held that it is this Self which is responsible for one's being led astray, away from the mystic path to be consumed by worldliness. Should the mystic succeed in her efforts, the stripping of that Self will result in a state of pure consciousness in which there is no subject and object and in which Nirvana, the ground of being or God is finally realised.

But the state of pure consciousness where the mystic cannot make any distinction between what she experiences and the experiencing itself, is not a desired state throughout all cultures and religions. Katz claims, for example, that in the Jewish

\textsuperscript{46}See The Miracle of Mindfulness for a very full discussion of the practices associated with the habit of mindfulness and therefore with the collapse of the subject object distinction as I see it.
tradition devekeuth, the definitive mystical state is such that one's individuality is necessarily preserved because of the nature of the relationship between God and humans. One cleaves to God; one cannot be one with Him for He is the unique creator and divine and ontologically distinct from His creatures: humans are the created and mortal. The distinction between 'I' and Self would be very important to such a view, in light of the fact that the mystics of the Jewish religion also have endeavoured to be rid of Self through prayer, fasting and isolation from the rest of society. If it is oneself that cleaves to God, then one cannot be purified of oneself. The Self that has the passions and desires and is tied to the senses is the object of the purgation: its destruction means the purification of the ego which can then face God, divested of all worldliness.

There are grounds, then, for conceding that a distinction between Self and 'I' exists in both the practice and theology of mysticism, notwithstanding the fact that its theoretical implications have not been fully drawn out. But there are also grounds for acknowledging that the distinction is not made when Self and 'I' are understood as the same, as I believe to be the case in Eastern and some Western (Christian) societies. By implication, Self is viewed as object by mystics within those traditions, and this suggests that some mystics do not understand the ontological pre-suppositions which they accordingly take on board. If 'I' and Self were one, mystics would not be able to argue for the annihilation of Self without arguing for the annihilation of 'I', which they do not do. 'I' is ever present even if it is just as the primary focus of individual consciousness. In spite of the insistence that the flesh is evil, mystics are very taken by the dignity of life and the status of being-human. Hence to maintain that Self must be destroyed is to take a stance which preserves the sanctity of 'I', whilst at the same time


48For example, the Essenes, a "group" of Jewish ascetics.
ridding oneself of the object which is seen as the greatest barrier to mystical experience.

The subject/object distinction is not only apparent in the distinction between 'I' and Self, however. There are other ways of objectifying ourselves which suffer the same fate as Self. In particular, I am thinking of expressions like "soul" and "spirit" which we also come across in both philosophical and religious literature, especially that of the Western European medieval and post-medieval periods. Additionally, it is interesting to notice that "soul" and "Self" are sometimes used interchangeably.

The soul was an especially important aspect of one's being for the medievals, but its meaning appears to be dependent on context. It is possible that this state of affairs arose from the translations (and subsequent interpretation) into Latin, of Greek texts that were then becoming available. The Greek, psyche, was translated by the Latin, anima, which in turn has come to us as soul from Old English (swol) and High German, Old Friesan and Old Saxon (seula, sele, and seola respectively. The Cartesian concept of soul (as in the mind/body distinction) is not implicit in the medieval understanding of psyche, which is derived from nephesh, the Hebrew, meaning "a being animated by the breath of life". The concept of soul as that which survives death was derived from the Greek, nous, which signified the immaterial soul. This concept is what has coloured our own understanding of soul and renders soul an object, quite distinct not only from body, but from self-consciousness or 'I'. Yet what is inescapable, is that the soul was (and probably still is) regarded as object. Whether or not the object "soul" was thought of as identical with 'I' is problematic because of the difficulties encountered in translating and subsequently interpreting the Hebrew, Greek and Latin

49The Jerusalem Bible Footnote 2e Genesis

50ibid. 1 Corinthians 15:45-49 Footnote w
words. But it is clear that the soul was what survived this earthly existence: thus the soul was intimately identified with one's very existence.

The corollary is that in being translated by the same word soul, psyche and nous are therefore not clearly distinguished. Hence the expression soul can cover a wide range of meanings, from Self, to 'I', to living being, to animating principle of the body.

John of the Cross, the author of The Cloud of Unknowing, and Teresa of Avila all talk of the Soul but seem unaware of the subtleties in which the concept is embedded. It appears to be the case that the same problems which arise with Self and 'I' might also be explicit with soul and 'I'. Sometimes, then, the mystic implies that Soul and 'I' are one, sometimes she implies that soul and Self are one. The contexts are difficult to determine, but how an object ('soul') can also be a subject ('I') is the very same problem faced by Self and 'I'. This is the dilemma which I will examine in the next Chapters.

Fundamentally then, Self is the object towards which the mystic has directed her attention in order to purify and liberate herself, or to attain Nirvana or to find oneness with the Ground of Being. Mystics have seen the Self as the embodiment and perpetrator of their carnal desires. At best, mystics regard the desire for anything other than God (or alternatively, for Nirvana), as a compromise. To be detached from all things, from all possessions and desires for possessions and then ultimately, to be detached from the desire for God or Nirvana itself, is finally to rid oneself of one's Self.

\[51\] Op. Cit.

\[52\] The Cloud of Unknowing (Author unknown) seems to acknowledge the Greek nous (p.242) or sees soul as the seat of consciousness.

\[53\] e.g. Eckhart
To be detached from God or Nirvana is precisely to be detached from all objects. That is to say, the intentionality of consciousness, which, as I will discuss in Chapters 2 and 4, seems to demand an object, is, at this point called into question. Thus objects of desire, objects of attachment, detachment, worship, praise, love; and the attachment, detachment, worship, praise and love themselves, which apparently entail an object, are completely abandoned. The collapse of the subject/object distinction is fully embodied in this complete abandonment.

If 'I' in some way represents or signifies the true being of the individual mystic, grounded in God's Being, then the distinction between 'I' and Self becomes a conceptual necessity. For the mystic is not interested primarily in self-destruction but in the annihilation of that which leads her away from God. In fact then, what remains of herself, is Kant's 'I' as bare awareness: 'I' becomes one with God or realises Nirvana. And what is destroyed, abandoned, is the object: Self (together with all other objects of consciousness).

In my next two Chapters, I will argue that there are very good reasons for holding that 'I' and Self are distinct and that on the level of everydayness, the expression "I do not exist" is non-sensical, whereas the proposition, "Self does not exist", is not. Thus to call Self an entity, viz. to imply that it exists, because of a supposed identity with 'I', is to make an assumption which is unestablished and, as I will argue, cannot be established.

The existence of Self however, makes little difference to what the mystic endeavors to do in ridding herself of Self. If one were to assert that Self, as an object, exists, one must be able to establish the conditions under which this can be shown, and the criteria

\(^{54}\text{entity from Mediaeval Latin } entitas, \text{ from } ens, \text{ being (Collins English Dictionary)}\)
for existence in general which one is prepared to set. Self is an intentionally "heavy" object. By this, I mean that we always talk about Self as if it exists, as if everyone else knows precisely what we are talking about, and as if it has properties and qualities which are easy to define and characterise. But this is not the case at all, as Hume found out. To my knowledge, no-one has succeeded where he failed. Self is, and remains, a non-existent object. This will become more intelligible as the thesis proceeds.

Hence the annihilation of Self is not to be understood as an activity which involves the destruction of an existent object. The object which is destroyed is what is projected by 'I': the object which is constituted by 'I' as its own in 'I's efforts to know itself. As far as 'I' is concerned, Self is constituted for its own epistemological ends because 'I' cannot be an object to itself. But because Self is constituted by 'I' and because it is thought of and becomes an object of knowledge, it is an intentional object. Because of the psychological, epistemological and empirical influence which 'I' gives to Self by holding on to it, as part of its identity, the battle between 'I' and Self is enormous. The stages through which a mystic might go in her efforts to attain Nirvana, or to be united with the Ground of Being, become relevant here. The mystic finds that what she sets out to do is not simply achieved. Self is a resilient object and 'I' can slip and falter on the path, when it all seems far too difficult. The state of Union which the mystic seeks, is the state in which the mystic finally realises that Self does not exist. This does not make her battle any easier, but once achieved, her consciousness is so expanded that her life is profoundly and irrecoverably changed. So lastly in this chapter, I will briefly outline the Unitive state.

See Ch. 3

I am using "thought of " in its widest possible meaning here to include all kinds of mental activity, like, "believes in", "known"
1.3 The Unitive State

The state of Union or Identification is characterised by the mystic's loss of Self and the ultimate realisation of the inapplicability of all categories in terms of what is and what is not. Consequent to this, the mystic abandons not only her Self but herself ('I'). The subject/object distinction, to which Self and 'I' belong, is simply not at play in this mode of experiencing. She becomes emptied, a term used by the mystics of both East and West to suggest the abandoning of the content and the conceptual structure which normally informs our experience. Eckhardt says of emptiness:

The emptier the spirit, the more is the prayer and the work mighty, worthy, profitable, praiseworthy and perfect. The empty spirit can do anything.

What is an empty spirit?

An empty spirit is one that is confused by nothing, attached to nothing, has not attached its best to any fixed way of acting, and has no concern whatever in anything for its own gain, for it is all sunk deep down into God's dearest will and has forsaken its own.57

The concept of emptiness as a privative state is discussed in Chapter 4 of the Thesis.

The emptiness in which the mystic finds herself is a transcendent state, and one in which all sense of time and identity is lost. The paradoxes which mystical experience seem to generate are found here. They are inevitable because, as I will argue later,58 the language which we use in our everydayness does not accommodate the new experience with its apparent absurdities. For language is part of the content and conceptual framework which is passed over in the mystical experience. Thus mystical experience only seems to generate paradox because it does not make sense according to our everyday understanding of the world; these paradoxes are in fact a result of the


58 Ch. 4
inadequacies of our language and the restrictions we place on our everyday experience in structuring it as we do. The language generates these paradoxes because our linguistic and conceptual structures are interdependent. To reiterate the point, mystics realise this, and often resort to metaphor and symbol for a more adequate, but nonetheless, impoverished way of articulating their experiences. Hence metaphor and symbol should be seen as an alternative way of expressing what appears to be inexpressible.

I will argue that transcendence is primarily constituted by two processes: mindfulness and both letting-go and letting-be. The latter is a double sided process in which letting-go necessarily entails letting-be, and vice versa. Mindfulness and letting-go/letting-be are the two processes which ultimately provide the foundation for the collapse of the subject/object distinction. What the mystic has done in order to annihilate her Self presupposes mindfulness and letting go and letting be. Unless the mystic is amenable to these two attitudes, her efforts to attain God or Nirvana will be fruitless. The destruction of the subject/object distinction in the Unitive experience leads the mystic to a depth of being that can only be described as indescribable; thus the ineffability of mysticism.

The mystic's claim that Self does not exist arises out of this transcendent experience. That experience provides an insight into the philosophical problem of the existence of Self. The conviction that Self does not exist is thus confirmed by experience which lies outside the rational and logical framework within which the problem lies.

However, a consequence of the loss of the subject/object distinction will be that once the Self/I dichotomy is forsaken, the expression "I do not exist" must be reflected upon in a new light. Ultimately, I hope to show that as mystical experience falls outside what we consider our everydayness, the categories which we normally use and which are constitutive of our rational and intellectual framework, including that of existence, are
not appropriate to mystical experiencing. In my next chapter, I therefore turn to the problems we encounter when we (correctly) view Self as an object, but fail to understand that it is a non-existant object, which is clearly distinguishable from the non-object, 'I'.
Chapter 2

SELF AS INTENTIONAL OBJECT
2.1 Introduction

At the beginning of Chapter 1, I mentioned the role consciousness plays in constituting our experience. During this chapter, I will be developing that theme in an attempt to indicate precisely what consciousness does with respect to 'I' and Self. Hence the question, "Who am I?" or its objectified form, "What am I?" which are probably asked by nearly everyone at some stage of his or her life, become the starting point for this Chapter. For those questions signal the fact that we are conscious beings, self-conscious beings.

The familiar concepts of 'I' and Self, which arise from within our consciousnesses are often taken to express the same idea. The aim of this chapter however, is to show that "'I" and "Self" are not co-referential expressions nor are they terms that co-signify. By this I mean that "'I" is not a referring expression, because there is nothing to which it can or does refer; whilst "Self" is such an expression and refers to the object, Self. I claim throughout this thesis that "'I" signifies or expresses, but never refers, whereas "Self" can either signify (but not in the same way as "'I") or refer. A second, and related, point is that although "'I" and "Self" are taken to be co-referential terms, the contexts in which they occur, predisposes against their being substituted salve veritate. This suggests that identity is a problematic relation between 'I' and Self, and that the ontological and logical presuppositions which tie the two together, should be looked at very carefully. I will be arguing that when we use the two expressions, we actually do not mean the same at all, because of the inherent subjectivity of 'I' and the inherent objectivity of Self.

They are expressions, however, which we use all the time when we speak about ourselves as even the hastiest of reflection will reveal. In particular, the concept of Self is one that
has been dealt with by many philosophers and psychologists in their attempts to gain an insight into, or even an explanation of, whom we are.¹

I shall propose that "I" is an expression which signifies consciousness' reflexiveness. I choose the word "signifies" advisedly, as I believe that it is ontologically neutral in comparison with expressions like "denote" or "refer to", which invite theories about reference and objects, and their attendant problems. "To signify" means to be a sign or presage of...to mean, have meaning.²

My choice of "signifies", or any derivative of its infinitive, "to signify", is not unprecedented. Kemp Smith translates the German word bedeuten as "signify" in a context where Kant talked about the problematic nature of objects.

But it is a question for deeper inquiry what the word 'object' might signify in respect of appearances when these are not viewed in so far as they are (as representations) objects, but only in so far as they stand for an object.³

"I" is a meaningful expression, "I" is commonly used to signify self-consciousness in the context in which it will be presented throughout this chapter. What self-consciousness consists in, as an ontological problem, is beyond the scope of this thesis. The ontological question can be bracketed whilst meaningful discussion takes place.

Of course there are contexts in which "denote", for instance, can be appropriately used. Those contexts help to constitute the referential framework of language, as it is understood within for example, the British/American analytic tradition. Terms like "house" or "car"

¹Jung, Freud, Hume and Kant immediately come to mind.
²Concise Oxford Dictionary.
denote or refer because there is something to which we can "point" when we use them. Terms and expressions like "unicorn" or "the present king of France", do not denote or refer. On the other hand, that "I" refers, is problematic, because it belongs to the expressive, rather than the referential, function of language. I discuss more fully this in Chapter 4.

During the course of this thesis, I will be arguing that because consciousness appears to require an object, and "I" is not an object, but an empty subject, it constructs or constitutes Self to fulfill this role in its own domain viz. thought, feeling, belief, ideas. Thus Self is an agglomeration which consciousness constitutes and projects to itself and the world in order to have knowledge of its own being, which is signified by "I".

I shall draw a distinction between two sets of locutions in which the word "Self" occurs:

a) in reflexive expressions like myself, oneself, itself, for itself, in itself. Amongst these I also include self-consciousness.
b) "The Self", "A Self" which are object phrases and indicate some object which I am taken to be.

Prior to putting forward my own views on "I" and Self, I shall outline an interpretation of Kant in which I claim that Kant distinguishes between 'I' and Self. That distinction, I shall maintain, is based in a distinction between 'I' and I think which is found in the difference between the transcendental unity of apperception and the synthetic unity of apperception:

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We are all uncertain of our conscious origins. Some modern theorists, for example Arthur Janov,\(^4\) claim that we are conscious of light and sound in utero, that we are sensitive to our mothers' emotional and physical states in the passing on of various hormones and chemicals via the mother-placenta blood supply during pregnancy. It might very well be the case that such theories not only are plausible but are correct and that consciousness has its primitive origins in our embryonic beginnings. Hence we would enter this world as physical beings with an already rich, if limited, foundation for conscious or unconscious experience, should people like Janov be correct.\(^5\)

But we humans are all conscious beings, that much is certain. What is also certain is that we are self-conscious. We have a sense of being that is peculiar and individual to each one of us. We use a language that expresses self-consciousness: "I", "my", "me", "myself" all reveal to ourselves and to the world that we are conscious beings.

Our recognising that we are self-conscious is displayed linguistically at an early age. Little children are often heard saying things like, "Me do this", "Me want that". For children this "me" expression must be held as a sign of growing self-awareness. It is later superseded by "correct" grammar and a child will begin to use "I" expressions.\(^6\) Generally speaking, we regard the use of "I" as a genuine and mature sign of selfhood.

\(^4\) Janov, Arthur The Primal Scream (Sphere Books Abacus London 1973)

\(^5\) I recently heard a news report in which it was claimed that some newly-born babies in Britain would respond to the theme music of the television series, Neighbours during times of extreme stress for them. Their stressed behaviour would be significantly modified as a result of the music's being played.

\(^6\) This is not meant to be an accurate scientific outline of the correlation, if any, between language skills and a child's discovery of its self-hood. This is a description of how it might happen, as it appears to have done with my own children.
To say that consciousness is intentional is to say that consciousness is consciousness of something.\textsuperscript{7}

Consciousness is consciousness-of. This is quite uncontroversial, so it seems, but what is being suggested here is an intentional relation, the nature of which is difficult to elucidate and articulate, notwithstanding the theories of Brentano and Husserl. That consciousness is consciousness-of is embraced by various intentionality theses from Hegel\textsuperscript{8} to Husserl\textsuperscript{9} - and beyond, including modern theorists such as Harney, from whom I quoted.

Consciousness-of, it might be held, is a relation between consciousness and something, possibly something that is an object. In other words consciousness-of implies a relation between consciousness and what is not-consciousness, an object. This is the intentional relation to which I just referred. However, I want to suggest, that there are two ways in which this relation might be regarded:

a) consciousness-of something, an object as suggested before - an intentional relation;

b) consciousness-of as a reflexive relation viz. consciousness-of itself where there is no Other to which consciousness can be, or is related.

However, Husserl was not the first to make this distinction. In the \textit{Phenomenology of Spirit}, for example, Hegel made it when he wrote, "For consciousness is, on the one hand consciousness-of the object, and on the other consciousness of itself."\textsuperscript{10}

\textsuperscript{7}Harney, Maurita. \textit{Intentionality, Sense and the Mind} (Martinus Nijhoff Publishers (The Hague 1984) p.142


\textsuperscript{9}Husserl, E. \textit{Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy} (Trans. Kersten) Martinus Nijhoff Publishers) (The Hague 1982)

Obviously the relation is determined by what consciousness is consciousness-of. When consciousness is conscious of its own being, then it is a reflexive relation and it falls under b). When consciousness is consciousness of something else ie. what is not its own being, then the relation falls under a). On this analysis, consciousness is not aware of its own being as an object. It is the Kantian (and perhaps the Cartesian) awareness simply that it is.

Objects of which consciousness might have consciousness, and which therefore fall under a) are items such as tennis balls, trees, beliefs, desires, unicorns, rainbows. It is my contention that Self also fits in here.

The reflexive relation shown up in b) is consciousness' consciousness of itself, of its own being. This is self-consciousness.

It is apparent that self-consciousness and consciousness-of Self are not logically equivalent expressions. Self-consciousness does not involve consciousness' consciousness of anything other than its own being. Self-consciousness must be seen as a fully subjective mode of being; the "of" used here does not express an object-relation between consciousness and itself. Rather it expresses a reflexive awareness that consciousness is. Consciousness of Self, however, suggests a relation between consciousness and an object - an Other. Hence consciousness of Self should be seen as a relation between a subject and an object and that relation, by its very nature in being directed towards an Other, is intentional.

"I" is the linguistic device by which consciousness expresses its own being; "I" therefore should be thought of as signifying self-consciousness. This is analogous to the Catholic doctrine once taught, that a sacrament is an outer sign of an inner reality; and, as another example, to the Tibetan Buddhist's "giving birth to" the sacred mantra, OM MANI PADME
In this sense, just as a sacrament is symbolic, and is not an arbitrary sign, so is "I". The uttering of "I" is a manifestation of self-consciousness, not arbitrarily expressed; and the same is the case with a mantra. Depth and being are meaningfully expressed through one's ritual uttering of the mantra.

Linguistically speaking, the uttering of "I" is an outward sign, of an inner reality: self-consciousness. "I" should be considered a legitimate and full expression of self-consciousness; conversely, consciousness of Self, which should not be thought of as the same as self-consciousness, cannot be so signified. "I" as an expression of consciousness' reflexiveness, is pure subject and should not be viewed as object. Likewise, "Self" is object and should not be understood as subject.

2.2 **Kant on Self**

In order to clarify the distinction between 'I' and Self, especially in relation to 'I' as pure subject, I will be helped by looking at what Kant has to say on the matter, as the roles of 'I' and Self are extremely important in his epistemology. I begin by noting that 'I' as pure subject is a Kantian notion. I now want to propose a view of 'I' and Self which I believe is soundly based in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. I will be claiming that there are adequate grounds for believing that Kant made such a distinction and that the distinction is not merely formal. Before doing this however, a few notes about his terminology.

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11*Thus mantra is a "tool for thinking", a "thing which creates a mental picture". With its sound it calls forth its content into a state of immediate reality. Mantra is power, not merely speech which the mind can contradict or evade.... from Lama Anagarika Govinda, *Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism* (Rider and Company, London, 1973) p.19

12See footnote 6, Chapter 1.
Firstly, the word "transcendental". The context in which it occurs appears to determine its meaning. Thus when Kant speaks of transcendental knowledge, he is speaking of "knowledge which is occupied not so much with objects as with the mode of our knowledge of objects insofar as this mode of knowledge is to be possible a priori."\(^{13}\) When he speaks of transcendental object, he means the "non-empirical, that is, transcendental object = x".\(^{14}\) Most of the Critique is concerned with the former, viz. our mode of knowledge of objects a priori: the structures of and conditions under which knowledge of objects is possible. The latter is an underlying theme through much of the Critique: we cannot know objects as they are in themselves, we can only know them as appearances.

Secondly, nearly all of Kant's basic terms are epistemologically "double" sided: pure/empirical intuitions; pure/empirical concepts; pure/empirical consciousness. Thus the two words "pure" and "empirical" are contrasted by Kant. "Pure" admits of no mixture of experience and is concerned with the a priori structures of the understanding and reason. In that sense, what is pure, is unaffected by experience, whilst yet providing the fundamental framework within which we operate as rational beings. On the other hand, "empirical" has to do with experience and the world of objects with which we are concerned: our phenomenal existence.

The unity of apperception is the third piece of terminology at which I shall look and it is troublesome. I can identify three "kinds" of unity of apperception:

a) Transcendental apperception is "pure, original unchanging consciousness"\(^{15}\); transcendental unity is the a priori unity of this consciousness which precedes all data of

\(^{13}\)Op. Cit Kant A 12 p.59  
\(^{14}\)ibid A109 p.137  
\(^{15}\)ibid. A107 p.136
intuition and by relation to which representation of objects is alone possible.\textsuperscript{16} It is neither thought nor knowledge, but bare consciousness. Kant also refers to this as pure apperception, original apperception.\textsuperscript{17}

b) Synthetic apperception is related to the empirical consciousness of objects and their relation to the pure structures of understanding, the categories and the schemata, but is not itself an empirical construct.\textsuperscript{18} That all possible representations can be united in one manifold in one subject, is the "absolutely first and synthetic principle of our thought in general."\textsuperscript{19} This is an objective condition for all knowledge, in so far as it "is not merely a condition that I myself require in knowing an object, but is a condition under which every intuition must stand in order to become an object for me."\textsuperscript{20}

Synthetic unity of apperception is thus presupposed by all representation: any representation can only be mine and then recognised as mine if this unity is presupposed. The synthesis that takes place is an a priori condition for all empirical consciousness and empirical representation. This is a synthesis of rules: of the condition under which anything can be perceived or represented as belonging to me. Those rules are the categories. Naturally enough, this does not apply to the world of things-in-themselves.

c) Analytic unity of apperception is mentioned only in (B). Kant says that the "analytic unity of apperception is possible only under the presupposition of a certain synthetic unity."\textsuperscript{21} In distinguishing thus, Kant is presumably acknowledging that one can analyse only in the

\textsuperscript{16}ibid

\textsuperscript{17}ibid A123 p.146; B132 p.153

\textsuperscript{18}ibid B161

\textsuperscript{19}ibid A117 p.142

\textsuperscript{20}ibid b138 p.156

\textsuperscript{21}ibid B133 p.154
context of a larger, synthetic whole, viz. that one is able to "represent to myself the identity of the consciousness in (ie throughout) these representations."

Only a) and b) are relevant for my purposes. I will be presenting an interpretation of Kant's epistemological concerns relating to consciousness (awareness), thought and knowledge.

In the Critique there is a movement from 'I' as bare awareness, to "I think" as the thought that 'I' exists, to Self which we know as an empirical object. The transcendental unity of apperception, I am going to argue, is signified by "'I'" and the synthetic unity of apperception by "I think". Hence there is more to "'I'" and "I think" than 'I's' merely being the subject term of the proposition, "I think". I will be arguing then, that "'I'" and "I think" are suggestive of different functions within the Kantian system. Questions about "'I'" and "I think" are thus ultimately questions about the relation between the transcendental unity of apperception and the synthetic unity of apperception. Overall, Kant himself is not particularly perspicuous here. It is evident though that both unities belong to the understanding and that they are both conditions for the possibility of all representation. It is almost tempting to assert that "they" are actually the same, but Kant does say specifically that the original synthetic unity of apperception is the transcendental unity thought in the categories and so, I will argue, it cannot be the case that these are simply alternative ways of describing the same unity.

The Kantian "'I'" is a bare, simple, contentless representation. "We can assign no other basis for this teaching than the simple and in itself completely empty, representation, 'I'..." 'I' is the condition under which all possible experience is experience. It precedes

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22ibid B133 p.153
23ibid B151 p.165
24ibid B404, A346 p.331
25ibid. B404, A346. p.331
all experience and makes all experience possible.\footnote{ibid A 107 p.136} But it is what might be thought of as an ontological condition or ground of being, as opposed to an epistemological condition. For Kant, 'I's' emptiness means that 'I' is indeterminate and that nothing manifold is given in it. 'I' is the vehicle for bare consciousness to reveal its existence, but it does not provide the ground or condition for knowledge, because implicit in knowledge, is a manifold of experience and that experience is necessarily, in the Kantian system, experience of objects.

It is difficult to determine whether 'I' is a condition for "I think"; or whether "I think" is a condition for 'I'. By this I mean, does 'I' as the transcendental unity of apperception, act as a logical basis upon which "I think" is constituted? Kant seemed to hold that 'I' generates "I think".\footnote{ibid B132 p.153} This makes the transcendental unity of apperception \textit{ontologically} prior to the synthetic unity of apperception; it also makes it \textit{logically} prior because without the mere form of consciousness there is no possibility of any \textit{a priori} knowledge. The transcendental unity of apperception is also called the transcendental unity of self-consciousness and it is because of this that I am able to be conscious that all representations are mine. The thought that they are mine belongs with "I think". Thus 'I' becomes incorporated into "I think" \textit{in the act} (as Kant calls the empirical proposition), "I think".\footnote{Kant refers to the empirical proposition, 'I think" as an act. B423 p.378 It is possible that he means " in the act of saying or uttering, 'I think'.} In this, the synthetic unity of apperception is constituted as the ground for every one of my representations, and thus I am able to think that they are my representations, they belong to me. The synthetic unity of apperception is the condition under which I think of all representations as mine.

The role that "I think" plays in the awareness of a unified consciousness is explicitly stated by Kant.
Thought, in the form of the proposition, "I think", gives content to the pure representation, "I". It transforms the bare representation, the indeterminate "I" and makes empirical representation possible in giving 'I' content. For 'I' to be a condition for knowledge, it would have to take cognisance of the categories, which it cannot do. 'I', in acknowledging the categories and making representation possible viz. in constituting objects in space and time, constitutes itself as a thinking subject expressed in "I think". "I think" necessarily engages the world and is thus the epistemological condition for all empirical knowledge, indeed for the possibility of all knowledge. The possibility and actualisation of the categories is therefore dependent upon "I think". The "I think" "delivers" the concepts of the understanding (the categories) to thought, and sensibility provides the manifold for the intuitions of space and time through which empirical objects are given.

Consequently, "I think", as a synthetic construction determines the possibility of experience. Without "I think" there can be no knowledge, neither empirical nor synthetic a priori. For part of the requirement for synthetic a priori knowledge is that there be some empirical representation.

There can be no doubt that all our knowledge begins with experience. For how should our faculty of knowledge be awakened into action did not objects affecting our senses partly of themselves produce representations........But though all our knowledge begins with experience, it does not follow that it all arises out of experience. For it may well be that even our empirical knowledge is made up of

ibid B138 p.157
what we receive through impressions and of what our own faculty of knowledge (sensible impressions serving merely as the occasion) supplies from itself.\textsuperscript{30}

Kant’s mathematical example of synthetic \textit{a priori} knowledge, $7+5=12$, indicates that not only is the number 12 not found in the mere thinking of 7 and 5, but that we can never, without the aid of intuition, come to the right answer.\textsuperscript{31} And intuition, with the exception of its forms, space and time, is, for human beings, \textit{empirical}, not pure.\textsuperscript{32} Intuition is what relates us to objects. As well as there being no knowledge without "I think", there can also be no uniform consciousness.

The consciousness of being (transcendental apperception or 'I') is given content by thought in the empirical proposition, "I think", which signifies the synthetic unity of apperception. 'I' cannot do this, since "I", as a contentless representation, cannot encompass any unity of apperception, because without content, no manifold is present. The manifold and the synthetic unity of apperception are mutually dependent. "I think" thus determines my existence as a thinking subject in terms of my presence in a spatio-temporal domain. "I think" arises out of my experience of that domain.\textsuperscript{33} Furthermore, the puzzle of how we can be objects to ourselves can be approached from this angle. This is how Kant states the problem.

How the 'I' that thinks can be distinct from the 'I' that intuits itself (for I can represent still other modes of intuition as at least possible) and yet, as being the same subject, can be identical with the latter; and how, therefore, I can say: "I as

\textsuperscript{30}ibid. Introduction B1 p.41

\textsuperscript{31}ibid B16 p.53

\textsuperscript{32}Unfortunately, Kant sometimes refers to space and time as intuitions as well. See the Transcendental Aesthetic. He argues that we do not have pure intuition, for if we did, then we would be able to encounter the world, noumenally, which we cannot and do not, do. Pure intuition belongs with the intellect and God alone intuits in this way.

\textsuperscript{33}ibid. B158 p.169
intelligence and thinking subject, know myself as an object that is thought....."
these are questions that raise no greater nor less difficulty than how I can be an
object to myself at all.....an object of intuition and inner perception."

"I think" and "I intuit myself", look structurally similar. Yet the latter says much less than
the former: "I intuit myself" implies no object at all, if "myself" is understood as a reflexive
expression. It says no more than that my consciousness is aware that I am. On the other
hand, "I think" implies an object because of the intentionality of thinking viz. thought’s being
directed towards an object; one must think of or about (something). Once the intentionality
of thought is acknowledged, the logic of the two expressions can be seen to be different.
For although "I think of myself" can be read reflexively, the circumstances in which it would
be done so are not immediately obvious. If one thinks of oneself, one automatically
objectifies or projects away from one’s intuited being. That is to say, one thinks of the
object, "Self", not of "I", because one cannot think of 'I'. Kant, if he believed that what one
intuits and what one thinks about/of are the same, is stuck with that problem: they are only
the same in the context of grammar.

One does not know oneself as an object that is thought, even though one seems to be
able to make the relevant statements within the grammatical structures which we use.
This point will become important later on.

To reiterate, we can say the following of Kant’s "I".
1) 'I' is transcendental apperception.
2) 'I' is pure, original, that in which nothing manifold is given.
3) 'I' is bare (contentless).
4) 'I' is the formal condition for all representation.
5) 'I' is also the logical principle of unity.

ibid B155-6 p.167
What Kant says about Self is not so easy to identify. Much of what he allegedly says, is not at all explicit. For instance, the Index references in the Kemp Smith edition bear the mark of Kemp Smith's interpretation of Kant. The Index refers the reader to pages 28 and 89, for example, for the distinction between empirical and transcendental self. Yet on page 28 "Self" is not mentioned at all, never mind a difference; and it is page 88 that mentions "Self" not page 89.

Obviously we are left to make inferences on the basis of interpretational prejudice. Kant, however, mentions Self often enough for us to get an idea of what he might mean by the term. He says,

a) consciousness of Self (apperception) is the simple representation of the 'I'.

and also that,

b) consciousness of Self is "merely empirical and always changing."

These two positions appear to be incompatible. Consciousness of Self cannot be both the simple representation of the 'I' and also merely empirical and always changing. But if one were to construe a) as a reflexive relation, then the incompatibility would vanish. a) would just say that self-consciousness is the simple representation of the 'I', but consciousness of Self in b) as an object is merely empirical and always changing.

Kant almost always favours the locution "self-consciousness" in the context of his "I" talk in contra-distinction to consciousness of Self, talk of which occurs within a

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35ibid B69 p.88

36ibid. A107 p.136

37ibid. See for example throughout Transcendental (B) especially B132
framework of inner sense. For Self simpliciter there is a case that it is to be understood on two levels: Self as an empirical object and Self proper, the transcendental subject. The inner sense framework relates to the former.

Even the inner and sensible intuition of our mind (as object of consciousness) . . . is not the self proper (das eigentliche Selbst) - that is, is not the transcendental subject, but only an appearance. 38

Space and time are the sensible pre-requisites for all knowledge, just as are the categories the rational pre-requisites. As the form of all human sensible intuition, space and time, (which in turn are themselves intuitions 39 ) is that which relates any object to human consciousness. The a priori structures of the understanding are revealed as a priori once we become acquainted with the empirical world. A priori knowledge is therefore dependent upon sensible intuition in terms of our realising the universality of human experience, of the empirical. For Kant, it follows that we can know ourselves only as appearances because we can know only appearances. As such, an appearance is the "undetermined object of an empirical intuition". 40 Appearances amongst which are numbered the empirical Self, are empirical objects. For Kant, Self is an object which we know and of which we are conscious. It is an empirical, but phenomenal, object, in other words. Thus we know ourselves as objects, as appearances. I shall return to this point in a moment.

For now there is a question of the Self proper, which needs to be examined. From that quotation, it appears that Kant identified Self proper with the transcendental subject. In the Paralogisms, he stated that the transcendental subject is represented by 'I'. 41 The transcendental unity of apperception, is both 'I' and what is represented by "I".

38 ibid. A492 p.440
39 See footnote 93
40 ibid A20, B34 p.65
41 ibid B404, A346 p.331
There are two questions to ask here:

1. Do "I", "the transcendental subject", "the transcendental unity of apperception", and the "Self proper", signify in the same way and by that I mean, are they identical?

2. If they are, can it be said that "I" represents the Self proper?

The conditions under which an affirmative answer to the first question can be given are unknowable. The Self proper is the Self, in itself, viz. the noumenal Self. In a footnote on p.432, Kant concedes that "all questions dealt with in the transcendental doctrine of the soul are unanswerable."[^42] That is because all of those questions deal with the transcendental subject of all inner appearances "which is not itself appearance and consequently not given as object, and in which none of the categories ....meet with the conditions required for their application."[^43] The transcendental subject is extra-categorical. One cannot define or characterise 'it', or give its properties, if 'it' has any. The transcendental subject is not an object: it cannot be intuited and it cannot be known. Much the same can be said of the Self proper. Since there is an entity which answers to the description, "transcendental subject" and an entity which answers to "the Self proper", it sounds as if the best we can do is to say that there is a single entity of which these descriptions are possibly true, but that there is no way of telling. And the same will be the case with respect to "transcendental unity of apperception", "transcendental subject", "Self proper" and "I".

[^42]: ibid A479, B507 p.432
[^43]: ibid
It follows that if 'I' represents the transcendental subject and that if the transcendental subject and the Self proper are identical, then 'I' will also represent the Self proper. Or does it? This argument has the form:

\[
\begin{align*}
X & \text{ represents } a \\
a & = b \\
\text{ therefore } X & \text{ represents } b
\end{align*}
\]

The argument form is valid in contexts like, "This photograph represents the Prime Minister; The Prime Minister is identical with Bob Hawke, therefore this photograph represents Bob Hawke." viz., in extensional contexts. Where the context is intentional, the argument form is invalid. Thus the argument, "Fran thinks that this photograph represents the Prime Minister; The Prime Minister is identical with Bob Hawke, therefore Fran thinks this photograph represents Bob Hawke" is invalid for all cases of Fran's not acknowledging the identity relation between the Prime Minister and Bob Hawke.

It is problematic whether one can infer from "'I' represents the transcendental subject" to "'I' represents the transcendental Self". This will depend on one's regarding "'I' represents x" as an intentional context. Whilst it is the case that 'I' represents each of the transcendental unity of apperception and the transcendental subject, it is by no means certain that what 'I' represents signifies the same entity. The substitutability of terms is the most important consideration; and in the end, the decision as to whether the terms are interchangeable, lies with what predicates or properties one is prepared to ascribe to what is being signified. In other words, a full description in terms of properties and predicates, is seminal in deciding substitutability.
That becomes a lot clearer with a simple transposition of subject and predicate. The two propositions, "The transcendental subject is represented by 'I'" and "The transcendental Self is represented by 'I'" obviously do not have the same signification in terms of their subject matter. Ultimately, in these cases, Leibniz's Law, if invoked, will decide against the assumption of identity of transcendental subject and transcendental Self. Beyond that, one can appeal to Kant's noumena/phenomena distinction which will tell us that there is no way of knowing the noumenal world and that therefore, any transcendental object, as non-empirical, is unknowable as it lies outside the Categories of the understanding. Hence to accept identity between noumenal objects is to make inferences and come to conclusions which are outside human possibility.

Finally on Kant's original conundrum. The 'I' that thinks and the 'I' that intuits itself are distinct yet identical; I am an intelligent thinking subject yet I know myself as an object. The reason that these are no greater problems than how I can be an object to myself at all, is that there is more than a formal distinction at stake. 'I' as thinking subject is not identical with the object of intuition, Self. 'I' and "I think" are ontological and logical conditions for the existence of Self, but they are not Self. As representing the transcendental unity of apperception, it cannot be the case that 'I' is also an empirical object, nor can it be any object at all, for we can know only objects. What we know is an object, an appearance, and this must be also what we intuit. 'I' does not and cannot intuit itself in the Kantian sense, viz. within the context of the space/time framework; 'I' intuits the empirical object Self. When Kant speaks of the 'I' that intuits itself, I do not think the intuition involved here is of an empirical nature, but is the bare awareness to which I referred before. Thus Kant's problem can be solved by one's insisting on the distinction between the subject as bare awareness ('I') and the empirical object (Self) and distinguish those from the transcendental Self. Whilst 'I' remains a bare intuition, it can never represent the empirical Self. The relation between 'I', 'I think' and Self is just the relation between consciousness, thought and knowledge. The first two are conditions under which an object can be constituted in
order to be known. The mere form of thought, that is to say, is instrumental in constituting an object which can be known as its own.

2.3 Self as Intentional Object

The "I" with which I shall be working in this part of the Chapter is basically Kantian in so far as it is bare and a logical principle of unity. By 'bare', I mean that 'I' is only awareness, that it is empty of content and that nothing is given in it except that it is.

Kant, I have claimed, used inner sense to move from 'I' as pure apperception, to Self, an empirical object of intuition and knowledge. Unlike Kant, it is immaterial to me whether space and time are absolute or the forms of intuition. Where Kant uses inner sense (time), I shall use the intentionality of consciousness to which I referred at the beginning.

Like Kant, however, I want to claim that some empirical representation is necessary to supply material for thought:

...the empirical is only the condition of the application of the pure intellectual activity.44

Regardless of one's adopting (or not) the Kantian architectonic and superstructure, one must agree that objects play an important role in perception and representation.45 How objects in general are to be understood is problematic. How I understand objects will emerge throughout the rest of this section.

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44 ibid A479, B507 p.432

45 Kant uses the word Vorstellung which Kemp Smimth translates as 'representation' throughout the Critique. It appears to mean many things e.g. what is represented, the act of representing, the contents of the mind. My use is the Oxford's 1) represent; call up by description, or portrayal or imagination, figure, place likeness before mind. The Oxford's " symbolise, act as embodiment of, stand for...." is not dissimilar to Kant's use.
I start with Husserl's natural attitude, namely, the everyday assumption that there is a spatio-temporally continuous world on hand for me, of which I am part and which I experience[^46] - and then bracket it. That is to say, I accept the world as given and make no assumptions about its ontology.

In these investigations, we keep theories - here the word designates preconceived theories of every sort - strictly at a distance.[^47]

Then I propose to adopt the method, parenthesising, which is to say, questions which can arise from the natural attitude will be set aside. These will include problems like, Are objects real? What is the world? What does that mean? ... and so on. Husserl describes this as:

> [the putting] out of action the general positing which belongs to the essence of the natural attitude: we parenthesise everything which that positing encompasses with respect to being: thus the whole natural world which is continually "there for us", "on hand" and which will always remain there according to consciousness as an "actuality" even if we choose to parenthesise it.[^48]

This is what Husserl called the phenomenological epoche.

As a discussion of "intuition" is germane to the following, I begin by acknowledging Kant's contribution to the area.[^49] For him, an intuition is the mode by which objects are related to knowledge.[^50] He argued that because human beings are not purely creatures of

[^47]: Ibid p.
[^49]: Also see footnote 100
[^50]: Op Cit. Kant
understanding, we do not possess pure, intellectual but empirical intuition.\textsuperscript{51} Objects and intuition therefore go together like smoke and fire. I shall not use the word "intuition" in precisely that way. I shall mean by "intuition" an immediate apprehension of the mind without reasoning; immediate insight.\textsuperscript{52}

The argument which I will be developing is as follows:

1. consciousness is consciousness-of.
2. consciousness of consciousness yields 'I'.
3. 'I' is empty, a bare (naked) subject which intuits its own being.
4. intuifying its own being, 'I' constitutes an object (Self) to unfold or to know that being.
5. the object (Self) that is constituted by 'I' is an intentional object.

I have glossed over some of these points beforehand, in particular consciousness-of which should be understood in terms of consciousness as subject and its relation to, or directedness towards other, or object. At the beginning of the Chapter, I drew a distinction between consciousness-of as a reflexive relation, exhibited by self-consciousness and consciousness-of as an intentional relation under which I claimed, consciousness of Self should fall. These two relations are interdependent. The interdependence is expressed in the bi-conditional:

"'I' iff Other".

Consciousness' consciousness of itself, or the shorthand 'I' (which signifies the reflexive relation) is dependent upon consciousness' awareness of something other than its own being. And awareness of the existence of 'other' is dependent upon 'I'. 'I' and Other, that is to say, necessarily presuppose each other. This is the basis for the subject/object dichotomy. With the awareness of its own being, self consciousness, 'I', reveals not only
that it is subject, but that there is other that it is not - object. Hence there is a logical
dependence of the two forms of consciousness-of upon each other.

But 'I' must not be considered as the awareness of the individual contents of
consciousness even though the contents as objects constitute consciousness' being. 'I' is
the principle of awareness of consciousness per se, the logical unity of consciousness, that
which all experience (as mine, to use the Kantian terminology) signifies. So that when I say
that 'I' is empty, a bare subject, I am saying that the awareness yields nothing about the
nature or contents of 'I'. 'I's awareness is simple and non-discursive.

In spite of its emptiness, 'I' nonetheless intuits its own being. But the intuiting of its being
does not unfold or give knowledge of itself to 'I'. In order to have knowledge of itself, 'I' must be, or be able to become, an object to itself (Kant's problem, see above) which it
cannot be. The reason that 'I' would have to be an object to itself, is that "knowing"
suggests or implies an intentional relation, just as consciousness-of other, does. (See
above.) To know suggests a relation between a subject and either an object (what is
known), or the content of what is known (what that knowledge is about or "of"). Having said
that 'I' cannot be an object to itself, my earlier sketchy comments about intentionality need
to be elaborated in this context.

In saying that consciousness is consciousness-of, I am asserting that consciousness is
directed. The directedness of consciousness is a shift made by Husserl away from
Brentano who was more interested in distinguishing between the mental and the physical
and using intentionality as a means of doing this.

Husserl's theory of intentionality is a theory about the acts of consciousness.
Consciousness consists in acts of intending some object. Perceiving, imagining, wishing
for, thinking of, are different ways of intending some object - they are intentional acts.
The intentional relation that is consciousness-of is not to be construed as a relation between a subject, and an object which must exist. It is not, in other words, a theory about reference.\footnote{The distinction between signifying, denoting and referring is very important. Russell and Frege spent considerable time working out theories which would provide the means of knowing when a proposition was true, on the basis of what was referred to and therefore, what exists or existed. It has been commonly held amongst philosophers that what is referred to must exist: since we usually refer to objects those objects must exist. But Meinong and now Sylvan have challenged those views.}

The intentionality lies in the act of intending and the existence or non-existence of the object intended is of no consequence. Intentionality is constitutive of consciousness, not of its objects, or of linguistic expressions, although as we will see, consciousness does constitute some of its objects (viz. those that do not exist. Chapter 3 will clarify this point.)

The intentionality of the relation between an act and its object in A's intending B is to be understood in terms of the trichotomy:

\text{act - noema - object}\footnote{Harney p.142}

The noema or meaning is what constitutes an act's directedness. That is why the existence or non-existence of the object does not bear upon the intentionality of the act. Existence of an object is not a requirement for intentionality; it is simply irrelevant.

Therefore it cannot be the existence of the intended object which constitutes the intentionality of the act. The intentionality consists rather in the fact that to every act, there is correlated a noema or meaning through which the act is directed to its object, if it has one.\footnote{Ibid in Chapter 4, I will take up the matter of whether or not an intentional act requires an object.}
With this in mind, I now return to how 'I' can know itself. Knowing is an act of consciousness. As such, in knowing (about, that, of) there will be the act, noema (meaning), and object towards which the act is directed. In the bi-conditional relation about which I spoke (above), I maintained that 'I' is subject and 'Other' (viz, other-than-I) is object. A consequence of this is that 'I' cannot be an object to itself. In order to do that, 'I' would have to be other than itself, 'not-I'. The absurd and contradictory result of that is that 'I' would have to be both 'I' and 'not-I'. So, in attempting to know itself, 'I' actively constructs or constitutes an object which will fill its epistemological requirements. 'I' constitutes that object from its own domain: its thoughts, ideas, beliefs, feelings. That object is Self. Hence Self is an intentional object because it is an object that falls within the directedness of consciousness.

Self is an object that is constituted through time. It is not that to which psychologists refer in locutions like "self-image" or "self-aggrandisement". It is the object about which we all speak when we mistakenly say that we know ourselves. What we really mean here is that we know our Selves. But that Self is also a metaphysical fiction. That this is the case will be argued in my next Chapter.

It might perhaps be objected that this account of Self appears to imply a necessary connection between me and my Self. That is to say, since Self would seem to be in a contingent relation to 'I', any Self can be mine. This is not a problem however, when one considers that the constitution of the object Self is totally dependent upon consciousness and its constituents. That is to say, just as self-consciousness is a result of consciousness' primitive awareness of its own being via the "'I' iff Other" bi-conditional, so consciousness of Self comes about through consciousness' awareness that it can make or constitute an object out of those constituents, which enable it to be aware of its own being. Since each consciousness is differently constituted, then each Self will likewise be uniquely constituted. In other words the uniqueness of each consciousness guarantees the uniqueness of its
own object, its own Self. Although those contents are contingently the contents of this consciousness (simply, they could have been otherwise), given the Self which is constituted, it can only be a Self in relation to the particular consciousness from which it arises. Therefore the question of a necessary connection between me and my Self proves to be not a problem at all. The Self that goes with you, does so necessarily, and the Self that goes with me does so necessarily, even though it could have been different in itself.

A final remark on intentionality. Husserl's thesis that consciousness is directed, must be modified to allow for the reflexive relation. Consciousness is not directed in at least one case, and this is when consciousness is consciousness-of its own being. But as I have argued above, the reflexive relation and the intentional relation are interdependent and this is expressed in the biconditional, "'I' iff Other", the basis of all self-conscious activity. It is problematic that consciousness is not directed in at least one other case, but I shall explore the problem further in Chapter 4.

An argument which I would now like to consider very briefly because it will come up in a different context at a later stage, has to do with the logic of substituting terms which supposedly refer to the same object. If "'I'" and "Self" co-signify, then in non-intentional (linguistic) contexts they ought to be substitutable salve veritate. The truth conditions for a statement about 'I' would also be the same as those for Self. But this would need the rider that where "'I'" occurs, "my Self" should be understood as equivalent; and also one needs to consider that "'I'" in this case, is a referring expression, counter to what I am claiming in the thesis. Now let us consider:

i) I do not exist.

and

ii) My Self does not exist.
i) is absurd; not only can it not be meaningfully uttered, but it is existentially self-defeating. The conditions under which it would be true are just those conditions under which it could not be uttered. If ii) is equivalent to i) then it would follow that it too cannot be meaningfully uttered and that it is existentially self-defeating and that the conditions under which it would be true are unable to be decided.

But ii) can be uttered meaningfully; it is not existentially self-defeating and the conditions under which it would be true are quite different from those of i). Many mystics would acknowledge that ii) is the case.

When in the Chapter which follows, I argue that Self is a metaphysical fiction, I shall consider much more fully why ii) can be the case. Although it might appear to be counter-intuitive to hold ii), it is nonetheless a radical conclusion to which many mystics come. And in the final chapter I shall be looking at a way of making sense of i). This will not turn upon whether or not i) and ii) contain terms which are substitutable salve veritate. Rather, the major consideration will be the context in which such a statement might be understood as expressing a fundamentally paradoxical but nonetheless intuitively graspable aspect of experience.

In this chapter, I have been attempting to show that "I" and "Self" do not co-signify. I presented an interpretation of Kant's reflections on 'I' and Self and claimed that even for Kant there is a substantive difference between 'I' and Self. This was based on what can be said of 'I' as transcendental unity of apperception, and Self as empirical object.

Then I took a Kantian notion of 'I' and used that to show that it ('I') and Self cannot be identical, because 'I' is and only can be, subject; and Self is and only can be, object. 'I' cannot be identical to Self because Self is object and object was "defined" in terms of "Other-than-I".
Lastly, I mentioned an argument to which I shall return, in which I believe that it is patently obvious that 'I' and Self are not identical, and therefore the terms cannot co-signify.
CHAPTER 3

SELF AS A METAPHYSICAL FICTION.
3.1 Introduction.

In the preceding chapter, I argued that Self is an object which is constituted by consciousness in order that 'I' can know itself. I claimed that "I" is, and only can be a subject, and that Self is object or other-than-I. I now turn to the ontological status of that object, Self.

My discussion of intentionality inevitably leads to the conclusion that whatever is the object of an intentional act, is an intentional object. To repeat the point, intentionality is constitutive of consciousness and not of linguistic expressions although it is expressed therein. For any x to be intentional, to be an intentional x merely means that x is an object towards which consciousness can be directed. That is, x is capable of being thought about, believed in, conceived of, known and so on. Anything and everything that can fall within the realm of human consciousness is potentially an intentional object. The Queen of England, my husband, trees, the atmosphere, neutrinos, mathematical problems, unicorns and Pegasus, are one and all intentional objects. Hence Self is rightly thought of as an intentional object.

To remark that anything which can be the object of an intentional act, is an intentional object, is to take the broadest possible view of objects as a whole. This view echoes that of the irreducibility theorists, of whom Anscombe and Chisholm are representative.

.....the expression "what can be thought about" is interpreted in such a way that anything can be thought about. When Anscombe says she uses the expression "object of thought" in the old sense, she means precisely this. The old sense of "object of thought" is the sense in which we say of all psychological acts that they are objects.¹

¹Op.Cit Harney p.92
The assumption, that in order to be thought about, or believed in (in other words to be an intentional object), an x must exist, is an unwarranted one. Those who make it confuse the ascribability of intentional properties to an object, with the existence of that object. In order to think about something, that something does not have to exist. In order to think of Self, Self does not have to exist. Some objects then, about which we think, do exist, some do not. What do we mean though when we say that an object exists? What do we mean when we say that trees exist but that Self does not? (And yet we can think about both. But that we can think of or about both, one of which exists, and one which does not as will be shown, is not my concern in this thesis. That is another philosophical problem. The literature on this is extensive.  

The existence or non-existence of any thing or object, particularly Self is the central problem of this chapter. I will be discussing existence throughout and so the phenomenological epoche, invoked in the preceding chapter, will now be dispensed with. In dispensing with the epoche, I am taking the phenomenological line adopted by Heidegger. Kocklemans remarked that:

- it will not be surprising to learn that Heidegger explicitly dismisses this reduction.
- He wants to make the being of be-ings the explicit object of a completely new ontology, which he intends to create through the phenomenological method. For this reason it is obvious that he has no interest in the bracketing of being.

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2See for example, Meinong or Sylvan on the one hand; or Russell and the Logical Positivists on the other.

3Kocklemans J.J. Martin Heidegger - A First Introduction to his Philosophy (Duquesne University Press 1965) p.20
Having argued that Self is an intentional object, I now want to develop an argument which will show that Self does not exist, show that 'it' is not a entity, why strictly speaking, there is no such entity at all: Self is a metaphysical fiction. If we are to consider the claims of mystics as neither mistaken nor false, we certainly need to come to a clearer understanding of Self. The claim that Self does not exist will be better understood in the light of an exploration of the concept of existence. This will provide a sound ontological base from which to view the mystics' claims. It will also provide some epistemological insights as far as 'I's' knowing its own being, is concerned. The claims of mystics are not based on considered reasoned argument. They come from deep, personal experiences. For that reason, if the philosophical discussion can provide an analysis of Self that confirms the mystics findings, then we will have good reason to affirm this feature of the mystics' experiences and indeed to claim that Self is truly a metaphysical fiction.

Some philosophical accounts of Self are incompatible with what many mystics claim about their experiences. For example, mystics can claim that their unitive experiences give rise to a sense of loss of Self, or, a much stronger claim, to the realisation that Self is an illusion, or does not exist at all. Any account of Self which attributes real object (viz. entity or existence) status to Self would be incompatible with the stronger claim. Locke's view of Self as substance, the position against which Hume argued also, presumes the latter. And even Hume's so-called bundle theory attributes some sort of existence to Self, albeit in terms of perceptions. We have inherited the idea of Self as something which exists and some theorists treat it as such to this very day.⁴

I will explore the concept of existence from a number of different angles. Firstly, there is the question, which we find in Kant, of whether or not existence is a property. Then I shall take up the idea that it is in virtue of attributing certain kinds of predicates and relations to

⁴e.g. Williams, Strawson, Wiggins
objects that we are inclined to say that some of them exist. Lastly, I shall explore the notion
that because Self cannot be both subject and object, in the sense in which I have
indicated, it is a contradictory object and therefore cannot exist. Self would turn out to be
logically impossible (it cannot be both a and not-a).

What then are we asking when we ask, "What is existence?"? We could be asking at least
one of two things:

a) if existence is a being of which we can legitimately ask, "What is it?"...

or,

b) whether existence is a property like "wisdom" or "happiness" or "blueness" of
which we can ask the same question.

The first alternative is a view which I, along with philosophers like Heidegger, reject. In the
Introduction to *Being and Time* Heidegger wrote:

> In the question we are to work out, what is asked about is Being - that which
determines entities as entities, that on the basis of which [woraufhin] entities are
already understood, however we may discuss them in detail. The Being of entities
'is' not itself an entity......In so far as Being constitutes what is asked about, and
"Being" means the being of entities, then entities themselves turn out to be what
is interrogated.⁵

That entities themselves turn out to be what is interrogated is central to the thesis of this
chapter. I will be claiming, as does Heidegger, that existence is not an entity; there are only
entities of which existence can be predicated. Existence is always the existence-of...... In
this respect, Geach's remarks about wisdom are appropriate.

Wisdom tout court means nothing in heaven or earth; wisdom is always wisdom-of—
as Aquinas puts it, is of-something (entis) rather than itself something (ens).\(^6\)

The view that I will be taking is in line with Geach's approach. This lends itself closely to the assertion that existence is a predicate or property.\(^7\) Thus when we say that something exists, we could be asserting that the \(x\) of which we are speaking has the property of existence; or that "exists" is a predicate that is ascribable to \(x\). On the face of it, it appears that existence is a predicate just like "is blue" or "is bumpy" or "is round". And this is what I shall be examining in my next section for it is in this context that the question, "What is existence?" should be placed. It seems to be asking for example, the same kind of question as, "What is blueness?". I shall be arguing that existence is a property, but not one "had" by all objects and that in many respects it is unlike blueness or bumpiness. From this and the following sections it will become clear that some intentional objects do not exist. Hence there are some intentional, but non-existent objects; and that Self is such an object will become apparent.

Before proceeding to this discussion, there is a point that must be made about the having of a property, and consequently attributing that property to an object in an expression like, "\(x\) is \(y\)" where \(y\) is the property concerned. Throughout this analysis, the sense in which I use the terms, "property" is very weak. A property is simply whatever is predicable of a subject. The proposition "Existence is a property of some objects" is derivable from "\(x\) exists" in a very simple deduction which is as follows.

\(^6\)Geach P.T.(ed) *Three Philosophers* (Basil Blackwell & Mott Ltd. 1961) Aquinas (by Geach) p.78

\(^7\)Hilary Putnam points out that the practice of reserving properties for objects and predicates for expressions, is fairly recent. "There is a very old notion for which the word 'predicate' used to be employed (using 'predicate' as a term only for expressions and never for properties is a relatively recent mode of speech: Is existence a predicate? is not a syntactical question...." See *On Properties* in *Essays in Honour of Carl G. Hempel* (ed. Rescher et al)
a) Existence is predicable of some objects.
b) Some objects exist.
c) A property is whatever is predicable of an object.
d) Existence is a property of some objects.

Hence "x exists" and "existence is a property of x" are to be thought of as materially equivalent.

3.2 Existence as a Property

Some philosophers claim that Kant argued that existence is not a property. Kant actually did not argue this at all; he argued that existence is not a real predicate. Existence, claimed Kant, is not a real predicate, for a real predicate determines a thing. To determine a thing, to be a determining predicate is to be a predicate that is added to the concept of the subject and enlarges it. Existence is not the kind of predicate which performs this function. When for instance we think of a hundred thalers, claimed Kant, our idea of that hundred thalers is not enlarged by attributing existence to them. The conceptual content implicit in a hundred thaler remains the same whether or not they exist or are only possible. The existence of the hundred thalers is in fact a different matter from their possibility which is represented in the concept of them. But if the concept of the object did not in some way match the object of which it is a concept, then there would be no reason to suppose that the concept is of that particular object.

6Op Cit Kant A598, B626 p.504
9ibid
10ibid
But we have to go outside our concept of an object in order to assert that it exists. However, by so doing, we do not enlarge the concept we have of that object. What we do is locate in an empirical context, the object of which we have thought. The concept of existence for Kant, comes from objects, not from their concepts. Concepts show what is possible, objects indicate existence.\textsuperscript{11} "That something exists" is a synthetic judgement, hence by locating an object we are entitled to say that it exists by applying the category of existence in a judgement.

Certainly then, existence is a predicate that is added to the concept of an object, for the subject of the concept does not contain the idea of existence, but that concept is not enlarged as a result of predicating existence of the object. This is the "test" of a determining predicate: that the concept of the object, expressed in the subject, is enlarged.

For Kant, existence is not a real predicate then but it is a relational predicate. This is the suggestion made by Campbell,\textsuperscript{12} who argues that we should understand the Kantian doctrine that "exists" is not a real predicate in the context of a long tradition emerging from Plato's \textit{Euthyphro}. In that tradition, existence is not thought of as a real predicate because it is a purely relational predicate. Campbell renders a real predicate as one which is apt for characterising an object. As "exists" is not apt for characterising an object, since it is purely relational, it cannot, so the argument goes, be a real predicate. A predicate cannot be both purely relational and a real predicate. Campbell says that "exists" is a relational predicate for Kant because it performs the locational function to which I alluded above. (We are able to locate an object in time and space.)

\textsuperscript{11}By object here, Kant means empirical object like tree or house or horse.

So existence should be properly seen as the existence-of some empirical object or other (but this is in relation to my consciousness through the forms of space and time). Thus existence is relational, because it is the existence-of (some empirical object) and it is a relational predicate, for by saying that something exists, a relation is postulated between the empirical data with which one comes into contact (the manifold of sensation) and one's consciousness. Kant noted that:

...any (alleged) existence outside this field, while not indeed such as we can declare to be absolutely impossible, is of the nature of an assumption which we can never be in a position to justify.¹³

For Kant then, existence is a property that is tied to empirical objects. Those objects are constituted in relation to consciousness, and it is in virtue of this relation that we can say that existence is a relational property. Because the concept of a subject cannot be enlarged by asserting that its object exists, "exists" is not a predicate which is apt for characterising the object. Thus Kant, on this interpretation, appears to be justified in arguing that "exists" is not a real or determining predicate. It is clearly the case that the conceptual content of a hundred thalers is the same whether or not they exist. Further, the addition of the property "existence" to an object, does not enlarge its conceptual content. And it is also clearly the case that we are able to locate empirical objects because they do exist.

I began by asking whether "exists" is a determining predicate, and if it is, is it a predicate like "is blue" or "is bumpy" or "is round"? These predicates are what Kant would call determining predicates and although sentences with "exists" in the grammatical predicate position are syntactically like those which have determining predicates, it is obvious that if we accept the Kantian position, they are quite dissimilar. Whilst it could be argued that "is blue" for instance, predicated of an object, relates a property (blueness) to an object,

¹³ibid
it must also be held that the predicate characterises an object, or is at least apt for doing so. Existence does not do this in the Kantian context.

I want then to acknowledge that existence is a relational property, for it places an object in a certain kind of relation to consciousness. This can be understood in terms of properties which some objects have and some do not. It will be shown that in the case of Self it does not have any of these properties. And it will also turn out that the possession of those properties by the objects concerned are both sufficient and necessary conditions for their existence or non-existence. (Anything that meets the criteria outlined, must exist.)

3.3 Existence as a Relational Property

If we assert that existence is a relational property because it places an object in a particular relation to consciousness, then there must be certain features, properties or relations had by the object or being concerned, that will warrant our arguing that it exists. Perhaps something is given to consciousness by that object; perhaps the object presents itself in such a way that we cannot help but to assert that it exists; perhaps the object is so represented to us that we cannot but say that it exists. No matter which way it is looked at, it appears to be undeniable that there is something about the object that warrants our saying that it exists.

One way of understanding this is in terms of givenness. Givenness is a fundamental notion with respect to consciousness itself and its objects. When an object is given to consciousness, the concept of Other is also constituted. As existence should be properly 14

14The givenness of an object can be understood as a presentation-to-consciousness. Hence the object is "already there for consciousness", in some sense, and it is up to consciousness to constitute it as its own. "In some sense" is a necessarily vague expression, for the mode of the object in itself is difficult, if not impossible, to determine.
conceived as existence-of, so what is given should be thought of as that which is given-to (consciousness). How consciousness structures, interprets and apprehends what is given to it, depends on both the nature of what is given (either as other or as itself) and of consciousness itself. Some of the objects which are given to consciousness are structured, interpreted and apprehended as existing and some are not.

Perhaps the paradigm of what is interpreted as existing, is material bodies which are given to consciousness as Other. They are what we come across in our everydayness; they are what fill our lives with the "data" of experience. They are, to use the Heideggerian expression, that which is present-at-hand.15

If it is possible to come to some understanding of what is meant when it is asserted that a material body exists in terms of its givenness, then it is possible also to come to an understanding of what is meant when it is asserted that anything else exists. What we mean when we say that something does not exist will consequently be dependent upon the concept of existence at which we arrive.

How material bodies are characterised is fundamental to our understanding of existence. It is in virtue of certain characteristics which those bodies "possess", that this understanding comes about. For example, if you can touch something you infer that it exists. Primarily, we characterise material bodies in terms of their extensional properties. We say that material bodies have size, weight, shape, mass and occupy a spatio-temporal domain, to name a few of their properties, all of which are extensional. But because any predicate that is not an intentional predicate, viz. a predicate which suggests dependence upon consciousness rather than independence from consciousness,16 can be thought of as an extensional predicate, the mere characterising of a material body in this way is inadequate.

16e.g. "thought about by..."; "believed in..."; "said that..." are intentional predicates.
for the purposes of saying that it exists. For example "Unicorns have one horn and are white." is a sentence containing an extensional predicate ("have one horn and are white.") By itself, this is not sufficient information to deduce, or infer, that unicorns exist. The ascribability of an extensional predicate is therefore not sufficient for saying that an object exists, viz. that one is referring to an entity.

There are also problems with the ascription of "exists" itself: is it an extensional predicate, or intentional? After all, we say that some material body exists, because of certain tactile information we receive and which we then, linguistically and logically, formalise in a predicate expression as a characterising description. Is there not a suggestion of consciousness-dependence here? That is to say, the argument that existence is firstly relational, and secondly that "exists" is ascribed on the basis of a tactile relation to consciousness, does not happily lead to the definitive conclusion that existence itself might not be an intentional relation. The status of "exists" as either extensional or intentional is therefore problematic.

However, to use the notion of extensional predicates as a way in to the explication of existence appears, at first glance, to be unsatisfactory. This is compounded by problems associated with the attribution of extensional predicates to apparently non-existent objects, a debate that has, historically speaking, been extensively argued by Object theorists like Meinong and Routley on the one hand, and by extensionalists like Russell and Quine on the other. This debate mainly centres around whether or not non-existent objects can have any non-intentional (and thus extensional) properties and what the truth conditions for sentences about them would be. It is not my primary concern here, but how any objects can be characterised at all in terms of their extensional properties is relevant, as it bears

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17 E.g. The infamous "The present King of France is bald" is a sentence about a non-existent object, and which apparently contains an extensional predicate. How can we even talk of truth conditions for such sentences?
directly on our being warranted in saying that an object exists, another point which will emerge towards the end of the Chapter.

To dismiss the possibility of invoking the use of extensional predicates in the elucidation of the concept of existence out of hand, however, is to burn all one's bridges before they are crossed. In fact, it would seem to remove the possibility of any elucidation at all! Perhaps then, there are some extensional predicates which are simply more appropriate to the task. Of course, there are, and the choice of those predicates is not at all arbitrary. It is not enough to be able to say of an object that it is blue or filled with air or bouncy and thus it exists. Predicating any property of an object, extensional or intentional, does not warrant one's asserting that the object concerned exists.

Let us suppose though that one can hit or kick or touch the object. In this case there is every reason to suppose, and very little reason not to suppose, that the object exists. So that it could be argued that some extensional predicates express a special kind of non-intentional relation between consciousness and an object. Those predicates could be thought of or referred to as existentially loaded, or ontically committing predicates. They are relational predicates because through their ascription, an existential relation is posited between consciousness and an object and in the case at hand, this would be a material body. Hence material bodies are given to consciousness as existing because of the kind of relationship which they bear to consciousness, as existentially loaded. That relationship is non-intentional however, because it presupposes certain other properties of the material body (like its being hard or soft or in a certain position (so that for instance it can be jumped over)). Those properties are also themselves non-intentional.

The conclusion to which we can come from all of this is that the application of non-intentional criteria, be they in terms of properties or relations expressible in a non-intentional relation, warrants one's asserting that a material body exists. Certainly you
can think of something, and perhaps even think of something as existing, but unless the above conditions are satisfied, you are unwarranted in ascribing existence to that material object. To put it in a nutshell, thinking about a material body does not carry any existential or ontic commitment, but hitting a material body does.

Harney, in discussing Chisholm's intentionality thesis, makes a similar point when she remarks:

"..."Tom is thinking of the Golden Mountain" is intentional for we cannot infer from this or its contradictory ("Tom is not thinking of the Golden Mountain") either that there is or there is not a Golden Mountain. Sentences containing a verb like "imagining", "wishing for", "hoping for", satisfy this criterion. Sentences about physical phenomena do not satisfy this criterion: From the truth of the sentence, "Jack kicks the horse" it follows that there must exist some horse which Jack kicks."¹⁰

Given this model for the existence of material bodies, can it be extrapolated to the existence of non-paradigmatic objects? For example is one warranted in asserting that atoms or any sub-atomic particles or even the moon exist? We talk about atoms as if they exist, and we actually mean that they do. Yet we cannot kick them or touch them or jump over them (except in some poetically licensed fashion of course, say insomuch as the cow can jump over the moon). However, we do theorise about them and other objects like them, and then come to the conclusion that they exist, because they are posited as the building blocks of an atomic theory, according to which "kickables" and "touchables" and "jump-overables" are composed of atoms. Hence an extensional relation is establishable through an already extensional context. We infer that atoms exist because of our

¹⁰Op cit. Harney p.26 This then begs the question. If Jack is a fictional character, fictionally kicking a fictional horse, does it follow that there must exist some horse which Jack kicks?
understanding of the macroscopic and microscopic natures of matter, with which we can establish extensional relations.

And likewise with universals or even numbers: these objects also exist for some philosophers and mathematicians. What of them? The non-intentional criteria are equally applicable, but from a different perspective. Whilst one cannot jump over an atom, but one can jump over something composed of atoms, one cannot touch the number two either, but one can count two objects; and according to some theorists, one cannot "see" the universal blueness, but one can create a relation with that universal in the act of relating to something of which the universal is an instantiation. Thus one can play with a blue ball or wear a blue frock. One can also jump over three hurdles or count out six dozen hot cross buns. Numbers are an integral part of every-dayness, just as are universals in this sense. Geach wrote of Frege with regard to his counting numbers as objects (and by this I imagine that he means real or existent objects):

Having analysed "there are just as many As as Bs " in a way that involved no mention of numbers or of the concept number, Frege can now offer this analysis as a criterion for numerical identity - for its being the case that the number of As is the same number as the number of Bs. Given this sharp criterion for identifying numbers Frege thought that only prejudices stood in the way of our regarding numbers as objects. I am strongly inclined to think that he is right.19

The criteria for the existence of numbers and universals can also then it seems, be met by appealing to extensional relations and properties amongst objects of which universals and numbers are predicable. Frege, according to Geach, could even show that numbers are objects (and thus exist) by not using the concept of number at all. This is not an uncontroversial view, but it is cited as a substantive approach to dealing with numbers as existents.

19 Op. Cit. Geach Frege p.161
I conclude this section by commenting that the criteria that warrant one's saying that an object exists, should be seen then in terms of that which is not purely intentional. Obviously my claims at the beginning of the Chapter, that anything that can be encompassed by consciousness is an intentional object, are equally applicable to discussions about the existence of an object. What is required for an object to exist, is that it be in some relation to consciousness, in terms of extensional properties; or be in a relation that is constituted through those extensional properties. This cannot be purely intentional. Does Self meet these requirements?

3.4 The non-existence of Self.

Apart from the intentional properties which we ascribe to Self, it is difficult to decide whether or not there are other properties which can be appropriately ascribed. That is to say, if intentional properties are those properties which are fully dependent upon consciousness (like being thought of or believed in), then how can we characterise Self? We can say that Self is an object, but that is a fairly innocuous extensional context in which to place it. More importantly, Self does not seem to have any other properties or relations that bear a non-intentional relation to consciousness, properties or relations, that is, that will warrant our saying that it exists. Being an object for example, does not guarantee the existence of whatever it is that is being alluded to, even if it sounds as if the object might exist.

But, it might be argued, in the statement "I am opposite the computer screen", the properties transitivity and symmetry express a relation between the screen and me. Any relation that is both transitive and symmetrical is also reflexive. Thus not only is "I am opposite the computer screen" the case, but because of reflexivity, "The computer screen
is opposite myself" is also the case. Thus there is at least one set of extensional relations that are true of Self and that is the set composed precisely of those relations revealed in the properties, transitivity and symmetry; for wherever these hold between 'I' and some x, by reflexivity, they will also hold between that x and myself. So, the argument would go, Self exists, just as 'I' does.

The argument, however, is fallacious. Self is not derived from the reflexive expression "myself". Whilst it is certainly the case that the computer screen is opposite 'I' and thus is also opposite 'myself', it does not follow that it is opposite my Self. As I argued before, "myself" is a reflexive expression which signifies the relation 'I' has to its own being. But it should not be thought that "my Self" can be derived from the reflexive expression "myself" and thus that the two have the same sense or mean the same.

Generally speaking, the correct use for "myself", as in "I saw it myself" or "I knocked myself on the bricks and it hurt", viz. reflexively, does not provide any clues as to how the existence of a Self can be deduced from the reflexive expression. And when that is compared with a sentence like, "My Self is an object", the connection if there is one, between 'myself' and 'my Self', is even more problematic. The truth-condition considerations, as we shall see in a moment, make this a difficult problem.

But it is not truth considerations alone that are relevant to rejecting the idea that Self is deducible from 'myself'. When I say "I hurt myself" I do not mean "I hurt my Self". That is to say, a relation is not being postulated between 'I', a subject and my Self an object (although grammatically speaking "myself" does of course occur in the objective case). That would be to claim that I can somehow hurt the metaphysical "entity" which is supposedly me, the "entity" that is, for which Hume sought in vain (and for whose non-existence I am now arguing). What is being claimed in such cases is that this being which is me, is hurt. That is what it means for "myself" to be a reflexive expression: 'I' is
turned back on its own being. That leaves no room for the deducibility of an object Self which is to be tenuously identified with the subject, 'I'.

Hence I would consider a claim that Self must exist because of the extensional properties found in the relations, transitivity, symmetry and therefore reflexivity, to be unfounded. I may well be opposite the computer screen, but my Self definitely is not (although I myself am).

A discussion of Self's purported extensional properties/relations need not end here, however. Certainly, sentences containing references to Self can be extensional as in "Self is an object for which Hume looked" or "Self was for Locke, a substantial entity", but the existence criteria about which I spoke above are not satisfied by such statements and therefore they do not contribute anything to the argument.

Furthermore, in a grammatical as well as a semantic context, one does not say "My Self is sitting here" or "My Self slept well last night". One makes such remarks of 'I' and it is not merely convention that one does so. A full characterisation of Self in extensional terms: how big, how tall, what colour, what shape, where it is, what it is next to, how it is non-intentionally related to my consciousness, to list some features which might be cited for 'I' or some object which exists, like a material body, is elusive, if not impossible. Self does not seem to have any of those extensional properties or relations. One does not shake hands with a Self, or go on holidays with a Self (except one's own - it "it" exists) or find a Self hiding under the bed. One engages in these kinds of activities with an other: person for example (or one's dog).

With atoms, numbers, and universals however, we were able to circumvent this problem by stating that the criteria could be filled as long as atoms or universals or numbers exhibited the required extensional relations or properties with respect to other objects to
which they are related, or of which they are composed, in terms of being kickable, or touchable, or jump-overable. This does not appear to be the case with "Self", unless it is a term that signifies 'I'. And in the preceding chapter, I attempted to show that that is not so.

At the close of that Chapter, I claimed that if "I" and "Self" co-signify, then in non-intentional contexts, they ought to be substitutable salve veritate. I argued that the truth conditions for 'I' statements will be the same as for Self statements. Let us suppose "exists" to be an extensional predicate. Then the truth conditions for assertions about the existence of both "I" and "Self" ought to be the same if the terms co-signify. Hence the truth conditions for statements about their non-existence will be the same, as non-existence will also be a non-intentional or extensional context. The two sentences to which I alluded were:

i) I do not exist.

and

ii) My Self does not exist.

Naturally enough, extensional relations and properties will be very important here. Thus if we assume that "I" and "Self" are terms that co-signify, they should be thought of as "I" as "the Self which is mine" viz. my Self (a non-reflexive relation unlike 'myself'). Then what is the case for i) should be the case for ii). I maintained that i) is absurd for it cannot be meaningfully uttered as it is existentially self-defeating; and that the conditions under which it would be true, are just the conditions under which (per impossible) it could not be uttered. This is, however, not the case with ii), which is both meaningful and utterable. That is the first consideration.

Secondly, why ii) is both meaningful and utterable has to do with extensional predicates and relations. On the interpretation of existence which I have been advancing, the contrary
of ii), that 'Self' does exist, cannot be the case for the reasons I have already cited, whereas with i) the contrary cannot but be the case. One has to be very careful though about the way in which the argument is worded. To interpret "I exist" in a Cartesian manner would be to apply the same conditions for understanding as I have applied to Self. This being so, the converse of i) could not be the case at all, which is to say there would be no grounds for warranting its utterance. 'I' as a thinking substance in Descartes' model, does not exhibit any of the required non-intentional relations or properties required for existence. It has the same status as Self; that is to say, its properties and relations appear to be almost entirely intentional, except for those which are manifested in existential/ontological statements (e.g. that Self is an object or that Self is an object for which Hume searched).

But generally speaking, the point is not usually interpreted in the narrow Cartesian context in which I have just placed it. When I say "I exist", what I actually mean is this person with all of its relations and properties both intentional and non-intentional, exists. "I" does not just refer to, if indeed it refers at all, or denote, or signify, a thinking substance or subject. It signifies this conscious being. I will explore this question further during Chapter 4.

Thus there is more to holding that i) is a nonsense because it is existentially self-defeating, but that ii) is utterable and therefore meaningful, than at first meets the eye. The application of non-intentional criteria for the existence of an object (and also of a subject in the case of 'I') is also pertinent here. I must exist in virtue of my uttering "I exist" and in virtue of the fact that I have just those relations that are required for anything to exist. In other words, the necessary and sufficient conditions for existence are met by 'I' but not by Self.

3.5 Self as a contradictory object.
In the last chapter, I argued that "I" and "Self" do not co-signify and therefore they are not identical. The argument was based upon a distinction not only in function, but also in ontology. "I" signifies consciousness' reflexiveness and "Self" signifies an object constituted by consciousness in order that it can know itself. Further, I argued that 'I' is and only can be subject, and that Self is and only can be object. But the two are logically and ontologically interdependent, for the proposition "I' if Other" is held to be the case.

If Self can be shown to be a contradictory object (if it can be shown to be both a and not-a), then there is obviously a further case to advance for its non-existence. But in order to show that Self is a contradictory object, there are certain assumptions that must be made, part of which involves backtracking a little and supposing that "I" and "Self" do co-signify. From there, the analysis of 'I' as subject and Self as object must also be assumed. So let us abandon the main contention of the second chapter for the moment, and suppose that it can be shown that "I" and "Self" are terms that co-signify, and therefore that what is true of 'I' ought to be true of Self. (In other words 'I' and Self are identical.) I shall, however, maintain that 'I' must be seen as subject and that Self must be seen as object, so that under the assumption of Self's being identical with 'I', the argument will show that Self must be a contradictory object.

If 'I' is to be explicated in terms of subject and Self is necessarily explicated in terms of object, and if the two are the same, it should follow that, in non-intentional contexts whatever is true of the one should be true of the other. But as I remarked above 'I' cannot be an object to itself. If that were the case, 'I' would have to be both 'I' and 'not-I', which is absurd and contradictory. But this is also the case with Self. If Self were to be its own subject, then it would have to be both Self and not-Self. Again this is absurd and contradictory, for anything cannot be both itself and not-itself.
A possible way around this problem is to assert that 'I' and Self are identical, but that they signify different aspects of the same being. Thus it is not possible, even in extensional contexts, to substitute their predicates. A comparison could be made with "the morning star" and "the evening star" for example, both of which signify the same object (Venus). It is at least arguable that if one accepts that "evening star" and "morning star" signify Venus, (in terms of the referential use to which Donnellan alludes)\textsuperscript{20} then it (Venus) is both the evening star and not the evening star (for it is the morning star). Then of an extensional sentence like "The evening star rises in the morning", it could be argued (counter-intuitively) that this is false, for it is the morning star that rises in the morning, not the evening star.

But this would further mean that there is at least a coherent sense in which the evening star is not the morning star and not the evening star either (but it is Venus) (in the attributive use identified by Donnellan)\textsuperscript{21} This being so, what warrants our saying that any of these are true of Venus in the first place? What is even worse, it could also be argued that Venus is not Venus, as it is the morning star; but it is not the morning star as it is the evening star; but it is not the evening star as it is Venus..... (which completes the circle quite nicely!).\textsuperscript{22} Thus Venus/the evening starthe morning star ends up being an impossible or contradictory object.

A simple solution to all of this would be to argue that there is a confusion between the "is" of predication and the "is" of identity. When one asserts that Venus is Venus, one is not predicating anything of Venus, but one is making an assertion of identity. Likewise with Venus' being the morning star or the evening star. "The morning star rises in the evening"

\textsuperscript{20}Donnellan, Keith 'Reference and Definite Descriptions' (Philosophy Review 1966)pp.281ff

\textsuperscript{21}ibid p.pp 285ff

\textsuperscript{22}Completed in virtue of Donnellan's attributive use of definite descriptions. See article to which I previously referred.
is true because the morning star and the evening star "are" identical. It would be false only if one were wrongly attributing a property ("being the evening star") to the morning star. But that is not what one does in this case. These are not attributions of a property to Venus, but an assertion or statement of identity. Hence it is not the case that "The evening star rises in the morning" is false for we do not make a genuine predication; the sentence is true in virtue of an acknowledged identity relation holding between the evening and morning star (and Venus).

An analysis of this kind works, it would seem, for the evening star and the morning star, but will it work for 'I' and Self? So, the argument would go, there is one entity of which it is true that it is both Self and 'I' but that to interchange how it is signified results in contradictions because of the confusion between the "is" of predication and the "is" of existence. When we say that 'I' is subject and Self is object, we are not actually predicating anything of them (except in a logical sense). We are attributing identity to 'I'/subject on the one hand and Self/object on the other. Hence Self cannot be both Self and not-Self because to be not-Self is to deny the basic (necessarily true) identity "Self = Self".

But surely this will not work at all. The argument presupposes the identity "'I' = Self", just as the identity "Venus = the morning star = the evening star" is presupposed in the above example. So that looked at in this way, one will still end up with "Self is not-Self", for the identities "'I' = Self = not-'I'" and "Self = 'I' = not-Self" must be held to be true, for "'I' = Self" is also supposed to be the case. Then because of the assumption that whatever is true of Self must be true of 'I' in an extensional context, a whole string of identity statements will ultimately yield a string of contradictions. So that each of 'I' and Self and subject and object will end up as contradictory objects.

A final remark about the idiosyncrasies of identity itself. When I say "I am Fran Gray", this is not a true statement in terms of the logidan's sense of identity (although it is, of course,
true). Thus if I were to develop amnesia as a result of an accident, to deny that I am Fran Gray would not result in a logical absurdity. The point that I am making about 'I' and Self is not this point, for in my argument, I am invoking the logician's sense of identity. The arguments concerning Self and 'I' in the above, presuppose the logician's sense of identity, not the sense in which a person is contingently identical with, for example, being a Prime Minister or a logger or the first woman to prove the ideological bias of the R.S.I. These are contingent identities. But in the above argument, 'I' and Self should not be thought of as being contingently identical but as strictly identical. As a matter of fact, what is true of Bob Hawke is also true of the Prime Minister, but this could have been otherwise. On our supposition, as a matter of fact what would be true of 'I' would be true of Self, but that could not have been otherwise. It is problematic that one could ascribe only a contingent identity to 'I' and Self, but if that were the case, even then, all predicates would have to be the same and therefore equally true.

This is probably even more telling, for it shows that on both an assumption of the logicians sense of strict identity and an assumption of contingent identity, what would be normally acceptable logical practice for extensional contexts, cannot be the case at all. One cannot interchange the properties predicable of 'I' and Self even though "they" are identical either necessarily or contingently. Once that does occur, it would seem that both Self and 'I' are contradictory objects based upon the assumption that 'they' are identical. (Hume did not look for 'I', he looked for Self!)

This may be no more than to point to the same kinds of problems which arise in the traditional post-Cartesian mind/body-problem debates. If the statements about the mind and its contents are really statements about the brain or its states, and the brain or its states and the mind and its contents are identical, then what is true of one ought to be true of the other in extensional contexts. But the problem is that they are not. We cannot "measure" a thought, even though we can "measure" a brainstate; and we cannot say that the mind
weighs so many grams, even if the brain does. The problem then is either with what we do when substitution occurs within extensional contexts; or, a related matter, the way in which identity is understood: what is assumed to be identical in the first place may not actually be identical at all. This would require an examination of the conditions under which we are warranted in saying that an object is identical with another.

That in turn is dependent upon what we are prepared to say about objects in the first place, what their properties and relations are, so that we can then assert that one object is identical with another. And this is determined in part (or in whole) by how something is characterised, a point to which I referred above.

If it is the case that the characterisation of something constitutes the basis for claims about identity, then 'I' and Self should have the same properties and relations and thus be capable of being characterised in the same way. Now it is obvious from what I argued in the second Chapter, that 'I' and Self are quite differently characterised from each other; and from what I have argued with respect to existence in this chapter that 'I' and Self have a different ontological status: 'I' exists but Self does not). So taking account of the argument in the previous chapter, the grounds for saying that 'I' and Self are identical, are therefore not at all apparent.

Of course it can be argued that the characterisation I have given for each of 'I' and Self, is incorrect. It would be the case that 'I' and Self are identical given a different characterisation of each one, a characterisation that would at least entail a true identity between the two. So that a proponent of changing the characterisation of 'I' and Self such that arguing for their identity is warranted, would have also to argue that "My Self does not exist" is nonsensical and existentially self-defeating. But the absurdity of this sentence is not immediately apparent, as it is with the 'I' sentence. Of itself, that may mean very little, but potential utterers of "My Self does not exist" are patently not contravening the laws of
logic that potential utterers of "I do not exist" might be (such utterers are of course impossible). Perhaps the 'Self' sentence is too similar in form to sentences like, "My fingers do not exist."). In short, any 'I'/Self identity theorists would be required to hold that mystics' accounts of their experiences which lead to claims about the illusion or non-existence of Self, are mistaken or false. The non-existence of Self would necessitate the non-existence of 'I' which is apparently a non-sensical position to take.

Hence the assumption made at the beginning of this section, that "I" and "Self" logically signify in the same way, rendering a strict identity between the two, is untenable and should be abandoned. If the assumption were to be maintained, then each of 'I' and a Self, must turn out to be contradictory, that is to say, both themselves and not-themselves. Thus the assumption that Self is identical with 'I' would unavoidably render Self a contradictory object. For that reason, Self cannot exist as a logical correlate of 'I'.

In this chapter, I have attempted to show that there are no grounds which warrant the assumption of the existence of Self. I have maintained that in order for one to assert that anything exists, there must be certain relational properties or non-intentional relations exhibited by the object concerned between it and consciousness. These relations and properties are not displayed by Self and therefore it does not exist. Further, the assumption that 'I' and Self are identical will yield the unpalatable result that each is a contradictory or impossible entity and therefore neither could exist, because it would have to be both itself and not itself.

The mystic's claim that Self does not exist, can therefore be given a sound ontological basis, the point at which we started; but the epistemological basis has not been discovered. I have argued that in order to know itself consciousness constitutes an object to give it knowledge of its own being. That object, I have claimed, is Self. Given that Self does not exist, it would seem that consciousness cannot have knowledge of its own being at all.
That is to say, if it is the case that Self is constituted to meet consciousness' epistemological requirements, that quest for knowledge must fail, not because Self does not exist (for one can know, in some sense, non-existent objects e.g. Pegasus or Attila the Hun) but because 'I' and Self are not identical. Certainly, consciousness ends up knowing something, but that something is Other-than-itself, rather than being what it can claim to be itself. If Self were in some sense derivative of consciousness in terms of being its logical correlate, we would be in a position to see that consciousness' epistemological needs are, indeed, met. But Self is the epistemological equivalent of nothing more than a Narcissistic reflection, shimmering on the edge of consciousness. Hence the knower cannot be the known: self-knowledge looks to be beyond consciousness.

The realisation that this is the case, that consciousness cannot have knowledge of its own being through constituting Self; that consciousness inevitably fails to have knowledge of itself through this means, is itself of paramount importance to the mystic. The epistemological basis for self-conscious knowledge lies not in the construction of an object that is arbitrarily connected to 'I'. It lies in the process of transcendence through which the subject/object dichotomy is dissolved. And that is a basic insight of mystics. The ontological and epistemological bases for the non-existence of Self are realised through transcendence, a topic to which I now turn for further elucidation of this matter. Thus the next chapter will be devoted to an exploration of this concept both from the mystic's and a philosophical point of view.
CHAPTER 4

TRANSCENDENCE
4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will be exploring the concept of transcendence as it specifically relates to the claim made by mystics, that Self is an illusion, that it does not exist. Transcendence, I will be arguing, is constitutive of mystical experiencing and is that state of being in which the mystic finds that all categories and distinctions collapse, including those of Self and 'I', which belong within a particular conceptual framework, which is partly linguistic. The collapse of distinctions and categories entails the collapse of the suitability of language to describe those experiences, hence the claim that mystical experiencing is ineffable: language belongs within a particular conceptual and categorial framework; it is implicit in its nature that mystical experiencing cannot be accommodated by that framework because ultimately the framework is inadequate.

At the centre of transcendence lies intentionality. Two intentional attitudes, mindfulness and letting go/letting be, which are the-hand-in-glove partners of transcendent experience, are particularly important here. They are what provide the basis for the de-constitution of objects which occurs in transcendent experience, but they are intuitive intentional attitudes, not rational processes. They are intuitive, rather than rational, simply because the conceptual framework which both implies, and is implied by, rationality, constrains experience to be of a certain kind, from which mindfulness and letting go/letting be are precluded. What the mystic actually does in engaging in these practices, is not itself a rational activity, that is to say an activity dependent upon Reason. It is an activity in which she deliberately seeks to abandon the constraints of everydayness and thus the rational conceptual scheme in which that is understood. Mindfulness and letting go/letting be constitute the core of mystical experiencing. It is through these attitudes that transcendence is attained or realised. I shall explore what is involved in the two at length later in this chapter.
Through the practice of the two attitudes, consciousness becomes such that it is emptied of content due to the collapse of the subject/object distinction, along with all other dualisms and dichotomies. Consequently, the concept of consciousness as directed, must be reappraised, for the apparent abandonment of its everyday activity suggests that consciousness can operate on at least one other level in which the subject/object distinction is not applicable as an ontological presupposition for consciousness' activity: that is during the course of transcendent experience.¹

The cornerstone of transcendence is the de-constitution of objects which is logically consequent to the practising of the attitudes of mindfulness and letting be. But the activity, indeed the being of consciousness, presupposes objects. Consciousness, I have argued following Husserl, is always directed and it is directed towards an object, whether its object exists or not. In a transcendent state, where objects are de-constituted, consciousness would seem to "lose" its object. The problem then arises of whether or not consciousness can be directed without an object, for once we allow the de-constitution of objects, consciousness, it would seem, still operates, but without being directed towards an object. Hence a tension seems to emerge between what mystics claim (expressed within their own, often metaphorical, linguistic framework) and what the directedness view of consciousness presupposes. It is this apparent paradox I wish to explore in the following.

Some preliminary comments however, are appropriate to set the stage a little more before I begin. Our epistemological framework is dualistic. It presupposes, as a minimal requirement for knowledge, a knower on the one hand and that which is known on the other. In the case of one's own being, this minimal condition, I will be claiming, is not and cannot be met. One cannot know oneself ('I'), but one can know one's Self, because that Self is the object which one constitutes in order to satisfy 'l's quest for self-knowledge. As I have already suggested, knowledge of Self is not knowledge of 'I'; and just as 'I' cannot

¹See Chapter 2 for the other.
know itself, so Self suffers the same fate of self-ignorance. 'I' as subject and Self as object are fixed in their respective subjectivity and objectivity: 'I' as knower and Self as that which is known.

Just as 'I' is capable of constituting objects, it is equally capable of de-constituting them. However this is not easily done through discursive, intellectual or rational processes. To appreciate the difficulties imposed by rigid intellectualism, one might think of the frustration which Hume experienced in his search for Self. I suggest that ultimately Hume could not let go of Self because of the overwhelmingly rational nature of his enterprise, an enterprise which bade him to grasp reason and the intellect at all costs. Self has survived because of Hume, not in spite of him. The alternative to deliberate ratiocination is found in the mystical experience of transcendence.

The de-constitution of objects requires that they be constituted in the first place. Hence the bi-conditional "'I' iff Other", the basis of my argument in the first chapter, should be seen as the foundation of transcendence. But the transcendence to which I am here referring, is quite different from transcendence as it is understood by either Kant or Hegel for example. Before discussing what might be thought of as mystical transcendence, I shall therefore spend some time outlining the positions of these philosophers because they both can be seen as antagonists to the position I take. Hegel in particular, is scornful of the intuitive rather than rational flavour of the mystic's claims, but I shall return to this shortly.

4.2 Kant, Hegel and Transcendence.

Within our epistemological framework fall many dichotomous or dualistic expressions, some of which have already been mentioned in preceding chapters: I/Other, Subject/Object for
instance. "Transcendent" and its partner "immanent" is another example. Kant juxtaposed these concepts, but it is not at all clear that he is consistent in his understanding of them. Because of this apparent inconsistency, the meaning of their attendant nouns ("transcendence" and "immanence") is also unclear. This latter aside for the moment, what does he say of "transcendent" and "immanent"?

There appears to be some equivocation in what the terms should be applied to, for Kant speaks of transcendent principles on the one hand, and transcendent employment (of the principles) on the other. In B 353, Kant wrote:

A principle, on the other hand which takes away these limits, or even commands us to actually transgress them, is called transcendent. If our criticism can succeed in disclosing the illusion in these alleged principles, then those principles which are of merely empirical employment may be called in opposition to the others, immanent principles of the pure understanding.¹

However in the surrounding text, Kant speaks of the application and employment of both transcendent and immanent principles. That is also the case later on. In A 643/B 671, Kant says:

For it is not the idea in itself, but its use only, that can be transcendent or immanent (that is, either ranging beyond all possible experience or find employment within its limits), according as it is applied to an object which is supposed to correspond to it, or is directed solely to the use of understanding in general, in respect of those objects that fall (sic) to be dealt with by the understanding. All errors are to be ascribed to a defect of judgment (sic), never to understanding or to reason.²

¹Op Cit Kant A296 B353 p.299

It is clear from this that there is not a distinction between transcendent and immanent based on the content of an idea (or principle). It is how we use the idea that determines the distinction. That being the case, a transcendent principle would properly be a principle that is used in a particular kind of way, viz. employed beyond the realms of possible experience. Correspondingly, an immanent principle would be a principle the employment of which is confined entirely within the bounds of possible experience. The equivocation can thus be explained by how the distinction is invoked in the first place: certainly there are transcendent principles, but they are such because of the way in which they are employed. The application and employment of a principle determines whether or not that principle is either transcendent or immanent.

Regardless of its origins, the transcendent/immanent distinction is couched in terms of possibility. For Kant, possibility was one of the categories applied in a judgement and was therefore an a priori structure of the understanding. As a modal Category, possibility shares with existence the peculiarity (as Kant saw it), of not enlarging the concept of the object to which it applied. Used predicatively, it was not therefore a "real" predicate for Kant. It was nonetheless a very important category, for it was intimately involved in the "formal conditions of experience in general".

But possibility, like many Kantian concepts which at first seem lucidly presented, turns out not to be a clear-cut concept at all. For what is possible was seen by Kant in terms of experience, which itself was determined by possibility as one of the categories.

The objective validity of the categories as a priori concepts rests, therefore, on the fact, that, so far as the form of thought is concerned, through them alone does experience become possible. They relate of necessity and a priori to objects of

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4 ibid
5 ibid
experience, for the reason that only by means of them can any object whatsoever of experience be thought.\(^6\)

From what Kant is saying here, experience and possibility are so closely linked that to qualify "experience" with the adjective "possible" would be redundant. A minor point perhaps, yet Kant repeatedly speaks of possible experience, as we noted above. In this context, possible appears to take on a different, perhaps non-categorial, dimension which is influenced by, rather than influencing, experience. That is borne out by Kant when he says of the immanent and transcendent:

We shall entitle the principles whose application is confined entirely within the limits of possible experience, immanent; and those, on the other hand, which profess to pass beyond these limits, transcendent.\(^7\)

We know what is confined to, or goes beyond the limits of experience because we learn from experience just what is possible and what is not, in terms of our empirical knowledge. But the categorial determination of our experience expressed as possibility in a judgement, is a necessary a priori condition for our empirical knowledge. Categorial possibility would thus be seen as a logical and ontological ground for all experience. Non-categorial possibility arises out of experience. (What is experienced and experiencable is possible.) Hence possibility would seem to have two aspects: that which as a constitutive part of the structure of judgement provides an a priori basis for experience; and that which is a result of our experiencing the world, albeit as appearance. These two views are neatly summed up in Kant's assertion that "the real contains no more than the merely possible."\(^8\)

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\(^6\) ibid
\(^7\) ibid
\(^8\) ibid
What is immanent and therefore possible and experiencable on the one hand; and what is transcendent and not experiencable on the other, can then, be understood more clearly in light of the above. Immanent principles are those principles which are employed because of the nature of our experience, which is confined by the structures of our understanding, within certain limits. There are no transcendent principles because there are no principles which can be employed transcendentally.³ Possibility plays the role of both determinant and regulator of experience, consequently all experience conforms with possibility. Since this is the case, a corollary of Kant's position would seem to be that the breaking of the boundaries of experience, or even the extension of those boundaries is, logically speaking, impossible. For those boundaries are strictly pre-determined by how we as human beings structure our world. But although the boundaries are pre-determined, the extent of their scope is problematic, no matter how strict the determination might be. Ultimately, what we admit as possible, we must also admit as experiencable (and of course the converse must hold). Because this is the case, it seems that there is no need to make the distinction between principles which are employable within the boundaries of experience and those that are not. As human beings we set our own limits of experience because of the nature of that experience (spatio-temporally organised and confined by the categories and schemata).

When interpreted thus, Kant, it seems, is correct in his dismissing the notion of the transcendent employment of principles. Tied, as the contrast between immanent and transcendent appears to be, to possibility and experience, there can be no room for extending, or even breaking the bounds of experience. That notion is absurd. All experience is immanent. But Kant's distinction falls short of allowing for experience outside of the categories and outside the intuitions of space and time. As we shall later see,
mystical experience, by its very nature cuts across these categories and a kind of experience which is not dependent upon categories, or space and time, is had by mystics. This would force a review of Kant's modelling of all experience around possibility and thus the categories and the intuitions of space and time.

This view of transcendence is very different from that of Hegel, of whom it can be said that he embraced a view of transcendence which is Rational and is specifically related to knowledge as a dynamic process. I am not saying that Kant's view was neither rational nor epistemological, for indeed it was intimately connected with the structures of the understanding and judgement. But Kant's denial of transcendence together with his apparently static understanding of the nature of knowledge constitute a sizeable difference between the two philosophers. Hegel himself thought of Kant's view of knowledge as a rigid set of principles, "as if it were an instrument, as if man went after knowledge with sticks and stones."  

In Hegel's Logic, the possibility of intuitive or immediate knowledge is examined at length. There, Hegel concluded that it is "untrue in fact to say that there is an immediate knowledge, a knowledge without mediation either by means of something else or itself....."  

Instead, for Hegel, Reason, as the purveyor of the dialectical process of knowing, is paramount. According to him, the drive for knowledge involves a complex process of gaining epistemological ground, examining that ground, seeing its adequacies and deficiencies, assessing them, and then moving further on. This dynamic process is thus essentially self-transcending. The process of knowing and acquiring knowledge is

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10 Campbell, Richard 'Philosophical Reflection and the Impulse Towards Transcendence' p.159 (from Ways of Transcendence (ed Edwin Dowdy)(Australian Association for the Study of Religion March 1982)

11 Hegel Logic p.109
constantly being modified and refined through and by Reason which evaluates and reflects upon the epistemological ground it has gained; then thinking and evaluating that; and so on.

Knowing is an active Rational mediated process in terms of the (intellectual) framework within which one continuously operates: to use an earlier phrase from Kant, it is immanent. And it is a transcendent process because there are identifiable stages which are surpassed as Reason successively evaluates each stage and goes beyond its former moment. Ultimately, truth, or true objectivity, will be attained.

Through such an evolving process Hegel sees philosophy unfolding as an all embracing exhibition of the necessary convergence of rationality and what is actual.\(^\text{12}\)

Hegel's rejection of intuitive or direct and immediate knowledge in favour of a Rational but nonetheless dynamic way of knowing, contrasts clearly with a mystic's insistence on immediate/intuitive experience or knowing. Taylor has written of Hegel:

He could not accept the Romantic notion of an immediate unity with the universal, or the belief which aspires to a kind of ineffable encounter with God. This unity could only be brought about by Reason, which can bear negation and separation within the unity, and hence maintain clarity of vision.\(^\text{13}\)

It is just this acceptance of unity, or of ineffable encounter with Ultimate Being with which the mystic is familiar and which constitutes the mystical experience of transcendence. Hence Hegel and mystics experience and express knowledge and truth in apparently opposing ways. Hegel's awareness of the contrast between what was generally held of mysticism during his own time and his own philosophy, is also evident. He wrote:

\(^{12}\)Op. Cit Campbell p.161 (Ways of Transcendence)

\(^{13}\)Taylor Charles Hegel (Cambridge University Press 1975) p.193
The term Mysticism is at present used, as a rule, to designate what is mysterious and incomprehensible...... those who recognise Mysticism as the highest truth are content to leave it in its original utter mystery, their conduct only proves that for them too, as well as for their antagonists, thinking means abstract identification, and that in their opinion, therefore, truth can only be won by renouncing thought, or as it is frequently expressed, by leading the reason captive.\(^{14}\)

The emphasis on Rational thought as the only “method” for encountering truth and knowledge could be seen as Hegel’s narrow conception of human experience and his over­generous disposition towards Reason. For mysticism is not alone in drawing intuitive being to itself. Poetry, music, painting, do not fall within boundaries of rational transcendence and thus of Reason; if anything, they fall outside and perhaps contrary to those boundaries. It is the sudden flash of inspiration, or an unarticulated insight that gives rise to great art, not the methodical, painstaking evaluation of one’s present epistemological situation. Rational reflection has a role in human experience, but it is only one way of regarding it, not the only way.

Hence a distinction can be drawn between what I will call rational transcendence and intuitive transcendence, a distinction based upon the kind of experience that one has, viz. mediated on the one hand, or unmediated on the other. In unmediated experience, direct knowing requires the de-constitution of the object of knowledge and it therefore represents a kind of knowing which is counter to the minimal requirements of the model I surmised at the beginning of this chapter. The de-constitution of the object is not, however, a rational or logical process. But it begins as an intentional way of being, in which an object is sought and brought fully into consciousness, a result of which is that all categories, Kantian or otherwise, are abandoned. Since Reason operates within the boundaries of its own logical constraints (an example being the law of contradiction in which x cannot be both a and

\(^{14}\)Hegel p.121
not-a at the same time), Reason too is abandoned. Hence what I am calling intuitive transcendence is beyond the "realm" where either the categories of the understanding (in Kantian terms) or Reason are applicable: beyond the everyday, beyond Husserl's natural attitude, beyond that which is conceived of and accepted as possible (but which of course the experiencers find entirely possible).

The Buddhist philosopher and exponent, D.T. Suzuki wrote of this contrast:

It is true that we cannot do without logic and philosophy because it is also the expression of life; to ignore it is nothing short of madness; but let us remember that there is another plane of life where only he is permitted to enter who has actually lived it.¹⁵

The concept of intuitive transcendence lies behind the mystic's claim that there is no Self, and that claim is intimately connected with her experience that unity, not dichotomy is, fundamentally, the way of all being. Hence the distinction between consciousness and its objects ultimately collapses and immediacy of experience is paramount.

The assumption throughout this thesis has been, however, that consciousness is always directed, that consciousness, in being consciousness of, always implies an object. Thus the idea that there is a way of being that is deeply involved with consciousness and yet where consciousness actually de-constitutes its objects could be claimed to be either non-sensical or paradoxical. But the former is part of the conceptual scheme of everydayness, the latter, the different plane of life to which Suzuki refers. So let us explore intuitive transcendence and its related concepts more fully.

4.3 Intuitive Transcendence

¹⁵Suzuki p.149
In the introduction to this chapter, I maintained that the cornerstone of intuitive transcendence is the de-constitution of objects; but that the bi-conditional "I' iff Other" is the foundation to transcendence. If we understand the bi-conditional as an intrinsic and necessary part of everydayness, but not as the only way of being, then my introductory remarks make sense. Consciousness is constituted through everydayness; the progression from an infant's identification with its mother, to an awareness of its own being, is a gradual process from unconscious being to self-constitution and self-awareness via awareness of Other, or the world. And it is in this process that the object, Self is constructed by 'I', because the world throws back an image of 'I' of itself. In this way, the world acts as a mirror to 'I'.

We cannot overestimate the role of the world as mirror in 'I'’s awareness of its own being and the subsequent constitution of Self as an object for 'I'. The interaction between 'I' (as bare awareness) and the world, is such that Self is constituted as an object which 'I' believes itself to be. But the point which must be emphasised, is that a reflection is not that which is reflected. It is a copy, and no matter how faithful the copy is, it cannot be that which is copied. A relationship, much like that between a picture and that which it is of, exists between the mirror image (Self) and that which it is of ('I').

Yet, 'I'’s confusing its own being with its mirror image is not a process for which it alone is responsible. For what the world throws back to 'I', is also constituted by the world. There are countless examples of this process: women who are told that they are better at language tasks than maths tasks, in which men (supposedly) excel; blacks who are told by whites that they are intellectually inferior because of their (supposedly different) genetic makeup, are but two that come immediately to mind. These everyday images-of, are thrown back by the world, are internalised by 'I' and become part of the object Self with which 'I' identifies. So just as a mirror contributes to, but distorts, that which it mirrors (for example by reversing the image, or making the image fatter or thinner or longer), because
of its own nature, so the world contributes to the construction of Self. We are left then with an object which is constituted by both 'I' and the world and which seems to reflect 'I's being.

However, 'I's bare awareness which lingers in the background dissociates itself from Self. It is this lingering which provides the impetus for 'I' to turn against Self and to seek its own being elsewhere. Although the construction of Self has provided an object which 'I' can know intimately, (from the inside so to speak), and to which it believes it can refer as "mine", this lingering awareness gently mocks the belief. (This seems to me to be the experience had by Hume.) For epistemologically speaking, Self is that which 'I' wants to claim to know as itself. This is in accordance with the subject/object model of knowledge cited in the beginning.

Nevertheless, the realisation that 'I' is not Self is a "result" of a more general process of de-constitution of objects which is a consequence of transcendent experience. The "'I'/Other" dichotomy is the umbrella under which 'I'/Self dualism falls. With the occurrence of transcendent experience, and the concomitant de-constitution of objects, hence of the "'I'/Other" bi-conditional, Self is one object amongst all objects, whose non-existence is realised. For consciousness to be self-consciousness in the first place, Other is an ontological necessity, and as we have seen the converse is also the case. This means that the 'I'/Other bi-conditional is a pre-requisite for all experience. And this will include intuitive transcendent experience. Of necessity, the world (Other) provides the foundation for transcendent experience because of its relation to consciousness and its self-awareness. Furthermore, the awareness of Other can actually be used as a "device" for embracing transcendent experience.

The process by which transcendent experience is embraced is through the de-constitution of objects to which I referred at the beginning of the chapter. Paradoxically, consciousness
uses an object to de-constitute all objects. To de-constitute an object is to take away its object status. From consciousness' perspective, it is to stop thinking about; to stop believing in; to stop hoping for. In other words, consciousness would cease to have the peculiar characteristic of always being directed towards an object. But the question arises, Can that be so? Can consciousness cease to be directed? OR Can consciousness be directed, but directed without an object? If the latter is the case, what sense can be made of it?

The most important difference between what I called rational transcendence and intuitive transcendence is whether or not experience can be unmediated viz. whether direct apprehension is possible. The imposition of either Reason or categories on experience - to enclose it within a limited boundary, viz. the boundary imposed by Reason itself upon experience and the notion of possibility - mediates that experience. That immediate, or unmediated experience, or direct apprehension is possible, entails the collapse or crumbling of the boundaries imposed by categories or by Reason. And this is essentially what happens in intuitive transcendence.

The intentional attitudes mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, mindfulness and letting-be, constitute direct apprehension or immediate experience and, therefore, intuitive transcendence. Through the practice of these attitudes, a transformation of consciousness takes place, in which the mystic is able to go beyond the everyday bounds of Reason, and ultimately, of sense. She experiences intuitive transcendence.

There are many ways of practising mindfulness, but all, at the outset, involve the apprehension of an object, be it material or intentional: for example, a candle or a puzzle, a piece of music, or a chant. Consciousness is directed towards that object so that it becomes fully involved with it. Hence the practice of mindfulness involves total
concentration on what is happening now. It is found in many religious traditions, from the apparently frantic Whirling Dervishes to the serenity and simplicity of Zen Buddhism.

But it is the de-constitution of the object that is crucial to this process. Consciousness embraces the object to the exclusion of all else. In so doing, consciousness is able to direct itself away from all distractions with which it might be concerned in its everydayness and take the object to itself, as the centre of its being. The object ceases to be an object because there is nothing else with which consciousness is concerned.

What I am suggesting here, then, is that the notion of "object" is constituted by the very plenitude of objects that consciousness, and thus reason and understanding, are able to constitute and encompass. Hence another bi-conditional is needed in addition to the original "I iff Other". That is:

"One object iff many objects".16

Consciousness' apprehension of objects is thus constituted by manyness rather than singularity, a point that was made by Kant in his recognising that quantity is one of the categories of the understanding and as such, is therefore intrinsic to judgement.

The Kantian category of quantity, as with all the categories, is a pure concept of the understanding which provides the basis to the synthetic unity of the manifold. That is to say, it is one of the a priori concepts of the understanding which are seen by Kant as foundational to all objects which constitute the synthetic manifold.17 Without the category of quantity, we would have no concept of the oneness or manyness of the objects within

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16 The plenitude of objects is not new. See later in the discussion of Heidegger's horizon's phenomena.

the manifold. Even worse, that there is a manifold which constitutes the totality of the possibility of all experience would be unknown to us. And last but not least, without the concepts of pure understanding, argues Kant, we would not be able to "understand anything in the manifold of intuition, that is, think an object of intuition." Unity and plurality, along with totality and the other categorial members, are logical determinants of objects and without any one of these categories there can be no fully determinate object.

However Kant has not been the sole representative of the idea that objects necessarily occur within a field of manyness. Both Husserl and Heidegger placed objects within a given phenomenological field.

Within the limits of the phenomenological epoche the correlation is strictly maintained: no "object" except in relation or correlation with its mode of givenness, no "subject" except in relation to that which is intended, a "world"

Functionally, the same model of a correlation - a priori though in a differently interpreted form, may be found for Heidegger....

Lhde indicates that this model belongs within the "horizon-phenomenon", which provides the basis for the phenomenology found in the later Heidegger. Fundamentally, horizons-phenomena, related to the visual field by Heidegger, are portrayed thus: "You describe, once again, the horizon which encircles the view of a thing - the field of vision." This means that any object appears as a figure within a particular context or

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18 ibid B106 p.113

19 ibid A79

20 ibid, Don. 'Phenomenology and the Later Heidegger' (Philosophy Today Spring, 1974) pp 22 & 23

21 ibid

22 Cited by lhde ibid, p.24
ground. For example, one does not observe *just* a cup of coffee: that cup of coffee is found on a bench in a certain place, grounded that is to say, within a context of which I am aware to greater or lesser extent. My supposition, "One object iff many objects", is confirmed by the hypothesis that objects necessarily occur within a rich and multifarious environmental framework; all objects occur in figure/ground context (*this* object within *this* context). Hence the horizon, which should be understood as the indeterminate limit of the field in which an object occurs, is instrumental in both describing and delimiting the object concerned. Hence Ihde says:

I may look out my study window......I may notice in particular the top of Mt. Bromley and when I do so, I may say both that Mt. Bromley "stands out" within the expanse of the visual field and that ! "focus upon" Mt. Bromley (noema and noesis are correlated)......Secondly, reflectively I may realise that this central or focal clarity is not present alone or isolated from the expanse of the field, but always stands in a relationship to a being-situated-within that expanse......

The situating of objects amongst other objects within a horizon, against a background, creates the object-for-me as I relate to the field in which it occurs. I do not see one object, but many, perhaps one of which is more obvious than any other. But the object "stands out" for me because of that background: I see it precisely because it is in a context.

But an important element in this description, is Ihde's expression "stands out". That an object can "stand out" is critical to intuitive transcendence and paradoxically perhaps, creates the grounds for its possibility. The standing out of an object underlies our ability to be engaged in the process of mindfulness. The multiplicity of objects is de-limited, by contrasting what stands out against the background, with the background itself. So that initially, consciousness is able to "zoom-in" as it were on a particular object, distinguished

23ibid p.24
from all else. That object becomes the totality of conscious experience, for by being so concentrated, consciousness loses the usual context in which any object occurs. That is to say, the horizon-phenomenon ceases to play a part in the perception of the object and the object loses its object status. The background drops away; the object does so too. Once this happens, consciousness and its object necessarily become indistinguishable: consciousness is fully engaged, but what has engaged it, has ceased being an object-for-consciousness. In other words, the object is de-constituted or its object status as Other is removed. The object, in Heideggerian terms, stops being "part" of the figure/ground complex: the object-within-its-horizon ceases to be. An ontological and psychological shift is made from object to non-object.

If we transpose this visual model to a broader context, its appropriateness to the deconstitution of all objects is quite clear. In the Zen Buddhist tradition for example, where the practitioner can be asked for instance, to imagine her original face, or the sound of one hand clapping, two notorious and often cited examples, one could say that the puzzle solver becomes the puzzle; or, that in the practice of Zazen, that the sitter becomes the sitting. Object qua object ceases to be because there is no field in which it occurs.

Sitting in meditation is nourishment for your spirit and nourishment for your body as well. Through sitting, our bodies obtain harmony, feel lighter, and are more at peace...... Your mind will take hold of mind in a direct and wondrous way which no longer differentiates between subject and object. Drinking a cup of tea, the seeming distinction between the one who drinks and the tea being drunk evaporates. Drinking a cup of tea becomes a direct and wondrous experience in which subject and object no longer exists.²⁴

Hence it is by concentrating on a particular object that the boundaries of consciousness are broken down and consciousness is altered: paradoxically, consciousness is "expanded"

²⁴Op. Cit Nhat Hahn p.42
by limiting itself. It is this kind of concentrating which is involved in what I am calling "mindfulness". The everyday directedness of consciousness, which has been the basis for this experience, takes on a new perspective. Whereas consciousness previously constituted the bi-conditional, "I iff Other" as ontological necessity, it now takes that Other and becomes one with it in order to move to a different plane of being where unity rather than dichotomy and multiplicity is evident. However, it is not only Other which is absorbed, but 'I' as well. For where there is no Other, there can be no 'I'. This is an important point to which I shall return in a moment.

Mindfulness is a process and an attitude in which consciousness abandons its usual way of being. Because we are grounded in our everydayness, it is difficult to free ourselves of our usual way of seeing the world, viz. within the framework of 'I' and 'Other'. To be able to change that attitude, requires practice and time, hence the appropriateness of the attribution of "process" to mindfulness. But the attitude, the preparedness to be mindful, cannot be undertaken without the aid of letting-go and letting-be, the second of the two intentional attitudes I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. These are more intimately concerned with the suspension of Reason and thus with direct apprehension than is mindfulness, because of the lack of intellectual or rational input.

The absence of all concepts indicates that the mind adheres to no object but rather engages in pure mirror activity .......

The absence of all concepts results from the practice of the attitude of letting go of all that we impose upon the world; it is to cease to be Kantian! It means that one no longer has any conceptual standpoint. For the having of a standpoint entails that one remains tied to the subject/object dichotomy. Consciousness, in becoming fully directed (in mindfulness), lets what it is directed towards, and itself, just be. Thus for example, one does not analyse the object chosen by consciousness; one does not inspect its tone or colour or temperature

25 Merton, Thomas Mystics and Zen Masters p.30
or ask where it came from, or what its purpose is. One lets it be as the object it is without the constraints of Rationality, by actually letting-go those restraints. And indeed, although the object appears to be separated from consciousness (as 'Other'), consciousness is able to apprehend the object directly, by side stepping its usual avenues of intellection. For what constitutes Otherness, in the form of Object, is the imposition of Reason on consciousness' contents. That is to say, Reason, in its natural attitude,\(^{26}\) begs us to identify this as candle, that as chant, this as dance. But now consciousness abandons this activity, by letting reason go, and thus the object with it. Through complete directedness towards a particular object, consciousness lets itself be and less Other, go.

In letting-go and letting-be, the mystic abandons her instrumental, moral or theoretic view of what she is doing. And this need not be a distinct activity, saved for the occasions of meditation or contemplation; it can apply to her everydayness. For example, the mystic washes the dishes not to get them clean and out of the way, she washes the dishes to wash the dishes.

If while washing dishes, we think only of the cup of tea that awaits us thus hurrying to get the dishes out of the way as if they were a nuisance, then we are not "washing the dishes to wash the dishes." What's more, we are not alive during the time we are washing the dishes. In fact we are completely incapable of realising the miracle of life while standing at the sink. If we can't wash the dishes, the chances are we won't be able to drink our tea either.\(^{27}\)

How can one let an object be the object it is and at the same time remove the constraints of Reason from an object? For surely once one has removed those constraints, and the constraints in terms of the functions of Reason and the understanding, are what is

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\(^{26}\)See Chapter 2

\(^{27}\)Nhat Hahn pp 485
responsible for the constitution of the object in the first place, then the object would automatically cease to be an object at all? Is this not a contradiction in terms?

In letting an object be, one does remove the constraints of Rationality. That is precisely the essence of letting-go, the complement of letting-be. For it entails the dissolution of one's conceptual framework. But one has to approach this practice through the object itself. That is to say, one uses the conceptual framework within which one is working, to move beyond that framework. Objects occur within that framework, indeed they are partly constitutive of it. But a different level of experience is attained by transforming the framework, the world of objects, through becoming one with it. That is the fundamental reason why the bi-conditional, "I" iff "Other" is absolutely basic to transcendence. The mystic "sees through" the everyday because she has used the everyday to transcend itself. The object of her direct apprehension, in other words, becomes the vehicle by which the everyday is transformed beyond the "I" iff "Other" bi-conditional. Another level of experience is attained, in which the subject/object dichotomy plays no part.

So let us look at the problem posed by the collapse of the object, and thus its corollary, the collapse of the subject. Firstly, it should be noted that it is in this experience, where mindfulness and letting be are fully established and practised, that transcendence is attained. Hence "transcendence" here is understood as intuitive transcendence because of the nature of the activity in which consciousness is engaged: consciousness deliberately sets out to go beyond the everyday bounds of conscious experience by immediate apprehension of its object and by abandoning the constraints of rationality. And it is in this experience that Self, as an object, is found not to exist. For no object exists.

By allowing the rational framework of everydayness to collapse, consciousness must also abandon the bi-conditional, "I" iff "Other". This means that 'I' along with Self must also be held not to exist. Hence it appears that the proposition, "I do not exist" might not be
non-sensical, as I argued in the second chapter it must be, and indeed might well be true in some circumstances. There are two considerations here: the first of which is contextual; the second is semantic and therefore addresses content.

The context in which "I do not exist" must be placed, is that the mystic realises the inapplicability of all categories to her experience. Thus she makes no commitment to the existence or non-existence of anything at all, including herself. Her "sense of identity" is lost in her experience and because of the constraints of language, language itself seems to be inadequate as a vehicle for articulating her experience. This is what gives rise to the paradoxes generated by her experience, but this point will be examined more fully, in a moment.

On the other hand, the idiosyncrasies of language should cause us to reflect on the content of "I exist". Syntactically speaking, "I exist" is a perfectly ordinary subject/predicate sentence. And in any sentence that has the form "x exists", "x" will usually refer to an object. This reflects the inherently referential function of language. In the case of 'I', however, there is no such object to which "I" refers; this applies to all contexts in which "I" occurs. Hence when I say "I exist", I do not mean, that there is an object such that it is 'I', and that it exists. I am, purely and simply, expressing my being. Perhaps then, we ought not to think of "I exist" as a proposition - albeit a correctly structured English sentence - nor should we so think of its contradiction ("I do not exist"). We should not think, that is, of it as a referential statement at all.

Because of its controversial nature, much has been written about this point, most of which revolves around, or has its genesis in discussions of the Cartesian Cogito. Ayer, for example treats "I exist" and "I do not exist" as referential statements and subject therefore, to being either true or false.
It would be absurd for me to deny that I existed. If I say that I do not exist, it must be false. But it might not have been false. It is a fact that I exist, but not a necessary fact.28

Williams also reflects the view that "'I'" refers and that therefore statements containing "'I'" must have a referential function.

"'I', unlike other pronouns, cannot fail to refer to a certain person ..... 29

A contrary view, however, is put by Geach who argues that some uses of "'I'" are derivative. In such cases "'I'" would fail to refer, because the usual context in which "'I'" occurs - to draw attention to the speaker - is missing. The instances which Geach imagines to be exceptional, are soliloquistic.

When "I'm getting into a muddle" is a soliloquy, "I" certainly does not serve to direct Descartes's attention to Descartes, or to show that it is Descartes, none other, who is getting into a muddle. We are not to argue, though, that since "I" does not refer to the man Rene Descartes it has some other, more intangible, thing to refer to. Rather, in this context the word "I" is idle, superfluous; it is used only because Descartes is habituated to the use of "I" (or rather of "je" and "moi") in expressing his thoughts and feelings to other people..... The use of "I" in such soliloquies is derivative from, parasitic upon its use in talking to others; when there are no others, "I" is redundant and has no special reference; "I am very puzzled at this problem" really says no more than "this problem is puzzling"... 30


29 ibid Williams p.105

30 Geach Peter T. Mental Acts (Routledge, Kegan Paul London 1957) p.118
Geach makes the point that the use of "I" has no special reference. Does that mean that it has no reference at all? One wonders, what the use of "I" to make a non-special reference would amount to, considering that superficially, "I" is in one sense, perhaps the most special or specific pronoun and is universal in its use and occurrence. If one is prepared to argue that "I" is referential, it should be regarded as specifically referential. Its use always implies a specific individual, unlike, 'you' in "You children come over here". said by someone indicating vaguely with her hand. Therefore, Geach's context should be understood as not making reference at all, rather than making no special reference.

But Geach's point suggests another function of language, into which "I" might fit: that language is expressive. I come upon a magnificent mountain scene and gasp, awe-struck, 'WOW!' This is language at its primordial expressiveness. So that if we were to think of the sentence "I exist" in the same way as instances such as these, then it would be understood as an expressive rather than a referential statement. However, once we allow the soliloquistic and expressive uses of "I", we would be forced into the position of arguing that whatever meaning we are prepared to give to "I", its meaning is dependent upon the context in which the expression containing it occurs. That is to say, the latter instances do not preclude the possibility of a referential use of "I": there are certainly some uses of "I" which seem to refer, because, to use Geach's expression, they appear to draw attention to the speaker. "I am going off to have a cup of tea now" or "I killed Cock Robin" for example.

What would be the likely criteria for the referential and/or the soliloquistic uses? When you are writhing in agony, muttering, "I'm in pain" are you speaking referentially or expressively? How does one decide such a case? When I tell you that I am hungry, am I drawing your attention to the fact that Fran Gray is hungry, or am I expressing myself to you? Then there will be even stranger examples: "Yes, Caroline, I exist, I, the man of your dreams, for whom you have yearned from the dawn of time."; or "Yes! it is I, I exist. You
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thought I was killed in the fire, but here I am to prove that is not the case." How are they to be viewed?

The argument that "I" does not refer, but rather expresses, and that therefore, sentences containing the expression have no truth value and neither make sense, nor are non-sensical, presents major problems once compound statements are considered. If the truth value for example, of a conditional statement, is dependent upon the truth value of its component propositions, and these contain 'I', how are we to determine the overall truth value of the conditional? It is true that if I hurry I can make the 8.15 bus, just as it is true that if I am hungry I can get a biscuit. This opens up a veritable can of worms, because again there will be borderline cases which muddle the argument. What about "If I am dead, I cannot go on holidays in three weeks time.", or "If I do not exist then I cannot be writing this thesis."? Patently, these examples which structurally are like any other conditional, could be conceived of as having a truth value, yet that value could not be dependent upon the value of its component propositions: my argument says that they do not have a truth value. And how do you determine the truth value of statements like "I am dead", regardless of my argument? These problems are enormous and beyond the scope of this thesis, so I leave them here.

More importantly, when will 'I exist' be referential and when expressive? Examples such as "Yes. I exist....I was not killed ......." are circumlocutory for "I am alive", a proposition quite different from "I exist". And "I exist" hardly draws people's attention to the speaker, except in circumstances such that the speaker considers herself to be ignored by the world; in the case I just suggested, in which someone might be thought to be dead, "I am alive" could be understood to be expressed in "I exist".

It is because the notion of "reference" is tied to that of "object" that the problem with 'I' has arisen. In the final analysis, to think of "I exist" as a referential statement is to think of 'I'
as an object, which, for the reasons I have already argued, cannot be the case. The contextual argument - that sometimes 'I's occurrence in a statement is referential - and sometimes not, is inadequate and unsatisfying because 'I' is not and cannot be an object.

Therefore, when I say, "I exist" or "I do not exist" I am not uttering the kind of sentence which we normally associate with such linguistic structures: a sentence with a propositional content and subject to the usual truth conditions of any other sentence of that syntactic structure. If we insist on having objects (existent or non-existent) as a basis for reference and therefore as the basis for the determination of truth or falsity of a statement, or proposition, or sentence, then that possibility is excluded, because 'I' is not an object. Since sense appears to be related to questions of truth and falsity, hence to reference, it would not make sense, nor would it be non-sensical to utter either of the two expressions; and neither sentence would be true or false. These are the same conditions which apply to "WOW!" or "Drink to me only with your eyes, and I will pledge with mine!"

If a corollary of the mystic's experience is the abandonment of 'I' along with Self, it can, then, be explained both in terms of the inapplicability of all categories, and the distinction between the referential and expressive functions of language. Ultimately the mystic makes no claims about existence at all; for her nothing either exists or does not exist. Hence the experience of transcendence, in going beyond all boundaries of everydayness, entails the forgoing of all the categories and concepts associated with that everydayness. And this includes the making of judgements and the use of all concepts. Existence, and statements about existence must therefore be given up, as should any qualification of 'I'.

In collapsing the categories of Reason and breaking the boundaries imposed by those categories, the mystic moves from everyday experience to intuitive transcendent experience. Language, which belongs within the transcended categorial framework cannot accommodate her experience. That is why what she says is apparently shrouded in
mystery and full of paradox. The mystery and paradox belong need not with the experience itself, but with the attempt to articulate the experience within a structured conceptual and linguistic framework. As I noted in Chapter One, this is why the mystic often resorts to metaphor, for in metaphor the mystic is able to find the kinds of terms which most closely approximate her experience. Metaphor expresses in a way in which ordinary expression cannot do. For metaphor subtly suggests or symbolises or even mythologises, what everyday expression fails to capture.

Furthermore, the experience appears to be shrouded in mystery and paradox, precisely because the mystic has transcended the natural attitude and abandoned the everyday world of subject and object. This is also why it can be difficult to understand what the mystic says. Most of us do not experience what she experiences. In attempting to understand what she is saying, perhaps we should be less blinkered in our efforts to make sense of what the mystic is trying to tell us. That would mean that we would be prepared to abandon the conceptual and linguistic framework from which the mystic has been able to "escape" and then become mystics ourselves. Perhaps that is our only way of understanding. In the end, we are left with one of the great paradoxes: that the mystic is not prepared to theorise about existence at all. Ultimately, the mystic is opened to a level of being, in which the question of existence is null and void because consciousness has gone outside the conceptual and everyday framework in which "exists" belongs. That is perhaps one of the most difficult lessons which we must learn from the mystic, viz. the possibility that indeed our conceptual framework is so limited that we must be prepared to admit that our framework-related-categories do not apply outside that framework. Hence concepts like existence arise from within our consciousnesses, and might be relevant only within that context.

With an analysis of 'I' which allows for a non-referential interpretation, the mystic's intuition that 'I' also does not exist appears then to be understandable. The paradoxical situation
with which we are faced, that in the mystical experience there is neither existence nor non-existence, illuminates that interpretation. The relationship between the mystical experience and the language chosen to describe it, can be explicated in terms of the collapse of the subject/object distinction and an analysis which appeals to expressiveness rather than reference.

Hence there appear to be several reasons why one might maintain that Self does not exist. The first is philosophical and concerns what one is prepared to say about objects, for example that the relations which hold between existent objects are neither purely formal nor purely intentional (see Ch.3). "Evidence" that this is the case comes from the mystic's experience because it denies the existence of any object; the subject/object dichotomy, a pre-requisite for the apprehension of any object, is absent. There are no relations, no spatial or temporal context in which to place anything; there is no anything, no "here" or "there", no "over", "under" or "being two metres high". Such concepts are inapplicable in the mystic's experience.

Although one might argue that it is solely at this level that the mystic can claim that Self, or anything else does or does not exist, the kind of process through which she goes inevitably leads her to re-think her conceptual framework. It is here that Hegel's dialectical process which is involved in rational transcendence becomes important. For the mystic reflects, rightly or wrongly, in the light of her transcendent and deepening experience, back upon her everyday experience. In that light, everydayness is transformed. The mystic sees through eyes that are differently tuned to the world and to her own being, as she experiences everydayness. Because her transcendent experience leads her to another way of being, she no longer operates under the same conditions as the uninitiated. Her judgement to the effect that Self does not exist should be seen as rising out of a particular mode of experience, to which not everyone is privy. That experience is nonetheless valid.
The mystic is able to reconstitute the original dichotomous framework but when she does so, it is in the light of the experience she has undergone, and for that reason, she is able to "see through" everydayness. She knows that everydayness is not all there is; being has at least one other aspect or face with which many of us are not familiar. In reflecting thus, the mystic actually engages in an Hegelian aufhebung - she transcends (in Hegel's sense) her previous plane of knowledge and experience. By denying that the conceptual structures of the everyday are applicable to intuitive transcendent experience, other conceptual assumptions with which we all might work must also be thrown into question.

Bearing these considerations in mind, we now return to the problem of the directedness of consciousness. Is consciousness directed, but without an object? Or is consciousness operating at such a level that it ceases to be directed in any discernible manner? Clearly, the preceding argument has demonstrated that the directedness of consciousness towards an object is a pre-requisite for transcendent experience because of the necessity of the bi-conditional, "'I' iff Other", and its modifying bi-conditional, "One object iff many objects".

However, the attitudes of mindfulness and letting-go/letting-be, require acknowledgment of, and directedness towards, an object. It is tempting to argue that consciousness must remain directed towards its object and that therefore, consciousness never rids itself of its object at all. But this line of argument must fail because of the eventual absence of any object-for-consciousness at all. The argument fails because of the structure within which the subject/object dichotomy occurs in the first place. Since those structures are no longer present, the very concept of "object" is nullified by the experience, as is the concept of "subject": consciousness and its object become indistinguishable.

Hence consciousness' object is lost to it. Can we say then that consciousness is directed? The answer to this question is extremely difficult to discern. In asking consciousness to abandon its conceptual structures, we are asking it to abandon the way of being in which
it has always operated. That is partly why the way of transcendence is difficult. But what we ask consciousness to do in mindfulness and letting-go/letting be, is to become empty. Zen Buddhists refer to this state as no-mindedness and Suzuki says of that:

no-minded-ness means having no mind (or thoughts) whatsoever. The body of suchness inwardly is like wood or stone; it is immovable, unshakeable; outwardly it is like space where one knows no obstructions, no stoppage. It transcends both subject and object, it recognises no points of orientation, it has no form, it knows neither gain nor loss.\(^{31}\)

The emptying of consciousness suggests that it can no longer be directed, for there will be no object towards which it can be directed. I have argued at intervals throughout this thesis that consciousness implies an object, viz, that it is always directed. This position should now be modified in terms of the kinds of experience that is being had. The emptiness of the mystical experience is constituted, one might argue just in the absence of the subject/object distinction.

Whilst there are good reasons for arguing that consciousness remains directed, it is obvious that the de-constitution of the object does not predispose against its directedness in mystical experiencing. In other words, the abandonment of the object towards which consciousness was originally directed, is constitutive of the process of transcendence. The directedness of consciousness is, and remains, crucial to that process. But consciousness must so remain directed, for once it ceases to be so, the transcendent experience is lost to it, for the subject/object dichotomy will be reinstated.

At the point at which transcendence is realised, the directedness of consciousness would disallow the possibility of "One object iff many", upon which the subject/object distinction is partly predicated. That means that the plenitude of objects, although constitutive of

\(^{31}\)Op. Cit Suzuki p.132
consciousness' everyday operations, is dispersed in the emptiness of the experience and returns only when that experience is over.

Furthermore, it is not part of the mystic's report to deny that she does actually experience. Whilst she might claim that her experience is of emptiness for example, it is nonetheless experience. Logically speaking, this is analogous to peering in the dark or to listening to silence. No apparent object is present, but it is the activity in which the experiencer engages that constitutes the directedness of the activity. It is the nature of the activity that constitutes its directedness in these cases, not the presence of an object, either existent or non-existent.

It would seem then, that a logical requirement for consciousness is that it be directed, but that in order for it to be directed, there need be no object; it can operate in privative mode in other words. Its own activity, its essential directedness is achieved by the establishing of the "I"/"Other" bi-conditional, but that bi-conditional can be suspended in favour of alternative ways of being. In other words, consciousness does not always imply an object at all, but consciousness is always directed.

Intuitive transcendent experience per se, remains mysterious to the uninitiated because language is an inadequate vehicle for its conveyance. What happens to consciousness during that experience, is problematic in the sense that the claims that consciousness becomes "empty" severely shake our phenomenological understanding of the process of conscious being. We must assume that the privative mode in which consciousness can operate during mystical experiencing, is a direct result of a complete abandonment of the normal or everyday ways of being. Although "empty" should not be taken literally, the mystic nevertheless, chooses words which in some way indicate or approximate her experience: she speaks metaphorically. The privative way of being in which she finds herself and which is expressed in terms like, "empty" shows another and altogether
different way of being, sharply contrasted with the plenitude of images and objects with which we are daily concerned. What is certain however, is that the mystic is able to denounce the fiction of the existence of Self as the fallacy it is, because of her experience that the subject/object distinction is itself based upon a very limited experience of the way in which everydayness is brought together by consciousness.

Lastly, where does all of this put 'I's quest for self-knowledge? Obviously, with the collapse of the "I/Other" dichotomy, in intuitive transcendent experience, the minimal knowledge requirements cannot be met. Under everyday circumstances, 'I' can know Self, even if Self does not exist. The object Self can be given attributes and qualities, much as a fictional character in a book can be. But on this level, 'I' operates within the conceptual scheme which constitutes the "I/Other" distinction of everydayness. That knowledge must be limited to the world of everyday: beyond that the devices it calls upon are inapplicable. 'I' constitutes and learns to know an object, Self, but what it learns to know is not, and cannot be, itself.

Within the context of mystical experience, understood in terms of intuitive transcendence, the knowledge model is inappropriate: for there all categories have been abandoned. Not only are ontological questions relinquished, but also the interrogative framework itself is given up. Where there is no "I/Other", there can be no object of knowledge, no knower. Furthermore, since 'I' can no longer be differentiated, consciousness' desire for self-knowledge must be relinquished. Consciousness loses its sense of its own being and it just is. Thus when Suzuki says that in the state of no-mindedness, the body of suchness (which I apprehend as consciousness),\(^{32}\) transcends both subject and object and recognises no points of orientation, he is articulating the non-differentiated state in which consciousness finds itself: consciousness is both everything and nothing; there are no

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\(^{32}\)See above Footnote 31
particular points of view. Paradoxically perhaps, the mystic attains the greatest knowledge of all: beyond the everyday fictions, the truest knowledge is that there is no knowledge.
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