Hum, tum and transformation

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This paper, *Hum, tum and transformation*, emerged from conversations between us, three research students of Development Practice, when we engaged on ideas around self and other given our critical location of attempting to research in between theory and practice, of philosophy and being, in the context of development. Once written in exuberance and some sort of intellectual rush of myriad thoughts, today our own writing appears to be at a distance. Once tenacious and tentative, I now see what remains unexpressed and the possibility excites us. The paper arrived after wondering about the transformative social, about collectivisation and mobilisation. It drifted towards why we need to rethink the individual. Inevitably, as we conversed we brought our ‘selves’ into the conversation and therefore an ‘other’ has emerged from our discussions and experiences that we present in this paper. One also thought of development as change and transformation and the differences between the two.

Is it possible to think action without direction? To become a story rather than a writer? To allow for the space of stories to remain the layers and contradictions one may find in this paper have been kept intact, our voices merges and parts, and it’s not always clear which one is which, so the paper is able to draw contradictions and imagery of the way we imagine ourselves, especially those of us who ponder upon transformation.

Mine is not a statement of knowing. Only an invocation of that which is outside of the pursuit of the known. It’s an invitation to lurk outside of what fits into the one possible way… to explore a congeries of possibilities. As I write I spill all my ink on words that consume me, trying inconclusively to understand something I cannot construe or even name. This space that harbinger conclusion but does not arrive at it invokes my curiosity. For lack of a better word I refer to it as transformation. I write about this space from many places, places that are not only topological. Some circuitous knots and some dead ends of attempting to comprehend, and from this perspective the trajectory of transformation is a non-linear/non-teleological flux. It is continuously changing its shape and form, morphing and transforming through the past and conceptions of the future into the present.

The sound of the river, of my search in transformation is over-ridden beneath the glaze and noise of development. I cannot feel its pulse and the noise of should-be’s rise around me in a din clouding my consciousness. Like cotton soaks moisture, my conscious being becomes what they call a woman now...performing over and over. And in the slow ballet I dance over and over to the tunes of the now familiar din. The reprimands from my grandmother, the fear of becoming my mother, the good girl who obeys...and I perform pirouettes over them. Sometimes I fall into a lull of monotonous motion and I forget about my search. It would not cross my mind but sometimes the sound of the river would break through my lull, jogs me into the real behind the rhythm of my dance and in the frenzy of monotonous movement, my cognition is sparked. At times it fades, but it is as if a torch has been shone on an object in a dark room. And then even though the torch goes out, the object stands out to me even in darkness. The river is an ever constantly flowing subject that I am. And I arrive at its banks
from different ways, always finding another Lacanian place.

My present today unlike the meadow has very decisive demarcations for what it means for me to develop as a person. It tells me that in the present doctrine of development I can only be certain faces of my subject and the others are foreclosed from the language of recognition. I am then female bodied and assumed of woman gender. Understood in my gendered subject-hood in foreclosed interpretation barring it. Expected deliverance into a heterosexual monogamous orientation in my sexuality, and romantic relationships I am hoped to be productive in the present economy and I am working in places my grandmother perhaps could not work when she was 25. There are changing labels on these captivities. I must, given my aspirations and historical location that can be accommodated in a human rights framework, labour in a job or business, survive and flourish in a monetised economy, my caste and class prescriptions will push my chances within the development prescription. I must have a family ground in kinship and marriage, procreate, be productive, cultivate my hobbies in the leisure I pursue to develop into a healthy citizen subject. And when I try to stray away, like I did towards the sound of the river there are labels to freedom too. I am out-boxed to be boxed again into queer, polyamorous, hippie, frigid or even delinquent. I imagine a place when at times I am only a transient consciousness, neither woman nor man nor any other name they call those things. I imagine a space where my skin is no rule-book parchment for doctrines to be written on, and if I turn my skin into parchment I will tattoo my own ways, my art, my utopia, where a coming-together, a reconciliation, is made possible, at least in thought. An arrived semantic. This paper thus, revolves around ideas to provide insight into how, through the human situation, phenomena comes to have personal meaning, a lived through significance that may not always be transparent to consciousness, charting our own transformative paths. It forecloses upon and makes almost impossible autonomous ways of becoming a self-developing subject, of value for oneself and to others; capable of founding through oneself and others an intersubjective realm of mutually constituted empathic self-involvement, encompassing a joy of struggle and a collective arrival, for each and all.

"I": formations and transformations

The self and the other is not a dual that can be put together. Dualisms put into relations of power stand the risk of turning mono-ist, one in the image of another. A repetition of sorts, affirmation and negation but the same. When the understanding of difference flows from a priori assumption of the same it asserts homogeneity. The subject is a phoenix constance that contradicts homogeneity. It rejuvenates from time to time, morphing an image of the self constantly vis-à-vis the other, face to face with the politics of difference and recognition. Involving in transformation makes us anxious as practitioners, especially because it falls off the grid. Like Freuds writing pad where the Mnemic and perceptual systems come into inter-play to leave a moment of inter-subjectivity, in the life worlds of the subject it creates a language of its own and writes a story. It is both knowledge of the self, as against abstract and impartial, and knowledge of the other. A story that in its unconscious hides an imagination of a possibility.

The transactional privatised notion of the self is a fundamental construct of the economic argument, that the dominant imagination of development projects in its understanding of
wellbeing. The arrival at a mono-ist logic of development is convenient to the point of questionable. In the moment of being a prescription it reaches a constance, a psychic stagnation, thrown into an impasse by the loss of a past, a pre-destined future that gears the present on ideological auto pilot. This psychic stagnation stands opposed to the idea of transformation as movement and flux. Dominant development models are then paradoxical to social transformation. It frames a picture of development, however, that seems to me like a simulacrum, which has the semblance but not the substance to distinguish difference.

If identification is a necessary prerequisite for human life as we understand it, the reverse is also true I believe. Individual identity, embodied in selfhood, is not a meaningful proposition in isolation from the human world of other people. Individuals are unique and variable, but selfhood is thoroughly socially constructed, in the ongoing interaction during which individuals define and redefine themselves and others, throughout their lives. An understanding emerges of selfhood as an ongoing and, in practice, simultaneous synthesis of internal self-definition and the external definitions of oneself offered by others. Self-consciousness, indeed cognition itself, can only be achieved by taking on or assuming the position of the other. In everyday terms, we cannot see ourselves without also seeing ourselves as other people see us. For me, the collective reality of society is no more than an extension of this basic theorem of identification.

The body seems to be the best starting point to begin to wonder about this world and opening one self to the transformative, which is foreclosed due to notions of a self of the descartesian ‘I’ existing in isolation. The decartian I, which here will be used as the modern I, is the location from which the liberal human rights discourse run around the notion of a choice/voice. The movement from the cartesian self-conscious subject to the self of the in itself (body) is essential to mark this transformative move from a kind of individualism that is the mark of debates around liberal democracy and participation.

Before we try and think of the body, one has to think of the thinking thing as the I, as proposed by Rene Descartes. The paper deals with him and tries to overcome him, as it takes his understanding as the prevalent form of individuality modernity ascribes to. But what reached maturity in Descartes is an ego centric subject view that is not specific to modernity. In his meditation to attain a certainty of sorts about whatever is, descartes started with doubting everything, only to conclude that everything can be doubted but the act of doubting itself cannot. Placing the doubt that was a relational symptom of phenomenal existence inside his thought, he concluded I think, therefore I am. Thus the subject, his thoughts and reflections were beyond doubt and unadulterated, outside of which was reduced to an Object, the world and ‘I’ reduced to a form, a picture. Hegel in his own turn in his overarching book on the spirit, narrates the journey from sense certainty of the now and here (a consciousness in itself), to self certainty of a consciousness for itself. A matter of relationship and co-operation became a matter of hierarchy and subjugation for the modern subject, 'I'. All such working on a notion of such an I, extends to human right frameworks and identity rights, which are important for formal claims to freedom and equality, instead of parity.

In this paper's formulation, an identity could be at best a performative entity of an individual rather than a transformative one. An individual as this paper fancies, is not a
given, not always available state of the experience of the self, but to be attained political/spiritual occurrence. The individual is not the thinking thing, but getting in sync with whatever is, and responding to its movements, someone like Gandhi would call it movements towards truth (satyagraha).

**Development as a transformative exercise**

Development has become a convenient metonymy for transformation. A kind of transformation, that finds space under current developmental agenda. That, which speaks the language of modernity, global capital and a phallocentric understanding of the lacking. At the heart of it, it pumps itself into motion by exploitative processes that feed on the difference that accumulates unrecognised around us. Am I suggesting tolerance for that which is not me? Am I making an argument that runs the risk of being boxed into the liberal argument of choice? Am I suggesting the subject can act ad libitum? A liberal argument would assert on rational tolerance, which is far from my mind.

I am suggesting a movement to recognition of difference that springs from the contradictory texts that constitute our lives. My lived real is an interaction with the social and necessarily with the other. The sense of transformation is when my place has a relationship with the travel to it. The existence of an autonomous self-developing subject emerging with the other; in difference not dichotomy, to be together and separate wholes at the same time. While no one form dominates the other, the distinction of such a pursuit lies in the absence of assumption. An assumptions frame, albeit all its intricacies, is in consonance with a gap, a slippage. The teleological does not make itself responsible for this unquantifiable irrational. While time takes a toll not only on the living to turn them dead, but teleological-developmental time renders the present to the past. Such theatrical politics.

The development sector arouses in me an anxiety over this frame and the picture it holds. This picture can be seen in the image of the empowered tribal woman on organisational annual reports. The language behind the picture translates to communicate the voice of a poor tribal woman and her agency to bring back her smile with a healthy harvest. That she is different is evident on the surface. But this picture is a silencing of a different kind where the script of a different life world is rendered undecipherable outside dominant metaphors. Her being therefore, varied and contingent as it is, doesn’t make itself known in that image. This picture does not come close to the times when after a long tiresome day in the field when she sits down to dinner and surprises me with her laughter. Sometimes when there are a bunch of us I watch her from afar as her face breaks into ripples of cream crinkling in layers. When she laughs, eyes closed and mouth wide, flowing like a cold river in the night. If I laugh like that my face will beak into fractured pieces of porcelain and my heart will go into seizure. If I laugh like that something will break and put me in touch with a real sense of freedom so long curtailed it comes with suspicion. So I sit there and watch, as she laughs. I wonder about the image of the tribal woman to be incorporated into development through participation and the way this version of the reality co-exists with the real that I see. In these moments the scripts get cold feet and hide with me under the blanket. But while I cannot see her faces in that image, so still, on the report, that image has in some sense become a part of her being and is claiming more space. This image is one of her mirrors. The biggest one as her place in the world is re-asserted by this image.
Sense, subject and body

The body has no agency in the sense the word is generally used, where it stands in command of the mind or the disembodied soul. Generally agency is understood to come from a conscious display of choices and deliberation. But it’s not the rational mind, but the body which is in this world, open to all the sensations, thus it is the body which is implicated in the social, and it has an unconscious inevitability of responding to whatever that is. It is at the realm of the stimulus and in psychology in the infant (four legged mammal) that the body and its agency will make itself available. The newly born, bereft of a part, of a notion of self, is in the present continuous, its sense of agency is an unadulterated interaction with what it finds itself in. Mythology and Freud have claims for the child to be godlike or overtly sexual without any taboos respectively. Very quickly one looses this voice of the body to the voice of an image, and one thereon constructs this symbolic identity and its agency on the lines of an existing custom or other kinds of pedagogy one is born in (ego ideals). The child is murdered to produce the man, to ensure the past lives on. Wordsworth made a political statement, 'child is the father of man', but his political opponents reduced it to mere poetry. Gandhi at the moment of the dandi march in the film as discussed later, would turn to his young days and remember a socratic pronouncement in a religious flavor, ‘your true disciple will understand another's woes and his own, and will bow to all, despising none.’

The transformation of the self, at its outset may look like pain or madness, as the world understand it as a concept. A whole lot still mock Gandhi’s claim of non violence, saying that he subjugated his self to violence for the sake of non-violence on the other. Thus his pleasure, his smile as the phenomenal proof was discarded as mere spiritual pretense. The form of the self is what the liberal identitarian discourse refuels, and thus change is its inevitability, not transformation. A transformation happens when one returns to, or let the dying voice of the body take over. The body is traded for a cultural or civil adult identity all across the world that has a tangible body on which further codifications and politics ensue. All radical transformations start from the transformation of the rigidly formed self, made due its past, its history. The new, the singular then would be to stand free from this past (being) and let the present continuous work through you (becoming). Who can understand the class and caste of Gandhi, who can decipher his past, as he practiced it? Swaraj in that sense was not against the British, not against another, but a work on oneself to come out of the past of the self, where several subjections were coded, to the self of present continuous and its rule. Krishnakant Bhattacharya in his essay swaraj in ideas pleaded to stop changing according to the times, but changing the times accordingly.

What is pivotal in how one forms a self-image, this notion of I, which is not just a modern notion, but perhaps a-historic model. In the mirror stage of lacan, the child for the first time sees itself in the mirror, as an object amongst many, his edges constituted by others. One loves this complete image of the self (ego ideal), but the felt experience of the body is always overflowing and considered as lacking in self-control. One beyond the mirror stage, enters the symbolic and this love of self-image and its preservation is the work of the ego and narcissism. In this narrative the movement of transformation would be to come out of the love the image, to a love of this clumsy bodily experience. What stands between this movements from the image to the felt experienced body, is not just light, but a blockade of
Identity or self-image is composed of an ambiguity, one pole of identity is drawn from a sameness, from being part of larger set of things but the other if different. Transformative is the task to challenge the sameness that collective identities impose. The imposition of sameness, works as suture, but none of these categories are chosen by the individual. The body is cryptic with categories of gender, race and religion as one grows up to become a subject. The child is not a subject, its identity is mobile and amorous, but growing up is the process of solidifying your sameness pillar, with little deviations for the feeling of uniqueness. These little deviations becomes a material on which the market capitalise and reduce it fashion statement. Thus the social subjugates the self to a point where all radical differences is some version of madness, evil or some criminal activity.

To transform is to challenge the notion of identity as a fixed form, it’s a constant movement of the pole of difference, where sameness is a limitation on the discovery of new provisional essences. It is journey of the self towards its own effacement, to the singular, to the flux of whatever is, where radical politics happen. A subject who keeps dying, keeps killing the old and surfacing the new.

Partha Chaterjee in his book on nationalism in the times of colonialism, shows how it was Gandhi, who gave a social turn to a movement, until then limited to a certain class demanding freedom. Gandhi then could be one example to perform the postulate this paper argues for the social is a state of affairs when an individual takes the onus of experiencing his own individuality fully. Unlike other political stalwarts of his times he was more interested in understanding the country. He walked through length and breath, experiencing life, experimenting his truths, not withholding them. This paper looks at the dandi march as a chance impulse Gandhi had experiencing the British law. He walked off to break the law and create salt as it appeared so natural to him to do. People followed and it became a historic event in the story of nationalism, where people got together. The masses circulated around Gandhi, Gandhi started embodying the masses, it was not monitored, it was never organised, it was an energy. As i see, Gandhi never thought of the collective as to be an attained objective; he worked for and through an inter-relationship. Not for independence, but for a co-operation. His fasting perhaps was not a political method to protest, but a real affective inability to eat. In him the transformative social happens via the individual, when one man speaks his truths and practices them, it aligns other people’s self-truth as well.

The thought struck me through a film by Juan Carlos Tabío. Like many other young men of his generation Tabío joined the revolutionary movement in Cuba at the end of the 1950s. The film ‘Lista de Espera’ (2000) was based on a story by Artuto Arango, the film shows a
run down bus terminal in rural Cuba with dozens of passengers waiting for the bus to come and occupy the few seats that will become available. Disorder and chaos reign when the bus breaks down and cannot leave and the passengers fall asleep at the terminal. In a collective dream, the group creates a communal living situation. They transform the terminal into a beautiful home, with gardens, libraries and plenty to eat, a place where every member of the group is valued, where gay men, black women, mechanics, engineers and bohemians, the young and old come together for a sake more than their own. When they awake at the end of the film, each person remembers the dream and values its beauty, but making it a reality does not seem an option, understandably they all have places to go, families to see, jobs to do. Interestingly, the movie title translates into ‘The Waiting List’ in English. People in waiting of what they are told they need, decide to fulfill their needs their own way. A waiting with no destined end, no marker to see how far we have reached because it spins together the aspects of the practice of ideas in the journey of seeking. It is a challenge because it allows us to re-imagine where we would like to go when we do not know already where we are ventured. The fear that we are waiting for nothing at all chews at us through all the digested ought-to’s. Development has the possibility of this arrival, and in carrying an autonomous meaning it will be hard work practicing a politics of difference that steps beyond liberal tolerance to one of recognition of the other.

This could be termed idealistic day-dreaming and unfeasible but what pushes me on is that an idea need only be logical to the person who practices it. In practice, of any kind or approach, we encounter Socratic doxae. In the search of doxae, an idea is a tool of non-violent persuasion to cultivate doubt. Transformative development for me has to be in a relationship of this wait for an arrival into doubt. Feminist philosophy could make space for this doubt, as historically ground in patriarchal texts, we attempt a movement beyond this history. If to change ourselves is to change our worlds, and if that relationship is reciprocal, then the project of history making is never a distant one, but always right here, on the borders of our sensing, thinking, feeling and moving bodies.

I personally believe there are in fact unconscious elements at work in our own encounters with things. Again, I use the word unconscious here not so much in the Freudian sense (relevant though it may be, given some of my own ambivalences and anxieties) but in a more explicitly cultural sense, having to do with those largely unrecognized and in turn uncogised aspects of our own histories that have been bequeathed to us by virtue of our status as historical beings of a specific sort. Hence the idea of the self-narratives I feel that we build for ourselves, which become aware of precisely during those moments when our own historical and cultural situatedness comes into view. Hence, in addition, the idea that alongside the manifest narrative of one’s life there exists some form or other of counter-narrative, one that indeed comes up against those ordinary understandings that conceal even as they reveal. This paper is much less about myself, about the vagaries and idiosyncrasies of my personal experience, than it is about my world, my existence as a social and cultural subject I feel.

Decoding memory

Fundamentally we as individuals consciously pursue goals and interests. I seek to be, and to be seen to be, something or somebody, to successfully assume particular identities.
Bourdieu (1977, 1990), offers a helpful perspective on these questions when he emphasizes the improvisational quality of interaction. Improvisation is facilitated and encouraged by ‘habitus’, the domain of habit, which, in the presentation of self, operates neither consciously or unconsciously, neither deliberately or automatically. Although the notion of habitus may in some respects be problematic, it resonates loudly with my perspective on identity. Habitus is simultaneously collective and individual, and definitively embodied. Not only do we identify ourselves in the internal-external dialectic between self-image and public image, but we identify others and are identified by them in turn.

As MacIntyre (1981) noted in his own reflections on the supra-personal dimensions of self-formation, ‘I inherit from the past of my family, my city, my tribe, my nation, a variety of debts, inheritances, rightful expectations and obligations. These constitute the given of my life, my moral starting point. This is in part what gives my life its own moral particularity.’ From the standpoint of individualism (and in a way what Satre proposed), I am what I myself choose to be. I can always, if I wish to, put in question what are taken to be the merely contingent social features of my existence. I am here considering an attitude. MacIntyre explains, ‘according to which the self is detachable from its social and historical roles and statuses.’ The story of my life is similarly embedded in those communities from which I derive my identity. I am born with a past but I constantly try to cut myself off from that past, in the individualist mode, in order to negotiate my present relationships. I find myself part of a history and that is generally to say, whether I like it or not, whether I recognise it or not, one of the bearers of a tradition I was born and brought up in, my social capital in Bourdieuan sense. This is to say that the present is in some ways a by-product of those culturally-rooted aspects of one’s history that have not yet become part of one’s story. They are hidden, not in the sense of that which has been buried through the forceful work of repression but that which remains unthought and is thus not yet a part of my own story, in a way what Adam Philips say as the unlived life.

**Politics of the subject Dandi march as tranformative action (action research)**

As a history-making practice, the project of building an alternative economy also involves new practices of the self, producing different economic subjects through a micro-politics or ethics of self-transformation (ibid.) In fostering this process of transformation, we have addressed the revolutionary arts of self-cultivation, not only to those aspects of self that could be seen as accommodating and embodying capitalism but also to our oppositional and anticapitalist selves. Given present circumstances, we would be crazy to offer an optimistic prognosis for the world and its denizens, but we can learn to call forth hope from our world-battered sensibilities. According to Isabelle Stengers (2002), hope is ‘the difference between probability and possibility’ and being hopeful is a matter of including possibility in our world and worldview. One cannot possibly enter the shoes of Gandhi, as he walked bare feet, he was singular, a true individual, on whom both good and bad can be imposed by society gripped by morality. Swami Vivekananda, was what he was, the society cover up his bare body, to again project an abstract spirit of goodness.

This reading is not to romanticise Gandhi, it actually does not consider him at all. It merely puts to use an event, not as it happened, but as it can be recreated with an eye towards the new. Dandi march returned to me one day, not as a social movement as I read it in my
history books, but as a strange event. History records this event as a well-planned movement, as a vision of sorts. Retrospectively it also gives logical explanations of using salt as the common need of the masses that mobilised them. Yet it also records that the decision was bizarre for both the congress members and the British who could not care about it less, but it managed to create a social that was unprecedented.

But how does it occur to him? What made him do that and how did it go viral? What possible power of instinct made possible a simple act of creation (salt) that made the law look like un-freedom? What history in its narrative miss out, cinema as a sensual medium recreates. The film images also narrate but possess an excess that every image has beyond the symbolic. Thus my reference point of the dandi march is not a book, but a scene from the film Gandhi, by Attenborough.

In a scene from the film Gandhi is staring wide open at the sea. His long contemplation is broken as the reporter enters the frame from behind. Gandhi is as if lost and the reporter, the symbol of history, expresses his anticipation of what is coming from him. Gandhi recalls his childhood and delves into a monologue of self-searching before a sudden silence hits him and his face shows unease, only to light up with a smile staring all the time at the sea. He stands up and in delight starts taking the first mad steps of what was to become the dandi march. His child like run leaves the reporter puzzled, but Gandhi as he promised did not disappoint the reporter’s anticipation. The sequence ends with Gandhi running and the reporter (history) chasing him as the sun sets in the distant sea.

**Indivisible duality: the individual, social and transformation**

The way out of the undemocratic human condition, swaraj, is in artful de-conditioning of your habits, of the self, of an imposed past which destroys singular experiences, the aura of anything. To go beyond the symbolic, necessitates breaking the law, disregarding of taboos which are usually held secure through fear which is symbolic and punishment that is real. It’s to render politics as art, as an act of resistance becoming an act of creation. All being said, picturing transformation results in a blur, which strains vision to a sensation? Though we place it in a kind of individuality as a vantage point, transformation is not a mere individual experience, it is a social one, it touches and is touched by all that that falls in its range.

One when remains in the cartesian mode, one remains divorced from a self other blur. An indivisible duality remains concealed, where the self and the other is indivisible yet the dual of it is not lost. In the Aristotelian (p,-p) model the two is actually a one, the basis of it being lack, power and thus a game of hierarchy. In the self-other blur of the indivisible duality Gandhi becomes a quality, than a person, dandi march becomes the rhythm on the tunes of which a political upheaval is played. In him, the state of the individual is the transforming social.

Through my own set of experiences I have come to realise that it is not enough simply to assert an identity, that assertion must also be validated, or not, by those with whom we have dealings. Identity is never unilateral. Hence the importance of what Goffman (1969) famously described as the presentation of self during interaction. Although people have
(some) control over the signals about themselves they send to others, we are all at a disadvantage in that we cannot ensure either their correct reception or interpretation, or know with certainty how they are received or interpreted. Hence the importance, too, of what Goffman calls ‘impression management strategies’ in the construction of identity. These dramatise the interface between self-image and public image. Impression management draws to our attention the performative aspects of identity and the fact that identification is a routine aspect of everyday life.

The question to be raised is, How might I begin to understand what had happened in the past that informs who I am in my present? I have to admit that my first impulse led me down an almost mystical path. Odd it is to consider it, I can’t help but wonder whether it is possible for the events of the past, terrible ones, in particular, to somehow leave traces, in the form of disturbed energy fields or some such thing. I’m not talking here about material traces, concrete reminders of events past, which were of course everywhere, but non-material ones. I do in fact find myself entertaining the idea that the past could somehow become inscribed in the present, that in some fundamental way it remained alive and operative. The mind, including my own, finds it difficult to move into regions like these, intriguing though they are. A less mystical version of all this might simply speak of absence or, better still, the presence of what is missing, as Freeman noted (2002). Whatever was there existed in relation to what was not I feel. Somehow I think, we bring things with us that set in motion the experiences of the day. That is to say, I must have been hermeneutically prepared in some way, hermeneutically ready, to experience all those things in the way I do. But how? What exactly was it that had been brought there?

However, I also believe that the subject, whose past appears limited to his or her own life, is something of a problematic. What is important to emphasize is that of the importance of memory in this context. The fabric of memory, I think is furnished not only from the recollections of events which the individual has himself experienced but from the memories of others. From their accounts of their own experiences, which frequently antedate his own, his image of his larger self is brought to include events which occurred both recently and earlier outside his own experiences. History then I argue, in all of its variousness, operate within me (the individual), itself a part of memory.

Long before we understand ourselves through the process of self-examination, we understand ourselves in a self-evident way in the family, society and state in which we live. The self-awareness of the individual then in a way for me is only confined in the closed circuits of historical life but still is part of the larger life itself, lives of people in and around him (me) which constantly influences and extracts too from this individual life. Not only might we need to think of memory differently, but also we might need to think differently about self-reflection and indeed the autobiographical and self-narration project itself. To put this as questions; Is the narration of the self possible without the privatisation of some sort and negating what is outside its realm? Are different forms and ways possible that look at those dimensions of the past that go beyond one’s personal life? Self and its origins then for me would be almost like an ever-porous fluid idea which I need to refrain from institutionalising and controlling through my own narrow set of experiences and consciously realise
the short coming of understanding self as not only a construct but also as an experience in itself, as a lot of what feeds into it is beyond any one set of linear comprehension. Carrying specific meanings, individuals must negotiate the world from their meaning, which has a social value, positive or negative. This paper concerns itself mainly with exploring the complexity of this, exploring aspects of the central relation between subject and world through a different lens. As each lens is used, we should become more and more aware of what it is that makes people become so naturalised to their world, what it is that makes them become so ingrained in the contours of their environment.

References


